

MTUC shocked at DPM's silence on 12-hour shifts
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The Malaysian Trades Union Congress (MTUC) said no worker should be required to work for more than eight hours per day or 48 hours a week.

As such, MTUC was shocked that the Deputy Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin did not condemn the practice of having two 12-hour daily shifts, and insisted that employers have only eight hour shifts.

"This basic universally accepted workers' right is also to be found in section 60A of Employment Act 1955," Bernama reported MTUC president Syed Shahir Syed Mohamad (left) as saying.

Syed Shahir was commenting on a report in the Star newspaper recently that the government may consider allowing more foreign workers for restaurants following complaints coming from Indian Muslim restaurants who wanted to bring in more migrant workers from India.

It was mentioned that this was because "...the locals cannot cope with the 12-hour shift and, because of that, operators say they don't have enough workers to ensure their business runs smoothly."

Syed Shahir said the reasons why local workers might not be interested in working was most likely the low wages and poor working conditions.

"The government should ensure that this is corrected, and that there are decent wages and good working conditions, and not just avoid the main issue by allowing these errant employers permission to employ migrant workers.

"Let us not also forget that employers must treat both local and foreign workers equally. Migrant workers are also human beings entitled to a decent living wage and better working conditions," he said.

He said every worker, who works eight hour a day or 48 hours a week, was entitled to a decent living wage sufficient for that worker and their families.

"A worker should never have to work 12-hour daily shifts, do overtime, work on rest days and public holidays just to survive in Malaysia," he said.

Syed Shahir said some restaurants did not seemed to have problems attracting local workers as they provide better wages and working conditions and not because there was shortage of workers.

"MTUC reiterates that the Malaysian government's first concern should be the welfare and wellbeing of ordinary people, including workers and their families and not just those of businesses, companies and employers," he said.

MTUC also reiterated the need for the government to immediately implement a minimum wage policy and law to end payment of absurdly low wages by some employers.

Since Malaysia was at the threshold of achieving developed nation status, the quality of life should also improve for its people and workers and should be translated into better wages and work conditions.

"Workers should have adequate time to spend with their family, for leisure and rest, and there really should be no longer more than eight hour shifts in modern Malaysia," said Syed Shahir.

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