

Foreign worker levy hikes in 2019

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KUALA LUMPUR: Progressive levy hikes based on the number of foreign workers hired will be implemented from 2019, said Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Zahid Hamidi.

He said this will allow more employment of locals and systematically reduce the hiring of foreign workers.

"To encourage the hiring of local workers and control the number of foreign workers, the proposal to increase levy rates progressively has been considered and agreed," he said in a statement after chairing the Cabinet committee meeting on foreign workers and illegal immigrants in Parliament yesterday.

Ahmad Zahid said the decision, which was made after consulting stakeholders, would also encourage a working environment that is more conducive and competitive.

"The new levy model and rates proposal was presented by the Human Resources Ministry," he said, adding that it was one of the eight meeting papers presented yesterday.

"According to statistics as of July 31, there were 1.75 million legal foreign workers compared to 2.13 million in 2015."

He said the government has also agreed to increase the frequency of health screening for foreign workers.

"This is to prevent the increase of infectious diseases cases in the country.

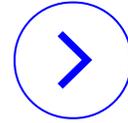
"Beginning January, it will be compulsory for all foreign workers to do the existing health screening and additional screenings."

Currently, all foreign workers are required to do a health screening prior to leaving their country of origin, a second within a month of arriving in Malaysia, a third at the end of the first year in Malaysia and one more at the end of the second year of residing in Malaysia.

"The additional screenings must be done once every two months in the fourth, sixth, eighth and tenth year, which is in line with the maximum 10 years of employment," he said.

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