

**Workers' permits: Online applications only, thanks**  
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**Deputy prime minister says move by Immigration Department will address problem of agents overcharging employers or cheating foreign workers.**

PETALING JAYA: The Immigration Department will only process online applications for foreign workers' permits, in a bold move to eliminate the role of agents and middlemen. The move came into effect on April 1.

In a report by The Star, Deputy Prime Minister Ahmad Zahid Hamidi said this would address the problem of agents overcharging employers or cheating foreign workers.

Speaking after the home ministry's monthly gathering in Putrajaya, Zahid said many foreign workers who were cheated by agents found themselves stranded here after paying huge amounts of money to enter the country.

"It is wrong to take advantage of those who are already in a spot, having to leave their families behind to earn a living in a foreign land.

"With this policy in place, we hope there will be no more of such cases," he was quoted as saying.

According to the report, Zahid said the new regulation would also shorten the waiting time for approvals and make the recording of data easier.

The online registration system, which replaces walk-in submissions, is for those looking to hire foreign workers in all sectors except domestic helpers, the report added.

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