

## 'No levy on foreign workers' by [neville spykerman](#)

PETALING JAYA: Struggling employers want the Government to reverse the decision forcing bosses to pay the annual levy for foreign workers.

SME Association of Malaysia president Datuk Michael Kang said the representatives of various industries would seek a meeting with the Government over its latest policy.

"We want the Government to cancel or reverse the policy," said Kang, adding that various associations would also send a memorandum to the Home Ministry.

He said the Government should have discussed the move with employers before enforcing it.

The Government, he said, was "punishing employers" with the policy, and added that this would affect the economy.

Under the Employer Mandatory Commitment (EMC), which came into effect on Sunday, employers cannot deduct the yearly fee from the wages of their foreign workers.

Federation of Malaysian Manufacturers (FMM) president Tan Sri Dr Lim Wee Chai said they would be writing to the Home Ministry for clarification.

"We will also request a dialogue," he said.

Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF) executive director Datuk Shamsuddin Bardan said that forcing bosses to pay foreign worker levies would cost them an additional RM5bil every year.

He said this was in addition to the RM3bil employers would have to pay annually with the increase in the minimum wage last July.

He said that every extra sen earned by foreign workers would be remitted to their home countries.

"Officially, between RM38bil and RM40bil is remitted out of the country by foreign workers," he added.

He also described the EMC – which made employers fully accountable for their foreign workers until they returned to their countries – as "utterly unfair".

Shamsuddin said employers could not be held responsible for workers who ran away, adding that the issue was the responsibility of the Government, with the authority and resources to handle it.

However, Malaysian Trades Union Congress secretary-general N. Gopal Kishnam said they were pleased with the EMC.

"We had been pushing for employers to pay the foreign workers' levy," he said.

He said that by making it more costly to hire foreign workers, employers would be forced to employ Malaysians.

Gopal rejected claims that locals were unwilling to work in 3D (dirty, dangerous and demeaning) jobs.

"Locals will do 3D jobs if you pay them enough and if they knew their jobs were secure," he added.

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