

Hire locals, MTUC tells employers

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KUALA LUMPUR, Sat: The Malaysian Trades Union Congress (MTUC) has called upon employers to hire locals instead of depending on foreign workers.

Its president, Zainal Rampak, said MTUC has always been against the hiring of foreign workers because of the high costs involved.

He was responding to the Malaysian Employers Federation's statement yesterday that employing foreign workers from countries other than Indonesia will make Malaysia an expensive place for investors.

Zainal said the MTUC had from the start only agreed to foreign workers being brought in for the plantation and construction sectors.

Even this should be done on a government-to-government basis and not through employment agencies, he said.

Speaking to reporters after opening the 2nd Annual General Meeting of the Bumiputra Commerce Bhd Officers Union here today, he said locals are not choosy in seeking employment.

"They are only particular about salaries," he said, adding that it is only natural for people to reject jobs offering low salaries.

Zainal said local employers should emulate their Japanese counterparts by maintaining their workforce, even when the economy is not good, instead of resorting to retrenchment and

downsizing.

A memorandum on the problems faced by retrenched workers has already been submitted to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, he said.

Zainal also called on banks and financial institutions to stop resorting to measures such as the voluntary separation scheme and the outsourcing of work following mergers.

He reminded them that when the merger exercise was announced, assurances were given that employees in the sector will not be affected.

He said these organisations should discuss with the respective union bodies to come up with solutions beneficial to all parties.