

Let excess workers move elsewhere, says MEF

NATION

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PETALING JAYA: The construction, plantation and agriculture sectors are still in need of foreign labour, while mamak restaurants, hairdressers, jewellers and textile merchants are also crying out for more specialised workers from abroad.

Meanwhile, there is an excess of over 250,000 foreign workers in the manufacturing and services sectors.

The Malaysian Employers Federation, saying that there has been a miscalculation in the forecast of employees needed, now wants the excess workers to be transferred to sectors where there is a shortage.

Its president Datuk Dr Syed Hussain Syed Husman said that while there may be oversupply in some sectors as mentioned by Home Minister Datuk Seri Saifuddin Nasution Ismail, there was still a shortage of foreign workers in other sectors, especially in plantation and construction.

“Instead of bringing in new foreign workers, the government should allow the foreign workers not required by some sectors to be employed elsewhere.

He also said those who had brought in workers should be compensated.

“No employer wants to spend RM25,000 to bring in a foreign worker when they really do not need them. It is more of a wrong forecast.

“The government should assist such employers recover some of the costs they incurred by allowing the surplus workers to be employed in needy sectors.”

He said the rules tying foreign workers’ approval to a particular industry and employer should be reviewed.

“Under existing rules, the current employer needs to end the employment of the extra foreign workers.

“The authorities can then decide to send him back or allow him to remain and be employed by other employers within or outside the sector.

“They should instead be offered work in available sectors. If they refuse to work in the new sector, then they should be repatriated,” Syed Hussain said.

On Wednesday, Saifuddin said that relaxing regulations on foreign workers and a recalibration exercise have led to an excess of over 250,000 foreign workers in the manufacturing and services sectors.

Syed Hussain felt there was no oversupply of foreign workers.

“The Home Minister’s assessment may be based on the approved quota, not the actual number of legal foreign workers in the country.

Malaysian Muslim Restaurant Owners Association secretary-general Habibur Rahman Shahul Hameed concurred, saying mamak restaurants were still in need of workers.