

Zahid: New system to register foreign workers next month

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The single window system to register foreign workers online next month will be able to tackle the issue of human trafficking and victimisation of foreign workers.

Deputy Prime Minister Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, who is also home minister, said the system would apply to all manpower-supplying nations, except Indonesia which would follow suit after a meeting in Putrajaya next month.

"It will also be implemented for Indonesian workers following the signing of an official agreement after next month's meeting," he told a media conference after a meeting with Indonesian Manpower and Transmigration Minister Muhammad Hanif Dhakiri in Jakarta today.

He said the single window system was to ensure only one channel for the approval of foreign workers, namely, applications via online.

"This is to prevent misappropriation, or excessive payment or recruiting of workers without employers... so that there is a coordination of workers, no longer without employers resulting in them becoming illegal foreign workers.

"They become illegal workers for overstaying. They entered legally but their stay exceeded the social visit passes, forcing the authorities such as Malaysia's Immigration Department and the police to take action," he said.

To overcome the problem, Ahmad Zahid said foreign workers, specifically those from Indonesia who wanted to enter Malaysia, must already have an employer.

"The employers, on their part, must be confirmed in accordance to the number of workers they are qualified to recruit," he added

Won't burden anyone

He said any new implementation in the recruitment of foreign workers was not to add to their burden but to ensure both parties, namely the employers and workers - other than the government - were satisfied and their implementation met international standards.

Ahmad Zahid, who is also home minister said on the issue of placement and housing for foreign workers, Malaysia had seen the approaches used in several countries in the Middle East.

On Aug 18, the deputy prime minister said employers should submit their applications for the recruitment of foreign workers online, and that agents would no longer be involved.

He had said the online system which would be introduced soon, would shorten time to bring in foreign workers.

During the media conference today, Ahmad Zahid said he discussed problems which had stalemated both nations on the sending of workers from Indonesia, during the meeting with Muhammad Hanif.

"Coincidentally, I took over as chairman of the Cabinet Committee on Foreign Workers. What was fettering Malaysia and Indonesia all this while, we were able to discuss. All the proposals from the Indonesian works minister will be detailed for me to take home to be discussed by a high level committee," he said.

At the Malaysia-Indonesia negotiation next month, he said he would state the developments of several requests and decisions adopted by all ministries involving approvals for foreign workers.

"This is for coordination so a bottleneck will no longer occur at the one-stop approval centre stage. This is to meet demand and offer manpower involving the two countries.

"I hope the joint agreement will put Indonesia and Malaysia in good positions as supplier and recipient of labour so that the two countries no longer face constraints, in addition to employers giving fair treatment to Indonesian workers," he said.

Also present at the media conference were Muhammad Hanif, Malaysian Ambassador to Indonesia, Zahrain Mohamed Hashim and Indonesian Ambassador to Malaysia, Herman Pratyitno.

Today is the second day of Ahmad Zahid's four-day working visit to Indonesia.

The visit to Indonesia is his first abroad since he was appointed deputy prime minister on July 28.

- Bernama