SEREMBAN: The programme to legalise and grant amnesty to an estimated two million illegals in the country has been deferred from Monday to July 18 so that the authorities have more time to prepare for the mammoth exercise.
It is understood that the Government is also mulling over the possibility of extending the period of registration from two weeks to a month to ensure there is sufficient time for the applications to be processed.

It is learnt that the Home Ministry has appointed 250 agents for the exercise and that discussions are now underway on how much they would be allowed to charge.

The figure is said to range between RM300 and RM500 for the registration of each worker.

There would also be separate charges for the legalisation of workers, levies, medical check-ups and personal biometric cards.

A source said authorities were forced to defer the programme to give agents more time to prepare.

&#65533;Since the agents will have to buy biometric machines, set up offices and hire staff for the exercise, they may not have time if the programme begins on Monday.

&#65533;To ensure the programme runs smoothly, we feel the agents should be given ample time to set up operations,&#65533; he said, adding that foreign embassies had also requested a longer registration period due to the high number of applications.

On June 23, the Government announced the legalisation and amnesty exercise codenamed 6P during which illegal foreign workers and their employers would be spared legal action if they took part in the drive.

It is also learnt that an Immigration officer would be stationed at the agents' offices during the exercise.

&#65533;This is to ensure the fingerprints of the illegals are correctly captured for future reference. There were cases in which foreigners returned to Malaysia using different passports,&#65533; he said, adding that each agent was also given the green light to operate in any three states.

The source said the deferment was also to allow authorities to iron out several issues that had cropped up during discussions with agents