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Hiring of all foreign workers frozen: Tajol

IN sending a clear message to employers to give priority to hiring locals, the Government has effectively frozen all intake of foreign workers by extending the recruitment ban in the manufacturing, construction, plantation and services sectors to cover domestic help.

Deputy Home Minister Datuk Tajol Rosli Ghazali said the Government has to control the influx not only because of the large number of foreign workers already in the country but also to stop employers from thinking it is their right to hire these workers.

"They should give priority to the locals," he told reporters after the launching of a pictorial biography of Malaysia's second prime minister, the late Tun Abdul Razak, in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad launched the book entitled, "Tun Razak, Jejak Bertapak Seorang Patriot", a Yayasan Tun Razak and Utusan Publication and Distributors Sdn Bhd joint project.

Asked whether the new ruling has been approved by the Cabinet, Tajol said it is a ministry affair.

He said the freeze will be in force until the situation has been brought under control, adding that the ministry is currently devising a new mechanism to deal with the issue.

"We will come out with a mechanism to control and monitor the situation within the next few days," he added.

Tajol was commenting on the news report that the Government has banned the recruitment of Filipina domestic help, 30,000 of whom are already in the country.

On Monday, Dr Mahathir had warned that a high dependence on foreign workers could pose a threat to the economy. The Prime Minister had said Malaysians should not be too choosy about jobs as this would only lead to a further influx of foreigners.

Tajol said the ban on the hiring of foreign domestic help covers all nationalities.

"We have to do this as it seems that employers have come to believe that they have the right to recruit foreign workers... they will get angry if we are slow in processing the applications," he added.

Worse still, the foreign workers also seem to feel the same way and think they have the right to work in Malaysia, he said.

Officially they are 1.7 million foreign workers in the country, Tajol said, but the ministry believes the number may be much higher as "there are many more whom we do not know about".

With immediate effect all applications to bring in foreign workers will not be entertained until further notice, but those who have secured approval can proceed with the recruitment, he said.

"The renewal of permits will be at the Government's discretion."

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