

Cambodia keen on MoU to send workers here

GOOD NEWS: Pact to include protection, employment terms and wages

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THE Cambodian government is keen to send its citizens to work in Malaysia, including as domestic helpers.

Malaysian Embassy deputy chief of mission Raja Saiful Ridzuan said a draft of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on recruitment and safety of Cambodian workers was sent to it two weeks ago.

"The Cambodian government is very keen to sign an MoU with Malaysia with regard to sending its workers to Malaysia.

"I think they will come back to us soon as they are eager to send their workers to our country."

The draft contained employers' responsibilities, protection for workers, employment terms and

conditions and wages.

Raja Saiful added that the Human Resources Ministry was also studying the documents.

"I am not sure if they (the Cambodian government) want amendments to be made to the draft but we have not got anything from them yet."

On the death of Cambodian maid Mey Sichan, whose body was found at her employer's hardware shop in Bukit Tengah on Saturday, Raja Saiful said the embassy's role was to assist Sichan's family in bringing back her body.

"We have not got anything from the Cambodian government but we are finding out details about the maid from the local agency here."

Raja Saiful also said it was a normal procedure for the recruitment agency which hired Sichan to bear the cost of her funeral and other costs.

Penang police chief Datuk Ayub Yaakob had said three people, including two women, could shed light on the alleged abuses by Sichan's employers.

Ayub was also quoted as saying that the 24-year-old maid had died from acute gastritis and ulcers caused by severe starvation over a long period.

Sichan's weight had dropped to 26kg when her body was found, way below the weight of a normal adult.

The deceased also had bruises and cuts all over her body, Ayub had said.

Sichan was reported to have been working for a couple for eight months and had been taking care of her employer's mother.

The *Phnom Penh Post* yesterday carried a story on Mey Sichan's death on page five.

The daily said at least nine Cam-

bodian maids were reported dead in Malaysia last year, while a rash of abuses had resulted in Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen imposing a ban on sending maids in October.

It also said rights groups had continued to urge the Malaysian Government to sign an agreement with Cambodia to ensure maids were protected.

"We encourage the government of Malaysia to sign the MoU with Cambodia to protect the rights of migrant workers," it quoted Chuon Chamrong, the head of Ad-hoc, a womens group here, as saying.

He said Asean aimed to evolve into an integrated economic community by 2015 but the challenge facing it was to draft and agree to a legally-binding Asean framework instrument on the protection of migrant workers.