

Government Open To Suggestion from Businesses on Foreign Workers

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PETALING JAYA, April 28 (Bernama) -- Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi said the government will announce the decision on the recruitment of foreign workers in due course.

He said, for the time being the government was open to suggestions and proposals from businesses on the matter while employers had also requested for the freeze to be lifted.

"The government understands the need of certain sectors who are in need of foreign workers. However, an important decision on this will be announced in due course," he said at the Malaysia Retail Chain Association (MRCA) Council Installation Night 2016, here tonight.

The event was also attended by Chief Executive Officer of the Performance Management and Delivery Unit (Pemandu) Datuk Seri Idris Jala and MRCA President Datuk Garry Chua Kah Seng.

Last February, the government decided to suspend the recruitment of all foreign workers for Malaysia, including those from Bangladesh while the government reviewed the two-tier levy programme for foreign workers.

Ahmad Zahid, who is also the Home Minister, said the retail business was a key part of the modern Malaysian economy as the sector was the fourth biggest contributor to Malaysia's economy, behind oil and gas, agriculture and manufacturing.

"However, as far as contribution to the people's economy is concerned, the retail sector is an integral part of our economic future," he added.

Ahmad Zahid said the government acknowledged the retail business in Malaysia by introducing several initiatives that directly and indirectly benefited the retail sector in the country.

He said among the measures were providing an additional RM1 billion for the Syariah-compliant Small Medium Enterprises (SME) Financing Scheme until Dec 31 2017 with the government subsidising two percent of the financing profit rate.

"The government also allocated RM107 million for the SME Blueprint to provide funds for entities at various stages of business development and RM60 million for the Entrepreneurs Acceleration Scheme.

"The government also introduced SME Capacity and Capability Enhancement Scheme and established a RM200 million SME Technology Transformation Fund under the SME Bank to provide soft loans at four percent interest rate," he said

Meanwhile, Ahmad Zahid said that retailers also played an important role to ensure that more tourists were attracted to Malaysia as the government was targeting some 30.5 million visitors this year, who were expected to contribute RM103 billion to the economy.

"To facilitate tourists visiting Malaysia, the government will by mid-2016 implement e-visa. As an incentive to tour operators, the 100 percent income tax exemption on statutory income is expected from the year of assessment 2016 until 2018.

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