

MEF: Employers need SOP clarity for incoming foreign workers

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The Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF) has urged the government to provide clearer Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) to employers on bringing foreign workers into Malaysia. - NSTP file pic.

KUALA LUMPUR: The Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF) has urged the government to provide clearer Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) to employers on bringing foreign workers into Malaysia.

Its president Datuk Dr Syed Hussain Syed Husman J.P said a clear SOP was particularly needed on the requirement for employers to bear all costs for bringing in foreign workers.

He expressed concern that it would lead to an increase in business costs during the pandemic, which would derail Malaysia's recovery efforts.

"The decision to allow the foreign workers to return to Malaysia will give much relief to employers who were not able to fully operate their business without foreign workers.

"However, we are concerned by the requirement in which employers would be required to bear all costs to bring in the foreign workers into Malaysia.

"There has to be clarity on this matter as it would be unreasonable to pay regardless of the circumstances that may occur during the recruitment process," he said in a statement today.

He raised matters on possible costs that might have to be borne by the employers in bringing the foreign workers into the country.

For instance, if the worker loses his documents before departure, Syed Hussain questioned whether the employer would still be liable for replacement costs.

He also asked if the employer would still be responsible for the cost incurred by the foreign worker to prepare documents for job interviews.

"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 added.

Yesterday, Home Minister Datuk Seri Hamzah Zainudin said employers interested in hiring foreign workers would have to bear all the costs involved in bringing them into Malaysia.

The costs include levy payment and the cost of quarantine on arrival at the country's entry point, he said.

On a separate matter, Hamzah also said 212,926 illegal immigrants had registered to be legalised as foreign workers under the Labour Recalibration Programme

However, 157,719 illegal immigrants have yet to go through the verification process at the Immigration Department

Syed Hussain said the number of verified foreign workers was still low as the illegal foreign workers may not have all the required documents for verification.

"To encourage more of these foreign workers to participate in the Labour Recalibration Programme, perhaps the Immigration Department should make the requirements for verification to be less stringent.

"If the illegal foreign workers cannot be legalised, then they could be sent home.

"This way, the government would be able to address the problems associated with illegal foreign workers more effectively."