

'Deal direct or else' warning

Hishammuddin threatens to blacklist those who use agents to speed up applications

PUTRAJAYA: People who pay "agents" to speed up their citizenship, work permit and other applications have been warned that they will be blacklisted and any approvals given revoked if they are caught.

Home Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Tun Hussein said he had received reports that such agents had been approaching companies and individuals with claims that they can get faster approvals for fees ranging from RM5,000 to RM10,000.

He said the highest number of cases involved applications for foreign workers while the others were applications for citizenship, permanent residence, entry permits and birth certificates.

"I have spent sleepless nights poring over a large number of files just to speed up the processing of applications, and I will not stand by and allow unscrupulous parties to take advantage and profit from it," he told a press conference here yesterday.

Hishammuddin said he had to personally look at each application before the decision whether to approve or not was made.

He added that he was distressed because the act by agents created the perception that all officers at the ministry were corrupt, applications could be bought and the process was not above board.

Both the agents and officers involved would face stern action if caught, he warned.

He advised the people to submit their applications personally and refrain from using the "services" of agents as they would only stand

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DATUK SERI HISHAMMUDDIN TUN HUSSEIN

to lose, since the ministry would no longer consider their applications once they were blacklisted.

On another matter, Hishammuddin said Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin would chair a committee meeting on Friday over the source countries for foreign workers, including whether to allow maids from countries other than Indonesia.

He said the meeting would also decide on whether to lift the temporary freeze on Bangladeshi workers.

"The committee will also look at the needs for foreign workers in each sector and the possibility of stopping certain sectors from employing them when there is adequate local labour," he said.

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