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Ignore rumours, workers advised

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WORKERS should not pay heed to rumours on the consequences of economic problems, particularly those related to job security.

Human Resources Ministry Secretary-General Datuk Zainol Abidin Abdul Rashid said workers should focus on increasing productivity rather than worry about impending retrenchment which may not take place.

As for employers, Zainol Abidin urged them to be open about job security and business prospects.

"I call upon all employers to be open regarding the security of employment so that workers will not worry about the future."

"Everybody concerned will thus concentrate on increasing productivity rather than worry about becoming unemployed," he told Business Times in Kuala Lumpur recently.

Zainol Abidin also advised employers to take advantage of the current economic situation to retrain workers.

This will help equip companies with highly-skilled workers when the economy recovers and experiences a sudden increase in overseas demand for Malaysian goods.

Zainol Abidin said workers will not be able to distance themselves from job security anxieties especially when the region is beset by economic problems.

"However, there are no indications that industry leaders in the manufacturing sector (in Malaysia) are retrenching workers.

"The Government is also taking all the necessary action to strengthen the economy and reinstil confidence in investors," he said.

He said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had indicated the country's economy will recover quickly if everybody works towards this goal.

Meanwhile, Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF) executive director Datuk Mohd Zain Majid has said that employers will not resort to retrenchment if they can avoid it.

Retrenching staff is "such a hassle and headache" that employers prefer other alternatives such as a reduction in working hours or working days, he said.

"It is not right to stir the pot at this stage when everybody wants to find a solution," Zain told Business Times when asked about rumours on mass retrenchment.

Meanwhile, the Malaysian Trades Union Congress (MTUC) is proposing that a special fund be set up to assist workers who have been made unemployed.

MTUC president Zainal Rampak said the congress is calling for the revival of the Special Relief Allowance and the Cost of Living Allowance, which were introduced in the 1970s and mid-1980s to supplement workers' wages.

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