

SKILLED JOBS

Beware foreign bosses' 'tricks'

MALAYSIA is going through what the United States and Singapore have been experiencing — losing high-skilled jobs to foreigners, particularly those from India and the Philippines.

The government must do something to protect Malaysians before we become beggars in our own country. Many industries are affected including banking or finance, health-care, shipping, education and more.

How does it start normally? Senior management team just brings in one foreigner (for example, from India) at a senior level and allocate a budget for him or her.

Since there's no enforcement on recruitment policy from the human resource (HR) team, that foreigner will start recruiting his countrymen (Indian friends or relatives or known contacts) via either direct contract or agency contract.

Direct contract means direct recruitment from place of origin (for example, Chennai, New Delhi or Mumbai). Agency-contract indicates indirect hiring from Indian recruitment firms that have offices in Malaysia.

The foreign boss normally creates redundant posts and prepares an organisational chart according to his whim and fancy.

Basically local employees will not have a platform to raise their concerns and issues because the HR team will always be given predictable justification by the foreign boss that Malaysians do not have the necessary skills or competency. In some cases, when staff do raise their concerns to HR, they will be "targeted" for key performance indicator activities (conducted half-yearly or yearly).

There are many companies with this issue.

On their remuneration package, it normally goes like this:

ASSISTANT manager level, a Malaysian will get around RM4,000 to RM6,000. Foreigner will get around RM15,000 to RM18,000, excluding fixed allowance of between RM500 and RM1,000;

MANAGER level, a local will get around RM6,000 to RM10,000. Foreigner will get RM15,000 to RM25,000, excluding fixed perks of RM1,000 to RM2,000; and,

SENIOR manager level, a local will get around RM10,000 to RM20,000. Foreigner will get RM30,000 to RM50,000, excluding fixed allowance of around RM3,000 and housing allowance of RM5,000 and other allowances.

A majority of the foreigners are so incompetent and tend to pass

the buck around. For some company projects or activities or business transactions, the foreigners will flout the law and instruct local staff to assume responsibility for the wrongdoing.

For example, even if a particular vendor from India does not match the required criteria, just because a foreign boss has some hidden "interest", local staff are instructed to proceed.

Another example is with regard to recruitment. Even if local candidates match job requirements, a foreign boss will over-rule and instruct the hiring team to recruit from a specific curriculum vitae pool (normally in this pool, all candidates are Indian nationals and recruitment can be direct contract or agency-contract).

There are cases in which local staff refuse to be in "cahoots" with foreign bosses, but they get transferred out. This is alarming. The funny thing is normally chief executive officers, deputy chief executive officers, departmental heads or anyone with higher authority does not care about all these problems.

This issue must be addressed before it becomes a "full-fledged disease".

Sebastian Ong, Kuala Lumpur