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Samut Sakorn (Mizzima) – Authorities in Thailand are expediting the process of providing information about national verification for Burmese migrants, even as governors in Phuket and Samut Sakorn province plan to control mobilizing migrant workers.

Wanlop Pringpong, Samut Sakorn, governor said on Friday that the province plans to control the mobilizing of migrant workers in the area. It will be systematic and easy to control.

“This is a problem in this province. In addition the valid date of national verification for Burmese migrants is quite close,” he said, according to a report in a Thai news website Komchadleuk on Saturday.

Wanchai Skornmaneerat, an official from the Department of Employment, Samut Sakorn province said that the local authorities will speed up providing information about national verification for migrant workers from Burma. The valid date is February 28, 2010.

The officials and related non government organizations have distributed leaflets in Burmese and ethnic languages, and reminded employers and workers of the migrant community to get verification done.

However, migrant workers in Mahachai district of Samut Sakorn province are reluctant to get passports and go for national verification.

Tei, a 26 year old ethnic Mon worker in a frozen seafood company told Mizzima in an interview today that her mother in Moulmein in Burma told her over telephone that local authorities asked her to pay 5,000 Kyats each month for each of her children working in Thailand.

“From early next year, my mother was told to pay every month for my passport because I am working in Thailand. This is one way officials will be extorting money from villagers. If I have to pay both in Thailand and Burma, I plan to go back home and stay with my family,” she said.

In Samut Sakorn, there are about 300,000 legal and illegal migrants working in seafood processing factories, one of Thailand’s major exporting industries. Mainly they are ethnic Mon followed by Burman and others ethnic groups.

Than, a worker, who lives here with his wife and a daughter and works in the same frozen prawn factory said that he could not afford the expenses related to the process of verification.

“There are private agents into processing who asked me to pay about 10,000 [300US\$] Baht for each person. So the total cost for our family will be about 30,000 Baht [900US\$]. I plan to send my wife and daughter back home if they (authorities) force us,” he said.

Sompong Srakaew, Director of Labour Promotion Networks, who works in the area, said the process is complicated for workers to understand and many could not afford it. He said the process is unlikely to be finished in time.

Wichai Praisangob, Phuket governor said that the province expected many more illegal migrant works entering secretly. Officials will search for and arrest illegal migrants from Burma, Cambodia, Pakistan and Bangladesh.

“Local villagers are complaining that they fear that migrant workers will get more job opportunities than local Thai people,” he said.