

The Star - 12.06.2021 m.s 04



## Dept expects more illegals to leave if programmes extended

**PUTRAJAYA:** The Immigration Department expects more illegal immigrants to leave the country if the repatriation recalibration programme is extended until year-end, with close to 100,000 foreigners having been sent home already.

Its director-general Datuk Khairul Dzamee Daud said the extension of the programme was necessary as the department needed more time to process existing applications.

The Covid-19 pandemic and national lockdown had somewhat affected the smooth running of the programme, he said.

"With an extension, we expect more undocumented migrants to take up the offer to go back. We also hope that employers will take up the extra time given to register their foreign workers in order to give them proper documentation," he told *The Star*.

Khairul Dzamee said that to date, 97,892 illegal immigrants had signed up for the repatriation programme with compounds totalling RM47,412,400 collected.

Of these, 80,284 illegal immigrants had returned with the rest waiting for the time to leave Malaysia.

As for the labour recalibration programme, he said names and details of 110,817 illegal workers were already placed in the system, involving 5,151 employers.

Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF) president Datuk Dr Syed Hussain Syed Husman said that MEF would advise its members to take the opportunity to legalise their foreign workers should the programme be extended.

"In the process, they should also arrange for these workers to be included in the Covid-19 vaccination programme," he said.

Welcoming the proposal to extend the labour programme, Syed Hussain said this would allow more undocumented migrants to participate.

"This will prevent critical sectors such as construction, manufacturing, agriculture, plantation and services sectors from suffering huge losses due to labour shortages," he added.