

26 AUG 1999

MTUC-Workers

RECONSIDER DECISION TO BRING IN INDONESIAN WORKERS, SAYS MTUC

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 26 (Bernama) -- The Malaysian Trades Union Congress (MTUC) today urged the government to reconsider its decision to bring in more skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled workers from Indonesia as there are several pressing local labour issues awaiting settlement.

MTUC president Zainal Rampak said in a statement that available jobs should first be offered to locals as about 250,000 school leavers and 60,000 university graduates enter the job market every year.

He said there were also 40,000 public and private sector workers retiring yearly upon reaching 55 years who should be given the opportunity for at least another five years because they are still young, in good health and have families to support.

"We have called upon the government to extend the statutory retirement age to 60 so that the skills of qualified, experienced, efficient and capable workers will not be wasted," he said.

He also urged employers to pay better wages, benefits and improve the condition of work especially in plantations and construction sites to attract more local workers involved in the sectors, and indirectly help the country to conserve valuable foreign exchange which amounted to RM3 billion last year.

"By paying local workers better wages and benefits, employers will also be able to bring about quicker economic recovery through more consumer spending which comes with workers' increased purchasing power," Zainal said.

Yesterday, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, at a joint media conference with Indonesian President B.J. Habibie, said Malaysia proposed to bring in more semi-skilled and skilled Indonesian workers in addition to the unskilled ones.

Habibie was on a one-day working visit to Malaysia which was aimed at enhancing bilateral ties and cooperation.

-- BERNAMA

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