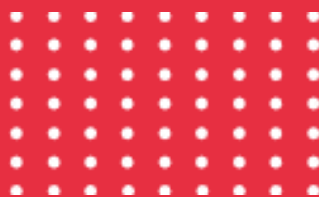


KEMENTERIAN SUMBER MANUSIA

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KERATAN AKHBAR KESUMA”

JUMAAT
17 April 2026



Human Resources
Minister Datuk
Seri R. Ramanan
says federal staff
who work from
home have to
provide hourly or
bi-hourly updates.

NSTP PIC BY HAIRUL
ANUAR RAHIM



CUTTING OPERATIONAL, COMMUTING COSTS

'WFH FOR PRIVATE SECTOR ENCOURAGED'

Employers can consider allowing staff to do so 3 times weekly, says Ramanan

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PRIVATE sector employers have been encouraged to adopt the work-from-home (WFH) policy currently practised by the public sector.

Human Resources Minister Datuk Seri R. Ramanan said this should be considered as it would enable companies and employees to cut operational and commuting costs, respectively.

"This also allows the government to save on subsidy spending, which can be channelled to other deserving causes," he said at the Work, Wages and Future dialogue session with the Concorde Club yesterday.

Ramanan said the private sector could allow staff to work from home three days a week, excluding Mondays and Fridays, as "these are crucial days in the week".

The federal public sector began implementing its nationwide WFH policy on Wednesday as a response to global energy pressures linked to the conflict in the Middle East.

The policy applies to federal civil servants in Putrajaya, Kuala Lumpur, Selangor and all state capitals who live more than 8km from their workplace. The arrangement excludes personnel in the security, defence, healthcare and education sectors.

Ramanan said most banking sectors and multinational companies had already implemented the WFH initiative.

"They have taken these steps

even before the government implemented it," he said, adding that he hoped other private sector employers would follow suit.

On suggestions that WFH could affect productivity, Ramanan said those under the policy were monitored by an application called Spot-Me, which was used by senior management of ministries and government agencies.

"The staff also have to provide hourly or bi-hourly updates on what they are doing from home."

Meanwhile, on another matter, Ramanan said his ministry saw no issues with the country adopting a new foreign worker recruitment system developed by Bestinet Sdn Bhd.

He said the ministry was currently discussing the mechanism for its implementation, known as the Universal Recruitment Advanced Platform (Turap).

"After that, I will table a paper to the cabinet. At the moment, I see no issues with adopting Bestinet as the developer."

The system is being marketed as a solution that allows companies to hire workers directly, bypassing middlemen who often charge excessive fees.

Ramanan was responding to reports questioning Bestinet's involvement in the project.

He said the company had developed the Foreign Worker Central Management System (FWCMS) and worked with the government since 2011.

"They operate in 185 countries. Their FWCMS system is used by the Home Ministry and Human Resources Ministry. I am not defending Bestinet, but stating the facts."

No issues with foreign hiring system

Company has 15-year track record, says Ramanan

By CHARLES RAMENDRAN
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PETALING JAYA: There are no issues over the adoption of a proposed new foreign worker recruitment system currently under development by Bestinet Sdn Bhd, says Datuk Seri R. Ramanan.

The Human Resources Minister said this is because the company has a track record of managing the country's migrant labour intake for over 15 years. He added that the government is still open to considering the new system, and discussions are ongoing on how the mechanism could be implemented effectively.

Ramanan stressed that he was not defending Bestinet despite allegations made in a foreign media report, noting that the company has efficiently managed migrant worker intake since 2011 through its Foreign Worker Centralised Management System (FWCMS).

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The report alleged that Bestinet would be awarded the contract.

He also dismissed a recent news report alleging that foreign workers are required to pay recruitment fees of up to US\$1,000 (RM3,954).

Ramanan explained that expenses such as flight tickets, visa processing, and other related costs, amounting to less than US\$1,000, are usually handled by recruitment agents in the workers' countries of origin and are not collected by Bestinet.

"I have said this many times that there should be zero migration cost for foreign workers," he said at a Concorde Club dialogue session at Wisma Bernama yesterday.

He noted that foreign workers currently have to pay between



Meeting of the minds: Ramanan (right) chairing a meeting with senior journalists including Ng (second right) and Wong (foreground, left). — RAJA FAISAL HISHAN/The Star

US\$5,000 and US\$8,000 (RM20,000 to RM25,000) just to secure a job in Malaysia.

The proposed new system, he said, would be a fairer approach as payments are shifted to employers and will cost below US\$1,000.

On the implementation of work-from-home (WFH) arrangements for civil servants on Wednesday, Ramanan said those eligible are being closely monitored through a digital application, with senior management tracking their daily progress via hourly or bi-hourly updates.

Asked if the current WFH arrangement would be adopted as a long term measure, Ramanan said that this has yet to be considered.

He said that consideration has

to be given to productivity output and the nature of the job and how effectively tasks are carried out.

"Some roles can be done remotely, while others require physical presence," he added.

He explained that the move to implement the current arrangement was driven by external factors such as ongoing tensions in the Middle East, which necessitated fuel conservation.

By reducing travel, he said the government could lower petrol and diesel consumption, enabling unused fuel subsidies to be redirected towards other more urgent needs, such as food assistance for the rakyat.

Ramanan encouraged wider adoption of WFH measures by the private sector to reduce overall fuel consumption in the country.

"Many banks, multinational companies and GLCs have already implemented this," he said.

Meanwhile, Ramanan brushed aside claims by certain quarters questioning his professional qualifications, reiterating that he is a trained engineer.

He added that he received his early education at Kolej Tuanku Ja'afar in Mantin before furthering his studies in the United States and Australia.

Also present at the meeting were Bernama chairman Datuk Seri Wong Chun Wai, Star Media Group's chief content officer Datin Paduka Esther Ng and several senior news editors.

The Concorde Club is an informal gathering of senior editors, politicians and key policymakers to discuss current issues.