

# KERATAN AKHBAR

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## 'Improve wages, living conditions to attract locals'

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**KUALA LUMPUR:** The government should increase wages and improve working conditions in traditional sectors so local workers will be willing to work.

Penang DAP deputy chairman Dr P. Ramasamy said the government should put in the effort to address local workers' disinterest in traditional sectors, which was contributing to the labour shortage in the country.

"No effort has been taken by the government to determine why local workers are not interested in working in the sectors," he said in his Facebook posting.

"They need to improve wages and the non-conducive living

condition of workers. Since local workers are reluctant to work in these sectors, there is a big need for foreign workers."

Ramasamy added that the government recently planned to allow the entry of 500,000 foreign workers into Malaysia to overcome the shortage of local labour.

"Their entry might be able to address some of the labour shortage problems in sectors such as plantations, agriculture



Dr P. Ramasamy



A working sorting oil palm fruits at an estate in Muar, Johor, recently. More foreign workers will be brought in to work in the plantation sector. BERNAMA PIC

and construction. Exploitation is rife in these sectors, which mostly employ foreign workers."

Previously, National Recovery Council member Datuk Michael

Kang said last October that the country needed 500,000 foreign workers due to labour shortage in micro-, small- and medium-scale enterprises to support recovery after the Covid-19 pandemic.

Following that, Human Re-

sources Minister V. Sivakumar announced plans to bring in 500,000 foreign workers from 15 countries to work in sectors deemed unattractive to locals, such as plantations, agriculture and construction.