

Restrictive labour laws being reviewed

KUALA LUMPUR: The country's labour laws remain cumbersome or restrictive and need to be reviewed, said Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin.

"To deliver the goals of the New Economic Model, the government is formulating bold policy measures to bring about strategic reforms that are required for the transformation of the economy.

"An important process that is taking place in this respect is the review of the labour laws.

"The government is aware of the employers' concerns that our labour laws remain overly cumbersome and restrictive.

"We need to update these laws to attract and retain local as well as foreign investments," he said at the Malaysian Employers Federation dinner last night.

Present were MEF president Datuk Azman Shah Haron and American-Malaysian Chamber of Commerce and Industry president Datuk Nicholas Zeffreys.

Muhyiddin added: "We need to quickly realign our economic strategies to deal with today's competitive environment.

"Industry now needs to have the will and foresight to advance its capabilities. They must move beyond the comfort zone or risk being left behind."

He said the stark reality was that 75 per cent of Malaysia's workforce was low-skilled compared with developed nations, where skilled employees represent 65 to 80 per cent of the total workforce.

"In addition, more than 100,000 students enter the workforce after secondary school every year without any skills."

He said there was a need to reduce this skills gap.

"Efforts are under way to review the curriculum at the secondary and tertiary levels to ensure that school leavers and graduates have the necessary skills required by the market."

Muhyiddin, who is also education minister, said the ministry was targeting to double the number of students taking up vocational technical education to 20 per cent of all students by 2015.