

More health checks for foreign workers from 2018

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Ahmad Zahid says as of July 31 this year, the number of legitimate foreign workers had dropped to 1.758 million from 2.135 million at the end of 2015.

KUALA LUMPUR: Immigrant workers are to be subjected to additional health screening, every two years, from Jan 1 next year to check the rise in communicable diseases in the country, and their levy is to be raised progressively from 2019 to encourage the recruitment of more local workers.

This was the outcome of a meeting today of the Cabinet Committee on Foreign Workers and Illegal Immigrants chaired by Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi here.

He said in a statement that the additional health screening had to be conducted every two years, on the fourth, sixth, eighth and 10th year of the workers' stay in the country under the maximum 10-year period of employment.

Currently, the workers are subjected to a health examination before coming to the country, within a month after being in Malaysia and at the end of the first and second years, he said.

"The government decided to increase the frequency of the health examination to check the rise in communicable diseases in the country," he said.

Ahmad Zahid said the government also agreed to raise the levy on foreign workers progressively from 2019 and to create a more

conducive and competitive environment to encourage the recruitment of more local workers.

“The meeting acknowledged that employers preferred to recruit foreign workers because of the lower cost of employing them.

“As such, the levy will be raised progressively based on the number of foreign workers employed and this will be implemented in 2019 after briefing the industry and stakeholders,” he said.

Ahmad Zahid said that as of July 31 this year, the number of legitimate foreign workers had dropped to 1.758 million from 2.135 million at the end of 2015.

He also said that the government had made the recruitment of foreign workers easier with an online system introduced on April 1 this year.

“With these initiatives of the government, I hope there will be no more problems associated with the recruitment of foreign workers and the involvement of middlemen in the process can be eliminated in a holistic manner,” he said.

-- BERNAMA