

Come and work in peninsula, PM urges Sabah folk

By Farush Khan and Joseph Bingkasan

KOTA KINABALU, Wed. Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has invited more people from Sabah, where seven per cent of the population are not employed, to work in Peninsular Malaysia which is facing a shortage of manpower.

He said because of the shortage, the various authorities had to employ foreigners.

"We prefer to have workers from Sabah working in the peninsula rather than the foreigners," he said when launching the Koisaan (United) Cultural Development Institute (KDI) and the KDI conference here today.

A non-political charitable organisation, the KDI is aimed at uplifting the quality of life of the indigenous people of Sabah in the fields of education, culture and economics.

Chief Minister Datuk Salleh Said, Kadazan Dusun Cultural Association Sabah (Koisaan) president Datuk Seri Joseph Pairin Kitingan and founder executive chairman of KDI Datuk Dr Jeffrey Kitingan also spoke at the function.

Dr Mahathir said there was no reason for people in Sabah to remain unemployed when there were abundant job opportunities in the peninsula.

He said by working in the peninsula, they could not only earn a living, but also contribute to national development.

He said no matter what tribes and ethnic groups they belonged to, they were all Malaysians who should work together to improve their living standard.

He added that it was his hope to see everyone, irrespective of race or religion, work hand in hand to develop the country.

He said he was pleasantly surprised to find that there were as many as 83 tribes in Sabah alone.

"It is clear that Malaysia is a unique country. Despite having so many tribes, languages and cultures, we can still live in peace and harmony," he added.

Dr Mahathir said one of the factors which contributed to peace in Malaysia was the Government's liberal approach under which the people were given freedom to practise their own culture and religions.

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