

Loke : Port Operators in Dire Need of Mover Drivers

Putrajaya : Port operators are seeking the government's approval to hire foreigners as prime mover drivers as a short-term measure to fill the vacancy gap, says Anthony Loke.

The Transport Minister said the drivers were critical to ensure the smooth operation of ports.

"Operators are asking for permission to hire foreigners to do the job for the next three to five years while they prepare to automate and digitalise the service. "I believe this request should be considered as it is just a temporary measure," said Loke after chairing the National Shipping and Port Council meeting yesterday.

The government had frozen the employment of foreign workers in this sub-sector for a few years to provide more job opportunities to locals. According to port operators, they are short of 800 to 1,000 prime mover drivers due to high turnover.

The Tanjung Pelepas Port in Johor is said to be the "most affected" as its workers tend to jump to Singapore for better pay after gaining some experience.

Loke said the issue needed to be addressed to ensure the efficiency of Malaysian ports, which saw a 10% increase in cargo movement in the first quarter of this year.

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