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Mahathir-Workers

MALAYSIA TO REVIEW RECRUITMENT OF INDONESIAN WORKERS, SAYS PM

BANGI, Jan 22 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the government will review the recruitment of workers from Indonesia following the problems they caused in Malaysia recently.

The prime minister said the government could no longer view the problems lightly.

"I think there are too many of them. If it becomes a big movement, we will face problems," he told a media conference after launching Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia's (UKM) 20th Career Day at its main campus here.

He was asked to comment on the fight between two groups of Indonesians, believed to be Achehnese, in Kampung Limau Manis, Dengkil, on Sunday night in which several vehicles, stalls and business premises were destroyed.

The incident occurred only four days after about 500 Indonesian workers went on a rampage and attacked policemen in an anti-drug operation at the Hualon Corporation (M) Sdn Bhd textile factory hostel in Nilai, Negeri Sembilan.

Dr Mahathir said that coincidentally he was passing by the area where the fight occurred and saw the fire and the presence of police personnel.

He also recounted an earlier experience in which he came across illegal immigrants while driving in Putrajaya escorted by a police car.

"When they saw the police they fled, I don't know where to. In fact the workers in Putrajaya are also illegal workers. We cannot view (the matter) lightly anymore," he said.

Asked whether the review on the recruitment of Indonesian workers would cripple certain industrial sectors in the country, Dr Mahathir said workers from other countries could work in these sectors.

He said that besides tightening security in the coastal areas which were used as landing spots by immigrants, the government would also deport immigrants without work permits.

As for those with jobs, their number would be reduced, he said.

Dr Mahathir said that all this while the government had assumed that the Indonesian workers would be grateful for the opportunity to work in Malaysia.

"But it seems that they want to make their own laws, reject our laws. This we cannot accept," he said.

He said that even Malaysians obeyed the laws in the country and the government would not tolerate foreigners not obeying Malaysian laws.

He said the government would also scrutinise the facilities given to foreigners in the country, including their permanent resident status, because some of those who had been given this facility were found to be involved in anti-government activities.

"I was informed that one of those who were given PR status was a member of the Kumpulan Militan Malaysia (KMM)," he said.

-- BERNAMA

AFY MAM JK