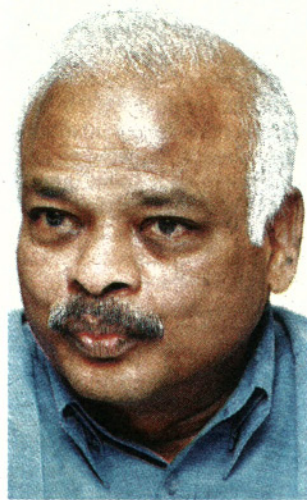


Datuk N. Marimuthu says employers should place more importance on the welfare of local workers



Datuk Ismail Abdul Rahim says action will be taken against those who flout the law



G. Rajasekaran says MTUC is happy the government has realised the seriousness of the foreign worker problem



Shamsuddin Bardan says locals should consider working in the plantation and construction sectors

Now not the time to pick and choose

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysians should stop being choosy about jobs and consider working in plantations and at construction sites where the salaries are also good.

Malaysian Employers Federation executive director Shamsuddin Bardan said in the plantation sector, for example, a worker could earn between RM1,500 and RM2,500 a month, depending on his productivity.

Similarly, he added, a skilled worker could earn RM100 a day if he worked in the construction sector.

"We cannot be choosers at a time like this.

"We must be multi-skilled to do multi tasking," he said, adding that some 20,000 people had lost their jobs and many more were expected to be jobless.

Shamsuddin said foreign workers should not be hired for jobs that were meant for Malaysians.

"I see them (foreign workers) working as cashiers, attendants, waiters, security

guards and hawkers," he said, adding that no action had been taken against them.

He said some 400,000 Form Five and Form Six school leavers and graduates joined the labour market every year.

He said the time had come for the government to look into the plight of locals rather than bring in foreign workers.

Director-General of Labour Datuk Ismail Abdul Rahim said the ministry was aware that employers and supermarkets were hiring foreign workers for jobs meant only for Malaysians.

He said the ministry was looking into this and action would be taken against those who flouted the law.

Malaysian Trades Union Congress secretary-general G. Rajasekaran said the organisation was happy that the government had realised the seriousness of the problem of foreign workers flooding the country, especially at a time when many locals were losing their jobs.

Rajasekaran also called on the Human

Resources Ministry to check on a glove manufacturing company where almost 80 per cent of its 3,000-over workers were foreigners.

"Why is the manufacturing company employing so many foreign workers when it can hire locals?"

Federation of Malaysian Consumers Associations president Datuk N. Marimuthu said employers should place more importance on the welfare of their local employees.

"Give the workers the necessary benefits like social security and better pay.

"They will continue working for them. It is not fair to just say that local workers are lazy."

Marimuthu added that employing locals instead of foreigners in the food sector should not be used by employers as an excuse to raise the price of food.

"There should be no reason for restaurant or food stall operators to increase their prices using this excuse.

"They are not the manufacturers."