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## Sim: Gig law will protect workers without hitting businesses

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**KUALA LUMPUR:** The Gig Workers Act, which seeks to protect these workers on matters such as contracts and earnings, will not drive up costs for businesses or fuel inflation, says Human Resources Minister Steven Sim.

"Over 10 years of data shows no clear link between minimum wage increases and inflation. In fact, better pay leads to higher productivity," he said.

He explained that the move is not meant to burden businesses, but to promote fairness in a rapidly changing labour market.

Sim spoke of how small and

medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are bound by the Employment Act, but not gig work platforms.

"This Act balances that equation," he noted.

The law, which was passed by Dewan Rakyat in August, seeks to ensure the welfare of an estimated 1.2 million gig workers in Malaysia.

Yesterday, Sim gave a talk in which he shared his insights on human resource and workforce-related topics.

He explained that gig workers deserve fair treatment, noting that many of them work up to 12 hours a day.

"Gig workers are human beings. They deserve protection like anyone else.

"We must move beyond a low-

cost labour model and build a high-value, skilled economy," he said.

The new law, he added, is part of the government's wider effort to modernise Malaysia's workforce and its ultimate goal is to create a fair, sustainable and future-ready labour framework.

"The gig economy is not going away – it's the future of work. Our responsibility is to make sure that the future is fair and secure for all Malaysians," Sim said.

The growing gig workforce had long operated without formal rights or recourse.

Sim said the legislation aims to "equalise the playing field" between traditional SMEs and online platforms that enjoy flexibility without labour obligations.

"There are companies with hundreds of thousands of gig workers working for them every day, but they are not recognised as employees.

"This Act ensures they receive basic protections and rights like any other worker," he said.

Sim also said the new law would define who gig workers are, set clear employment standards and ensure they receive social security coverage and access to a proper grievance mechanism.

"For the first time, gig workers will have a proper process to lodge complaints, go for conciliation, or bring cases before a tribunal," he said.

Meanwhile, effective this month, employers are required to

contribute 2% of their foreign workers' monthly wages to the Employees Provident Fund, while workers themselves will contribute 3% with the first payment deadline on Nov 15.

It applies to all non-Malaysian citizens holding valid work passes or permits, excluding domestic helpers.

Sim said the new measure would help formalise Malaysia's foreign labour market and align the country's labour standards with international norms.

"They come here to earn a living away from their families. It is only right that we do the right thing for them.

"Having both groups under the same system promotes fairness and accountability," he added.

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MALAYSIA has become the first Asean nation to join the World Economic Forum (WEF)'s Global Gender Parity Accelerator Network, underscoring its dedication to advancing women's economic participation.

The network is a public-private collaboration platform operating across more than 35 countries and regions. It serves as a bridge between governments and businesses to collectively tackle some of today's most significant economic and social issues.

Malaysia now joins countries such as Japan, Chile, Colombia, Egypt and Mexico that have leveraged this platform to advance wide-ranging policy reforms.

These include introducing gender pay gap reporting systems, extending parental and paternity leave, and creating return-to-work initiatives for women, all of which demonstrate how inclusive and sustainable growth can be achieved through shared commitment.

WEF has commended the Malaysia government for its continuous efforts in skills development and in promoting gender equality and inclusion.

WEF Asia Pacific Community lead and country manager (Malaysia) Shaun Adam said: "The World Economic Forum stands ready to support the Government of Malaysia and all its partners by connecting this effort to our regional and global networks and by sharing best practices and co-designing pathways that make gender parity a competitive advantage for Malaysia's economy."

He acknowledged Human Resources Minister Steven Sim Chee Keong's leadership in the International Labour Organization visit on Oct 22 for the Global Skills Forum (GSF), and his role at the job constituents meetings.

"He has constantly championed upskilling and lifelong learning, regardless of gender as a national priority through the My Mahir ecosystem, while balancing progress with the Gig Workers Law that was recently launched this year," praised Adam.

WEF, he noted, has a good partnership with TalentCorp, which had recently attended WEF's annual meeting in Dubai and shared some of the best practices with the international community.

"Equality is not inevitable, it happens because people choose to make it happen," he said.

Building on the country's entry to the Global Gender Parity Accelerator Network, Human Resources Ministry (Kesuma) has launched the Wanita MyWira Accelerator, a national initiative designed to equip at least 100,000 women with high-growth, future-ready skills and opportunities beyond 2030.

Spearheaded by Kesuma through its strategic think-tank agency, Talent Corporation Malaysia Bhd (TalentCorp), in partnership with the World Economic Forum (WEF), the programme will train 1,000 women under TalentCorp's MyMahir-certified pathways, targeting an 80% job placement rate within six months of completion.

Supported by a RM15mll co-in-

## MALAYSIA JOINS WEF TO CHAMPION GENDER EQUALITY AND TALENT DEVELOPMENT



(Centre, from left) Sim, Tunku Ali Redhaudin and Nancy alongside programme co-chairs during the launch of the Wanita MyWira Accelerator programme.



Sim: Think about gender barriers as a powerful spring – coiled very tightly, built into our homes, our culture and even our own personal psyche.



(From left) Kesuma deputy secretary-general (policy and international) Dr Mohd Shaharin Umar, Sim, Tunku Ali Redhaudin and Nancy during the launch of the Wanita MyWira Accelerator programme.

vestment model, this phase brings together 1,000 companies committed to adopting flexible work practices, offering returnship opportunities for women who have taken career breaks, and hiring trained women graduates.

In the long term, the initiative aims to empower more than 100,000 women beyond 2030, contributing to Malaysia's goal of increasing female labour force participation and building an inclusive, future-ready workforce.

Speaking at the launch of the programme, Sim said the initiative reflects the nation's commitment to both ambition and inclusion.

He noted that his Ministry, through TalentCorp, is equipping Malaysian women for future-ready and high-growth sectors such as artificial intelligence (AI) and renewable energy.

Sim added that Kesuma has introduced several policies to support working families,

including the right to Flexible Work Arrangements (FWA), tax deductions of up to RM500,000 for employers who adopt FWA, and a 50% tax deduction for paid caregiving leave.

Budget 2026 also expanded childcare tax relief to cover children aged six to 12.

"Think about gender barriers as a powerful spring – coiled very tightly, built into our homes, our culture and even our own personal psyche," he said.

"Our efforts, policies and activism are forces we are applying to hold that spring back."

"But if we release that pressure, even for a moment, the spring will stubbornly bounce back and things will return to business as usual."

He noted that although Malaysia is only slightly off its goal of 60% female labour force participation, this still means that for every 10 men working, only about seven women are working.

"Through the Wanita MyWira

Accelerator, the government aims to remove barriers to women's participation in the workforce by offering training for flexible job opportunities, promoting family and caregiving-friendly workplaces, and boosting women's workforce participation, especially in rural areas," Sim said.

Meanwhile, Women, Family and Community Development Minister Datuk Seri Nancy Shukri said the initiative reflects Malaysia's belief that when women succeed, the nation succeeds.

"Gender inequality remains a global concern, including here in Malaysia."

"As societies evolve, so too must our approach to empowering women in education, health and the economy. Because when women rise, the nation rises. Real progress demands targeted action, strong institutions and inclusive budgeting," she said.

"Through Wanita MyWira, we are creating real pathways for women to access decent work

and participate fully in Malaysia's economy. This effort strengthens our national ecosystem for women's empowerment, in line with the National Policy for Women 2025-2030 and the Madani vision of compassion and shared prosperity."

Malaysia's female labour force participation rate stands at 56.5%, below the national target of 60% by 2030, and slightly higher than the Asean average of 55%.

WEF's Global Gender Gap Report 2025 ranked Malaysia 108th out of 146 countries, showing improvement from the previous year but highlighting the need for stronger action to close gender gaps in economic participation.

To help narrow this gap, the Wanita MyWira Accelerator will provide targeted training, foster employer partnerships and promote childcare-friendly practices designed to make workforce participation more accessible for women.

The strategic direction of the programme will be guided by co-chairs Sim and Nancy on behalf of the public sector.

Representing the private sector are Tunku Besar Seri Menanti and Teach For Malaysia chairman and founding trustee Tunku Ali Redhaudin ibni Tuanku Muhriz, BigPay group chief executive officer Aireen Omar, Microsoft Corporation legal, government and corporate affairs director (Asean and new markets) Dr Jasmine Begum, PwC Malaysia executive chair Nurul Ain Abdul Latif and LeadWomen founder and chairperson Anne Abraham.

The implementation of the initiative will be led by TalentCorp, with support from the respective ministries and WEF.

For more information, email [women@talentcorp.com.my](mailto:women@talentcorp.com.my).