



(File pix) Datuk Shamsuddin Bardan. Pix by Khairul Azhar Ahmad

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By Masriwanie Muhamading (/authors/masriwanie-muhamading) - June 8, 2018 @ 8:57am

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KUALA LUMPUR: THE Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF) has backed the government's decision to halt the rehiring programme for undocumented workers.

MEF executive director Datuk Shamsuddin Bardan said the government should repatriate illegal workers immediately as it cost up to RM75 per person daily to house them in detention centres.

He called on the government to ensure that the process of employing foreign workers be made clearer, less costly and based on the need of employers.

"If the process of hiring legal foreign workers is difficult and expensive, some employers may resort to hiring illegals that are available in large numbers.

"It is estimated that for every legal foreign worker in Malaysia, there are 2.3 illegal ones.

"Not all illegal foreign workers are employed. Many of them run their own business in shopping complexes and business premises, at the expense of locals who trade at stalls and by the roadsides," he added.

Shamsuddin said some sectors would be affected, especially the construction sector and smaller agriculture operators, which employed large numbers of illegal workers.

"There will be project delays due to manpower shortage. Developers may have to incur late delivery charges. Consumers may then have to pay more."

Shamsuddin said there was an urgent need for the government to rebrand the 3D (dirty, dangerous and difficult) jobs, while offering training, extra incentives and bonuses to attract locals.

"As an example, not many locals want to be a cleaner or sweeper. We can rebrand such a job as environmental assistant, for example.

"Such rebranding will make the job more socially acceptable.

However, rebranding alone will not resolve the issue of attracting locals to take up such jobs.

"Employees need to be trained and upskilled to perform jobs which may involve operating more sophisticated machines."

Shamsuddin added that such skills need to be certified under the Sijil Kemahiran Malaysia which would allow them to earn more.

He also said that local employees should not be paid minimum wages just like foreign workers.

"Certified local workers should be paid additional incentives and bonuses based on their productivity and performance.

"The government should provide tax exemption on incentives and bonuses paid to employees."