

Clarify SOPs on recruiting foreign workers, say bosses

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The Malaysian Employers Federation has asked the immigration department not to be overly stringent when approving work applications from foreign workers already in the country. (Bernama pic)

PETALING JAYA: The government needs to provide more clarity to employers on SOPs for the admission of foreign workers in all permitted sectors.

Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF) president Syed Hussain Syed Husman said they were particularly concerned about the cost involved in bringing in foreign workers.

"We are concerned with the requirement that employers will be required to bear all costs in bringing in foreign workers into Malaysia.

"There has to be some clarity on this matter as it would be unreasonable to require employers to pay regardless of the circumstances that may occur during the recruitment process.

The latest SOPs on the management of foreign workers were issued by the home and human resources ministries.

Syed Hussain said any increase in cost of doing business during this period would derail Malaysia's recovery efforts.

"For example, if a foreign worker loses all his documents prior to departure, would the employer still be liable for the replacement costs?"

Syed Hussain also questioned if employers would be responsible for the cost incurred by the foreign worker in preparing documents for an interview.

"We are of the view that it is important to have a clear policy to avoid any misunderstanding and dispute between the employer, worker and the government," he said in a statement.

Syed Hussain said the governments in source countries should facilitate the movement of their citizens to work in other countries and not allow third-party recruitment agents to charge exorbitant fees.

He said these source countries should be more transparent in the amount that can be charged as recruitment fee. International organisations can play their part in raising awareness in the source countries on fair recruitment practices.

On the recalibration programme introduced by the immigration department to recruit foreign workers already in the country, Syed Hussain said the number was still low as many of them did not have all the required documents for verification.

He said that of the 212,926 illegal foreign workers who registered to be regularised under the programme, only 34,318 applicants had been accepted. Another 20,889 were rejected and 157,719 had not attended the verification process at the immigration office.

"To encourage more of these foreign workers to participate in the recalibration programme, perhaps the immigration department should make the requirements for verification less stringent.

"If these illegal foreign workers cannot be legalised, then they should be sent home. In this way, the government will be able to address the problems associated with illegal foreign workers more effectively," he said.