

Muhyiddin Denies Bangladesh Workers Given Fastrack Citizenship
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KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 18 (Bernama) -- Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin denied claims that Bangladesh workers in the country were being easily given citizenship so that they could become voters.

He said the Barisan Nasional (BN) government did not need to do this to ensure victory in the next general election.

"We can ask the Bangladeshi authorities if indeed such claims were made but we do not give fastrack citizenship to Bangladesh workers. Any foreigner who wants Malaysian citizenship must fulfill various conditions, among them how long the person has lived in the country.

"We do not give special treatment to Bangladeshis. More so when it is linked to elections. It is as though we are so desperate to win that we are asking foreigners to become citizens and ask them to vote.

Furthermore, in the voting process, a voter drops his ballot in the box and no one knows who the person voted for," he told reporters after opening the Malaysian Makkal Sakti Party's annual convention at the Putra World Trade Centre here.

He was responding to reports that the NGO Affairs website of the Bangladesh Prime Minister's Office had carried an article quoting sources who claimed that Bangladesh workers in Malaysia were being given fastrack citizenship on the condition that they must vote for the ruling coalition in the next election.

He added that he would be asking the Malaysian High Commission in Dhaka to follow up on the matter.

On another matter, Muhyiddin advised Malaysians planning to travel to conflict zones to first check with the authorities of the countries concerned whether it would be safe to do so.

This was to avoid a recurrence of tragedies like what happened in Sungai Golok in southern Thailand on Friday where four Malaysians, including a three-year-old boy, were killed while 60 others were injured after three time bombs went off within minutes of each other in the border town.

"I extend my condolences to the bereaved families. I hope our embassy in Bangkok will do the needful to assist the families of the victims," he said.

The injured included 16 Malaysians.

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