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Indon-Workers

M'SIA'S PLANNED POLICY ON INDON WORKERS SPARKS WORRIES IN EAST JAVA

JAKARTA, Jan 22 (Bernama) -- Malaysia's planned "last-in-the-list" policy on Indonesian workers following violent riots at a factory hostel in Negeri Sembilan last week send the chill down the spine of the local authority in East Java.

East Java Labour Department chief M. Djaelani said today that it would have a severe effect on the province, being Indonesia's biggest supplier of Indonesian workers to Malaysia.

Djaelani was quoted by a local portal news, "detikcom", as saying that Malaysia was still the "prima donna country" of thousands of its workers, after Hong Kong, due to its geography and cultural similarities.

Last year alone, a total of more than 8,000 East Javanese flocked to Malaysia for employment and more than 9,000 did the same the previous year.

More than 13,000 Indonesian went to Hong Kong last year and more than 14,600 in 2000 to seek for jobs.

Djaelani said he had yet to check the provincial origin of the workers who created trouble in Malaysia which caused the Malaysian government to plan such move.

He said his department had prepared Indonesian workers from east Java on proper conduct and etiquette when working in Malaysia to avoid any misbehaviour that could give Indonesia a bad name.

A group of about 500 Indonesian went on a rampage at a hostel of a textile factory in Nilai, Negeri Sembilan, last Thursday staged after police arrested 16 of their co-workers for drug abuse.

The rioters overturned vehicles before retreating to their hostel from where they hurled abuse at police as they threw chairs, tables, bottles and stones.

The incident, the latest in a series, prompted Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to issue a warning to place Indonesia last in the recruitment of foreign workers.

Malaysia is home to about 700,000 foreign workers, mostly Indonesians, who work in the various sectors like construction, plantation and as housemaids.

-- BERNAMA

OPP JK