

Zahid says brother's firm not given job to bring in 1.5 million Bangladeshis
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By Eileen Ng

A company linked to the brother of Home Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Zahid Hamidi has not been chosen to bring in 1.5 million foreign workers from Bangladesh, even as talks on the matter remain ongoing.

Zahid told Charles Santiago (DAP-Klang) in a parliamentary written reply that the proposal to recruit the workers was still in the discussion stage with the Bangladeshi government.

The talks were over a detailed new mechanism in order to strengthen the current mechanism.

"In light of this, the government did not appoint Real Time Networking Sdn Bhd to bring in the 1.5 million Bangladesh workers as stated," he said.

Charles had wanted to know the status of Real Time Networking and if cost-benefit and impact analyses on Malaysian workers had been conducted.

Real Time Networking is owned by Datuk Abdul Hakim Hamidi, who is Zahid's brother.

It was previously reported that the firm was in negotiations with the governments of Malaysia and Bangladesh to provide an online system to handle registration and monitoring of 1.5 million Bangladeshi workers, which Putrajaya recently announced would be recruited over the next three years.

Civil society organisations had warned that the bid by Real Time Networking smacked of conflict of interest, nepotism and collusion as it gave Zahid, who is also the deputy prime minister, oversight of approvals for incoming migrant workers.

Zahid said the new online mechanism was expected to prevent middlemen from handling the entry of Bangladesi workers.

"As such, the proposal involving bringing in 1.5 million workers from Bangladesh is only to fill up positions that locals shun.

"However, the government is also very careful in this matter so that job opportunities for locals are not affected and protected. This not only applies to Bangladesh, but to all source countries as well," he said.

He said the actual number of Bangladeshi workers needed would depend on employers' needs and would be reviewed based on the employers' qualifications and abilities.

Among other, employers must show that they have adhered to regulations set such as giving priority to locals first.

Zahid added that the entry of foreign workers to Malaysia would not affect job opportunities for locals or the labour market as migrant labour was confined to five sectors: construction, manufacturing, agriculture, farming and services. – November 2, 2015.

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