

# Govt mulls temporary work permits for undocumented migrants - Muhyiddin

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MUAR, Oct 30 -- The government is considering to issue temporary work permits to illegal foreign workers in the country to overcome the shortage of foreign workers in the oil palm and rubber industries, said Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin.

The prime minister said the government was seeking ways to solve the problem of shortage of foreign workers in these two sectors, especially after Malaysia closed its borders to curb the spread of COVID-19.

The proposal is to give one- or two-year work permits, he said at a meet-the-people session with the Chinese community and Chinese non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in Pagoh here today.

“Give them a temporary licence or work permit, like what we call an amnesty or legalisation programme. This is what we are mulling over,” he added.

Muhyiddin, who is Pagoh Member of Parliament, was replying to a question from the chairman of Bukit Pasir Tiong Hua Association, Er Yu Peng, on the government’s efforts to help residents involved in the oil palm sector in Pagoh as they are now facing a shortage of workers due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Muhyiddin said this proposal would be explained further by Home Minister Datuk Seri Hamzah Zainuddin, and Human Resources Minister Datuk Seri M. Saravanan later to avoid misunderstanding.

The prime minister said he did not want to give the wrong impression to syndicates that they could bring in illegal workers in future because Malaysians were “nice people”.

“You (illegal foreign workers) stay there one year and can get a work permit. This (perception) is wrong,” he added.

Muhyiddin said he was aware that the shortage of workers in the oil palm and rubber sectors affected many parties because this issue was frequently raised at his meetings with the local people, including community associations.

“That’s why we will study the situation. If possible, we will try to implement it,” he said.

Earlier at the event, Muhyiddin presented a RM5,000 contribution each to four NGOs in the Pagoh parliamentary constituency.

The NGOs are Rumah Berhala Poh Hoon Kong Tanjung Selabu, Pertubuhan Penganut Dewa Seong Tay Kong, Persatuan Penganut Dewa Hua Kuang and Kong Hock Tong Cemetery Management Committee.

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