

Multiple challenges in curbing entry of illegals into Sabah

PUTRAJAYA

SABAH'S terrain and vast territorial waters are among the main challenges facing the State Immigration Department in curbing the entry of illegal immigrants into the country, said Immigration director-general Datuk Khairul Dzaimie Daud.

Apart from that, he said, the location of the migrants' settlements in water and difficult to reach places made it hard for the immigration enforcement personnel to arrest those who took refuge there.

"Another challenge facing Sabah immigration is to get the cooperation of the public to prevent the entry of illegal immigrants, as well as the public's lack of awareness that it is an offence to harbour or protect illegal immigrants.

"Most employers also prefer to employ illegal immigrants because of low wages, compared with local workers, especially in the plantation, agriculture, construction and services sectors," he said.

Khairul Dzaimie said since the Covid-19

pandemic, operations carried out by the department were required to comply with standard operating procedures to prevent enforcement officers, as well as the immigrants, from being infected.

"The illegal immigrants who are detained are required to be sent to a transit quarantine centre before they are placed at the Temporary Detention Centre," he said, adding that the department, as well as other enforcement agencies, sought public cooperation to report the entry of illegal immigrants into the country, and not protect them.

He said the responsibility of preventing the entry of illegal immigrants into the country was not that of the security forces alone, but also the community to safeguard the country's security and sovereignty.

"We call on the public to assist the security forces and other enforcement authorities by providing information on any border intrusion to the National Task Force Hotline at 011-62511223," he said.

Bernama