

Outsourcing Policy Rears It's Ugly Head

The absence of a coherent policy on the recruitment of migrant workers in Malaysia, and a constant shift in policies, have now landed thousands of Bangladeshi workers abandoned and stranded without basic human needs and jobs.

This recent development comes about due to a new policy called outsourcing. As its name suggests, this policy was established with the aim of outsourcing labour recruitment away from employers. Bangladesh was made the test country and if successful others would be introduced to this as well.

Many of the workers had paid between RM6,000 to RM12,000 to recruiting agents, outsourcing companies and their accomplices. In the last few months, the brunt of this outsourcing mess came to light after over a hundred workers went on hunger strike in front of their own high commission appealing for intervention from their government.

Following that a few thousands were reported to have been left stranded at the Kuala Lumpur International Airport neglected by agents and were made to live in temporary shelters at the airport carpark.

And there were those who were cramped into houses with appalling living conditions and exploited by their employers. Some managed to raise their plight with Tenaganita, who has since been at the fore front of addressing their concerns after releasing a fact finding report a few months back.

In September, Tenaganita joint forces with other Malaysian activists to meet a delegation of Bangladeshi officials from the caretaker government of Bangladesh. The Secretary of the Expatriates' Welfare Ministry of Bangladesh lead a delegation to Kuala Lumpur specifically to make an on-the-spot inquiry into the reasons behind the current labour exploitation faced by thousands of Bangladeshi workers.

The act by the Malaysian government of shifting blame on agents instead of admitting to a flawed system had built-up to a freeze on employment of Bangladeshi workers.