

Plan to sell Perwaja: Terengganu seeks more details from KL

KUALA TERENGGANU, Wed. — The State Government will meet Federal Government representatives to get more details of the latter's intention to dispose of its stake in Perwaja Steel Sdn Bhd.

Menteri Besar Tan Sri Wan Mokhtar Ahmad said the State Government, which has a 19 per cent share in Perwaja, was still in the dark on the matter and would not make any hasty decision.

"I believe the Federal Government has a good reason to dispose its stake in Perwaja.

"But whatever the reason, we will have to discuss the matter first.

"Anyway, the State Government only has a small share in the company," he told reporters after the Executive Council meeting here today.

Wan Mokhtar was asked whether the State Government would dispose of its share in Perwaja following a statement by Prime Min-

ister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad that the Government was considering bids by several parties on the sale of the national steel company.

Dr Mahathir had said that quite a number of parties believed that the company could be turned around. He also said that the company had a big asset which could be used to turn it around although there was truth that in its business account there were losses.

At the Executive Council meeting, Wan Mokhtar said the Government had decided to launch a campaign to attract local youths to work in the hospitality industry.

He said lack of interest among the locals to apply for jobs in the hospitality industry in Terengganu had resulted in a shortage of workers and had forced investors to look for manpower elsewhere.

"Most parents still think that working in hotels or

chalets is not right for Muslims.

"We have to change this perception or else we will lose the jobs created by the growing hospitality industry to foreigners."

As a first step, he said the State Science, Technology and Human Resources Committee would draw a detailed programme to attract more youth into the hospitality industry.

Among the programmes is on-the-job training at established hotels and at the Molek Inn managed by the Mara Institute of Technology in Dungun.

"The hospitality industry in Terengganu needs about 4,000 workers, including tourist guides, once all the hotel development projects are completed in one or two years.

"We must be ready to supply these establishments with workers. Otherwise we will lose these job opportunities to foreigners," he added.