

# 'Let qualifications be sole criterion for hiring'

**RIGHT TO EMPLOYMENT:** Time to acknowledge capabilities instead of gender, say experts

**KANYAKUMARI DAMODARAN**

KUALA LUMPUR  
news@nst.com.my

**Q**UALIFIED individuals should have the right to employment regardless of gender.

Malaysian Trades Union Congress president Mohd Khalid Atan said such discrimination had become prevalent in all sectors of the workforce.

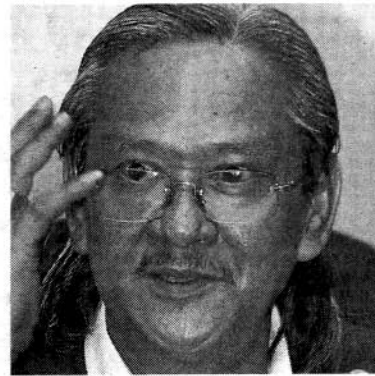
"When hiring an individual, the company should look into the qualifications of a person and only that.



**Shamsuddin Bardan** says employers must be educated on this issue

"If that individual has all the required paper qualifications in terms of education and experience, a natural occurrence such as pregnancy should not hinder the employment."

Khalid was commenting on the government's decision on Tuesday to withdraw an appeal against a landmark High Court ruling that pregnant women should not be



**Mohd Khalid Atan** says discrimination, especially in terms of race and gender, is serious

discriminated against when it came to employment.

In 2010, Noorfadilla Ahmad Saikin sought a declaration that the termination of her contract on grounds she was three months' pregnant was illegal.

Her case was widely followed as it was the first time a civil servant had taken legal action against the government over gender discrim-

ination in the workplace.

"Discrimination, especially in terms of race and gender, is serious and should be given the required attention.

"Noorfadilla's case is just one of the many which occur in our nation. Employers should understand that people want to make a living and acknowledge their capabilities instead of gender."

Malaysian Employers Federation executive director Shamsuddin Bardan said while there were no specific legal provisions on turning down pregnant women, it was morally incorrect.

"Employers may relate it to the performance quality of an individual, but this issue is directly related to gender. Therefore, any employer seen to be sidelining employees based on factors such as pregnancy can be charged with gender discrimination.

"Employers should be educated on this issue and authorities should highlight such issues in their road shows."