

Bosses put up posters for AWOL aliens

Handsome rewards offered if workers found

MOST employers may turn to repatriation companies to hunt down foreign workers who go missing.

But some are choosing to do it their way – putting up “wanted” posters and offering rewards to those who can hunt down these workers.

Construction firm manager James Ng is one such employer who put up 20 posters last month on lamp posts in Geylang, offering a S\$2,000 (RM4,888) reward each for information on two of his Chinese foreign workers who went missing.

The large posters showed mugshots of Jin Feijian and Xia Miaolong, their work permit numbers, a cellphone number to call and the cash reward.

He picked Geylang to put up the posters because the area – especially the alleys near Aljunied MRT – has become a popular haunt for Chinese foreign workers.

The duo were among five workers who disappeared just before their work permits expired in August.

Ng, 51, decided to start with posters of the two workers and see if his experiment worked.

It did. Last Friday morning, Xia, 49, was spotted loitering near Geylang Lorong 25 – barely 50m from one of the posters with his photo on it.

The worker had turned himself in a week earlier, but had disappeared again.

This time, Ng roped in several colleagues, including supervisor Jack Chew, and made the five-minute drive from their office to Lorong 25.

They took the Zhejiang native back to their office along Sims Avenue then handed him over to the police.

The tip-off came from another Chinese worker, who collected his reward, said Ng.

The company is making some headway with the search for Jin.

Chew, 45, said he received a call two weeks ago from a Chinese national working on Jurong Island who said he had seen Jin working there. Chew said he was trying to gather more information before taking action.

The problem of missing foreign workers has been a headache for employers who stand to lose their S\$5,000 (RM12,220) security bond for each missing worker.

When workers go missing, some employers



Fruitful move: Ng (right) and Chew removing the posters in Geylang after their workers were found. – The Straits Times / Asia News Network

would engage the help of repatriation agencies, which usually charge between S\$300 (RM733) and S\$500 (RM1,222) to track down a worker and pack the person off to the airport.

But Chew and Ng said they did not seek help from a repatriation agency because they wanted to avoid “trouble”.

Chew said: “Sometimes, the worker could get locked up by the repatriation company. We don’t want the worker to complain. We thought it’s better if we settle the matter ourselves. Also, we know the workers live and hang out in this area.”

Last month, another employer had also put up posters in Geylang and Chinatown, offering rewards totalling S\$6,000 (RM14,664) for information on three performers from China. At least two of them have been found, according to reports. – The Straits Times/ Asia News Network