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Workers

MALAYSIA UNABLE TO TAKE IN FOREIGN WORKERS, SAYS SYED HAMID

By: Mikhail Raj

DHAKA, Feb 28 (Bernama) -- Malaysia's current financial difficulties owing to the regional economic crisis makes it difficult for it to continue taking in foreign workers, Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said today.

He said those workers whose work permits had expired would be sent back to their home countries since the massive earnings repatriated by the more than 150,000 legal Bangladeshi workers in Malaysia were a strain on the economy.

This, coupled with the slowdown in economic activities and the repatriation of earnings by the larger number of Indonesian workers posed a burden to Malaysia, he told reporters following a meeting with his Bangladeshi counterpart, Abdus Samad Azad.

At the meeting held yesterday on the sidelines of the preparatory meeting of foreign ministers of the group of eight Islamic developing countries (D-8), Abdus Samad requested Malaysia to take in more Bangladeshi workers.

Syed Hamid also denied media reports that Malaysia was not treating Bangladeshi workers well.

Such reports emanated from sensationalisation of isolated cases by the media when on the contrary, the Bangladeshi high commissioner in Malaysia had himself attested to his countries' workers being treated well, he said.

He said Malaysia had done a lot for Bangladeshi workers.

For instance, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had allowed illegal foreign Bangladeshi workers to be legalised so that they would not be exploited by unscrupulous agents, he said.

-- BERNAMA

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