

‘Deposit system’ for deportation

BY THARANYA ARUMUGAM AND AINA NASA (/TAXONOMY/TERM/6770) - 12 DECEMBER 2014 @ 8:10 AM

PUTRAJAYA: THE government is set to introduce a deposit mechanism in embassies to repatriate immigrants who abused their visas or completed their employment contract.

Deputy Home Minister Datuk Seri Dr Wan Junaidi Tuanku Jaafar said this would prevent foreign workers overstaying.

He said a special committee had been set up to look at the enforcement in the repatriation.

“We are coming up with a system where it will be mandatory for foreign workers to pay a certain amount of money, which will be held by their embassies in Malaysia.

“After the completion or termination of employment, the money will be used to deport the immigrants back to their country.

“For example, if a worker saves RM50 per month, he could accumulate up to RM1,800 in three years, and this amount is sufficient to buy an air ticket back to their country in Southeast Asia.

“Therefore, we wouldn’t face issues of funding the deportations, simultaneously preventing overstaying and crowding in detention centres nationwide,” Wan Junaidi told the *New Straits Times*.

He said the committee would have a meeting in February with the Human Resources Ministry, Malaysian Employers’ Federation and employers to discuss the matter.

“One of the things I’ve noticed is that we (enforcement officials) are efficient in detaining and arresting illegal immigrants. But, it is not clear who will handle repatriation once the employment ends.

“Employers must be held responsible. The guidelines are there but we need the force of the law to ensure the parties carry out their tasks.”

Addressing the necessity of hiring foreigners, Wan Junaidi said if Malaysia withdrew these workers, which had been done before, there would be a shortage in some sectors.

“This is how the entry of foreign workers started. Malaysians are distancing themselves from the so-called ‘dirty’ jobs like working in plantations, dangerous jobs like construction and ‘demeaning’ jobs like working in coffee shops.”

Commenting on the influx of illegal immigrants, Wan Junaidi said it was due to Malaysia’s proximity to Indonesia, Vietnam, the Philippines, Thailand, Myanmar and India.

“The other countries surrounding Malaysia, such as the Philippines and Indonesia, have low economic development. The rural people are still poor.

“They see Malaysia, in particular Johor, Selangor and Penang, as employment hubs due to the industries in these states to improve their wellbeing.”

In the past four years, the ministry recorded a significant increase in the number of illegal immigrants detained with 33,917 arrests in 2010, 37,415 in 2011, 39,474 in 2012, and 49,133 last year.

Wan Junaidi said the influx was due to the country’s porous borders, which made it easy for illegals to enter the country.

He said the government should beef up employment of civil servants, adding that the matter had been discussed in the cabinet. He said it was agreed that stricter enforcement should be introduced.