

Maid fee to be reviewed

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By MERGAWATI ZULFAKAR, JOSEPH SIPALAN and LEE YEN MUN

PUTRAJAYA: Malaysia and Indonesia have agreed to review the cost structure for bringing in maids from the republic.

[Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak](#) said there were complications with the current agency fee set at RM4,511.

"We have agreed that the agency fee should be set at a more reasonable rate to allow the Lombok Agreement to be implemented in full," he told the media after his annual consultation with Indonesian [President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono](#) here yesterday.

Under the agreement which was signed in October last year prospective employers need to pay a RM4,511 agency fee, which includes RM2,711 to be paid to the agency and a RM1,800 advance payment which employers can recover in instalments from the maid's salary over six months.

The maids were supposed to start arriving early this year but the number was dismal as the maid agencies claimed that the fee was too low to cover their cost and they could hardly make any profit.

Susilo agreed with Najib that there had been issues in the implementation of the Lombok Agreement, particularly regarding the agency fees, and emphasised the need to find an effective solution.

"We already have the Lombok Agreement, which covers the protection, use and empowerment of Indonesian workers in Malaysia, but there are still issues that have emerged from this framework ... we will find an amicable solution," he said.

Human [Resources Minister Datuk Seri Dr S. Subramaniam](#), when met later, explained that the new rates proposed by maid agencies during the Joint Task Force meeting in Jakarta last weekend were too high, though he did not elaborate on the quantum proposed.

"This was also discussed in a meeting today (yesterday), and the Indonesian government has agreed to allow for it to be renegotiated. We will try to come to a mutually acceptable rate," he said.

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