

The Star : Costly to hire Indian maids

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KUALA LUMPUR: If you cannot afford to pay a maid RM1,400 a month, don't even think about hiring one from India.

Employers looking to hire maids from India must also put up a whopping bank guarantee of about RM9,000, to be deposited with the Indian High Commission.

The maid's minimum wage is set at RM1,400 per month and she must be provided with a prepaid mobile phone as part of mandatory requirements issued by the Indian High Commission.

Flight costs and other miscellaneous expenses are also to be borne by the employer.

A copy of the conditions and contract of employment for maid is available at the Indian High Commission.

The High Commission's first secretary (consular) S.K. Mehrotra said the employment contract should be between the worker and the employer directly, and not through any agent.

The employers must go to India themselves to directly hire the maid. The High Commission does not want agents to get involved in recruiting maids because agents have brought in workers and short-changed them, he said.

If the employer is not happy with the maid, he can send her back. Training is not a requirement yet, as both countries (Malaysia and India) have not signed any bilateral agreement on the hiring of maids.

Last week, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said recruitment from the four countries India, Nepal, Laos and Vietnam would take place only after the memorandums of understanding were signed.

Currently, there are many Indian women working as maids in most Middle Eastern countries.

Asked why the recommended pay was high, Mehrotra said, The pay is set at RM1,400 because the maid will have to leave behind her family and go to serve in another country.

Indian maids get about the same serving in other countries in the Middle East, and the bank guarantee provides proper protection for the maid.

According to the contract of employment, if the employee fails to fulfil the expectation of the employer, her salary shall not be reduced or deducted in any way.

It states that the maid will be insured for a minimum of RM20,000 (at a premium of RM300) against sudden death during the course of her duties as a maid.

All complaints concerning the terms of the contract should be made to the Labour Department here. The contract has to be signed by the employer at the Indian High Commission and the maid in India before the protector of emigrants, it added.

In Ipoh, Indian High Commissioner to Malaysia Ashok K. Kantha said Malaysia and India would soon sign a memorandum of understanding to address the problem of Indian nationals being cheated when seeking employment here.