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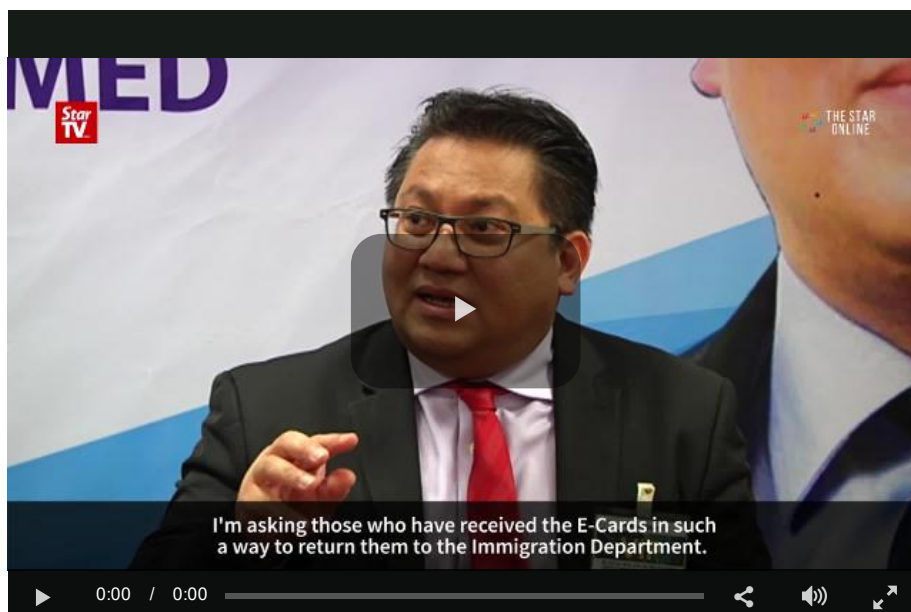


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Illegals urged to return E-Cards amid probe

BY AUSTIN CAMOENS



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PETALING JAYA: The Home Ministry is investigating how illegal immigrants ended up having Enforcement Cards (E-Cards) without registering with the rehiring programme.

Return them at once, it urged those who were wrongly issued the cards.

Deputy Minister Datuk Nur Jazlan Mohamed said a number of Immigration Department branches were found to have wrongly issued the cards.

"Our investigations will get to the bottom of it," he told reporters after visiting the Western Digital factory here yesterday.

The ministry has been clear on how the cards should be issued – in tandem with the rehiring programme – but confusion had arisen, he said.

"Those who were wrongly issued the cards must surrender them immediately.

"The cards are considered invalid if they are not registered with the rehiring programme, and they may face action," Nur Jazlan warned.

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to-door checks to ensure that companies were not hiring illegal workers.

The rehiring programme was introduced by the department in February this year. Under the programme, employers can apply to hire illegal immigrants legally.

The programme is only open to illegal immigrants in Peninsular Malaysia and only for those with employers listed in the five selected economic sectors.

Meanwhile, Nur Jazlan announced that employers wishing to apply for foreign workers could now submit their requests online via two dedicated systems.

He said the Foreign Worker Application System (SPPA) was to hire foreign workers from Bangladesh, while the Integrated Foreign Worker Management System (EPPAX) was to get those from other countries.

The requests would be thoroughly vetted by the ministry.

"We will determine if the application is valid and will call the employer for an interview before we make a decision," he added.

The websites can be accessed at www.eppax.gov.my and www.sppa.com.my.

On a separate issue, Nur Jazlan said the 58 missing Malaysian Immigration System (myIMMS) biometric screening equipment - worth RM140,000 in total and not RM10.3mil according to an audit - could be obsolete units.

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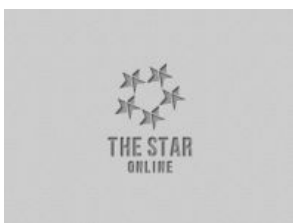
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