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Mahathir-Employers

NO ACTION AGAINST EMPLOYERS, SAYS MAHATHIR

BANGI, Sept 10 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that the government has no intention of penalising employers who once employed illegal foreign workers as these illegals have returned to their respective home countries.

"We did not take action before when they (illegal foreign workers) were here, so we cannot take action now...the people (the workers) have already gone," he said.

The government now wants to concentrate on getting the construction industry moving and foreign workers who want to ply their trade here must come through proper legal means, he told reporters after opening the Malaysia-France Institute (MFI) here.

Asked if Malaysian employers were holding the government to ransom by forcing it to reverse the decision on the intake of foreign labour, he said: "Not to reverse...if they (employers) want to have (foreign labour), they must only employ legal ones, so they'll have to pay."

"(If we were to) penalise them (employers), we'll penalise ourselves...the construction industry is not moving," he added.

Malaysia set July 31 as the last day for illegal immigrants to leave the country or face caning and jail sentence for failure to do so.

The amnesty granted by the government was taken up by a large number of illegals working here.

-- BERNAMA

SR AHH RM