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New minister to head panel on foreign workers

KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. - The Minister of Human Resources Datuk Lim Ah Lek said today that Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad would appoint a Minister to head the Cabinet Committee on Foreign Workers.

The post was held by Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, who was sacked by Dr Mahathir last Wednesday.

At a Press conference after launching a nationwide IT campaign for MCA leaders at Informatics College in Jalan Petaling, Lim said:

"There is no problem, in so far as processing of applications from employers requiring foreign workers."

He added this was being carried out by a separate committee headed by the Home Ministry.

"The main committee is merely looking into policy matters," he said.

It was reported that the plantation and manufacturing sectors required 122,700 foreign workers in the first six months of this year.

As at July 4, a total of 926 employers had submitted applications to recruit these foreign workers.

Between Feb 17 and May 21, 206 employers had applied to bring in 60,000 foreign workers.

On the issue related to actions of five branch managers of MBf Finance Bhd who had allegedly forced their staff to resign under the Voluntary Separation Scheme, Lim said:

"The management had co-operated with the ministry and had given us the assurance that appropriate action would be taken against those involved."

He added he had also been informed that the management had decided to reinstate those involved.

Lim reiterated that while the ministry would not like to interfere on the kind of action to be taken against those involved, he, however said "we want to send the right signal to employers" that any VSS must be transparent and genuine.

The MBf Finance's VSS involved 120 branches and 4,032 workers throughout the country.

A total of 1,769 workers applied to join the VSS and of this 1,123 applications were accepted and 646 rejected.

Of the applicants who were rejected, 168 appealed and 57 were then accepted. A total of 25 workers withdrew their applications.

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