

# **‘Govt not to be faulted for acceding to industry’s foreign labour request’**

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KUALA LUMPUR: The government should not be faulted for planning to bring in more foreign workers into Malaysia as it was only acceding to the industry’s request, said an academician.

University Malaysia Sarawak, Social Science Faculty senior lecturer, Assoc Prof Dr Jeniri Amir said the industry on the other hand, should not be thinking only about profits by employing cheap foreign labour over local workers.

“Employing foreign workers is not the best solution to resolve their manpower requirement in the long run.

“If we keep taking in foreign workers, the country will eventually be flooded with them, leaving the issue of unemployment among the locals unresolved,” he said.

The government had earlier planned to bring in a large group of foreign workers from Bangladesh to meet demand in the relevant sectors, but the measure was heavily criticised by various parties.

In response to the protests, the government through Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi on Friday announced that the recruitment of all foreign workers including Bangladeshis, to Malaysia would be suspended.

Commenting on the government’s decision, Selangor Youth Council president Datuk Irmohizam Ibrahim described the move as proactive.

“With this announcement, our youths should grab the opportunity to take up available jobs in the manufacturing, construction, service, plantation and agricultural sectors.

“They should not be too selective in finding employment,” he said, adding that employers too should give priority to local job seekers.

He suggested that employers in the relevant sectors monopolised by foreign workers, consider revising the salary for employees and add certain incentives to attract local workers.

Meanwhile, UiTM Administrative Science and Policy Studies Faculty lecturer Prof Dr Zaliha Hussin said employers of foreign workers must keep tabs on them to prevent their involvement in negative activities.

“It is also imperative for these employers to ensure the well-being of their workers, such as that the latter have proper accommodation with facilities and basic necessities.

“This could prevent the workers from resorting to illegal squatting, and to enable easy monitoring,” she said when contacted by Bernama.

She also said the employers must play a role in identifying the number of workers they really need so that they would not take in more than necessary. — Bernama