

Bangkok Post - Govt gives illegals last chance to register before crackdown

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Illegal labourers from Cambodia, Laos and Burma will be given a last chance to report to the government or face a tough crackdown if they continue to work without permission.

About two million workers from the three countries are estimated to have entered Thailand illegally and they will be subject to a stricter watch, said permanent secretary for labour Somkiat Chayasriwong.

They are being told to register with branch offices of the Department of Employment from June 15 to July 14 for the right to stay in Thailand for one year. Their accompanying children aged less than 15 will also be allowed to live with them.

The registration of illegal workers is not new. The government had earlier tried to legalise their status but many failed to register for work permits.

The latest chance came after the cabinet agreed on April 26 to put all illegal workers under stricter monitoring by the state.

Mr Somkiat called the move "opening the door and closing windows" and said it would give foreign labourers an opportunity to work in Thailand while blocking any illegal acts.

Authorities will facilitate workers who enter Thailand legally and those who register, but if they fail to follow laws, they will face a range of measures, including fines, imprisonment and social measures.

Some workers who want to be registered but cannot complete the process by the deadline can ask for an extension of another 30 days, Mr Somkiat said. Among this group are those working on fishing boats who may not be able to report to the government in June and July.

Each worker will have to pay 3,880 baht for registration, which includes 600 baht for a medical check, 1,300 baht for health insurance, 1,900 baht for a work permit and 80 baht for registration.