

# Swift approval of foreign workers will help boost productivity, says MEF

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The sectors given fast tracked approvals of foreign workers under the Relaxation of Foreign Workers Recruitment Plan will boost the productivity of the respective industries and propel the nation's gross domestic product (GDP). - NSTP/DANIAL SAAD

KUALA LUMPUR: The sectors given fast tracked approvals of foreign workers under the Relaxation of Foreign Workers Recruitment Plan will boost the productivity of the respective industries and propel the nation's gross domestic product (GDP).

Malaysian Employers Federation president Datuk Dr Syed Hussain Syed Husman said the plan would enable employers in the various sectors to operate at an optimal level after the government promised that the greenlight to bring in foreign workers will be given within three days.

"This will assist the nation to achieve the targeted four to five per cent targeted GDP growth in 2023.

"The minimum requirements for foreign workers' applications under the plan will also resolve the issues of shortages of foreign workers. Majority of them employed in Malaysia are working in 3D jobs (Dangerous, Difficult and Dirty).

"Under the current system, employers need to wait even up to six months from the date of application," he told the New Straits Times today.

Syed Hussain said this in response to the announcement by Home Minister Datuk Seri Saifuddin Nasution Ismail that employers in seven sectors applying for foreign workers from 15 source countries will receive approval within three days.

Among the 15 source countries are Indonesia, India, Nepal, Bangladesh, the Philippines and Cambodia while the sectors included services, such as domestic workers; manufacturing, agriculture and construction.

He said the government decided to give the commitment during the special meeting of foreign workers management chaired by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim yesterday.

The plan, said Saifuddin, was not a permanent solution to shortage of foreign workers but needed due to unprecedented circumstances amid the nation's economic recovery.

The quick approval, he said, would not affect local job seekers as there were no takers for the 3D jobs which have been actively advertised but remained unfulfilled.

Saifuddin said the plan allows employers to hire foreign workers based on the capability and needs without the need to fulfil the pre-conditional hiring qualification as well as quota eligibility.

The easing of the process, he added, would not compromise the country's security, sovereignty and workers justice.

Employers, he said, will be subjected to Section 60K of the Employment (Amendment) Act 2022 and must comply with the requirements such as minimum wage and Social Security Organisation contributions.