

Jakarta to tighten entry requirements for workers to M'sia

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The Indonesian government is planning to tighten entry requirements for its people to work in Malaysia to avoid dumping of Indonesian workers in that country.

Indonesian vice-president Jusuf Kalla said among the regulations proposed by the government of the republic were for workers working abroad to be trained and possess skills in certain fields.

He said by becoming skilled workers, Indonesia workers were entitled to receive minimum wages set by the Malaysian government as well as insurance coverage.

“We need to have rules, (workers) need to have skills and they should be given minimum wages and insurance coverage,” he said in a special interview with Bernama at his office in Jakarta recently.

He said it was time for the Malaysian government to consider the enforcement of the minimum wages for domestic workers to safeguard their rights.

Jusuf said, previously many Indonesians had gone to Saudi Arabia and Malaysia to get jobs as maids because the salary was five times higher than in Indonesia, but nowadays the current salary for maids in Indonesia has risen up to Rp2 million (about RM630).

He said the demand for a new minimum wage for maids was made based on the amount of the salary itself in which it should be two or three times higher than in Indonesia and there was no point for the people to work abroad if they were paid lower than in their own country.

“Previously, they demanded for Rp500,000, now they ask for RM1,000 because they receive lower salary compared with the amount offered in Indonesia, even now it is difficult to find maids in this country,” he said.

He said efforts were being carried out by the Indonesian government to address the issue of entry of illegal workers from the republic to Malaysia.

The vice-president also said the entry of illegal workers, with some of them putting their lives at risk, was something that was not wished for but the Indonesian people were willing to enter Malaysia illegally due to high offers.

“The illegal workers issue arises when there are supply and demand between both (employer and employee) and both are guilty... they should both be punished,” he said.

'Protect the country's good name'

Jusuf also reminded the people of Indonesia who were working in Malaysia to protect country's good name and work for their advancement.

He said that having the opportunities to work in a foreign country was something to be proud of and the people of Indonesia should use it to build good relations either in terms of economic, cultural or political.

"I would like to congratulate our people (Indonesians), who are in Malaysia and let us work together for the betterment of our nation... because we have a long history of brotherhood," he said.

Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak, when tabling the 2016 Budget on Friday, announced that effective July 1 next year, the national minimum wage would be increased from RM900 to RM1,000 per month for peninsular Malaysia and from RM800 to RM920 for Sabah, Sarawak and Labuan.

However, the minimum wage does not apply to domestic workers and maids.

- *Bernama*