

**Foreign Workers to be compelled to Undergo Periodical Health Examination – Ahmad Zahid
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KUALA LUMPUR, May 12 (Bernama) -- The Cabinet Committee on Foreign Workers and Illegal Immigrants in its meeting today agreed to compel foreign workers to undergo periodical health examination.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, who chaired the meeting, said it was to ensure that all foreign workers were free of both contagious and non-contagious diseases, as well as drug abuse, so as to ensure safety of Malaysians in terms of health.

"Health examinations on foreign workers will be implemented periodically throughout their employment to reduce the risks and the spread of contagious diseases to the Malaysian public," he said in a statement here Thursday.

He said the implementation of the periodical health examination, however, would be finalised after discussions and consultations with employers.

Ahmad Zahid said the committee also agreed that employers be compelled to provide proper accommodation to their foreign workers based on the stipulated minimum standard of accommodation, failing which would cause their applications to renew the temporary working visit passes for their foreign workers would not be considered by the Immigration Department.

"The committee also agreed to a proposal that interested private companies be given the opportunity to provide centralised accommodation service for the foreign workers as an option for the employers.

"However, the government will not fix the service charge to be imposed on the employers by the companies providing the centralised accommodation service," he said.

Meanwhile, Ahmad Zahid said a total of 1.99 million legal foreign workers were registered in the country as at March 31.

"This is a huge number, but the government still receives complaints from critical sectors claiming to have a shortage of workers, especially after the freeze on hiring of foreign workers was implemented," he said.

Therefore, he said only employers of these critical sectors, which had strived to hire local workers but still had many vacancies to fill, would be considered to recruit foreign workers or illegal immigrants without employers who had registered for the Illegal Immigrants Replacement and Rehiring Programme, he said.

Nevertheless, the deputy prime minister said priority in employment opportunity should be given to local workers and efforts to rehire retrenched workers should be intensified.

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