

5 JAN 1996

Mahathir-Husbands

FOREIGN HUSBANDS OF MALAYSIANS MAY ALSO BE ALLOWED TO WORK

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 5 (Bernama) -- The government will consider the possibility of allowing foreign men married to Malaysians to take up employment in the country, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The possibility would be looked into because they were already in the country and it would be better than importing workers who were totally foreign to Malaysia, he added.

"We have to think (about it), otherwise, they will be whiling away their time in the country while their wives work and they are supported by their wives... this is not good," he added.

Dr Mahathir, speaking to reporters after opening the RM2-million Federal Territory Darul Kifayah orphanage complex in Kampung Delima here, was asked to comment on the statement by Deputy Home Affairs Minister Datuk Megat Junid Megat Ayob last Tuesday that the government was willing to allow the foreign wives of Malaysians to work if they possessed the required qualifications.

Megat Junid said, however, the privilege would not apply to foreign men married to Malaysians because Malaysian women were not permitted to bring their foreign husbands to work in Malaysia and, so far, there were no plans to review this policy.

Asked when the foreign spouses of Malaysians would be allowed to work in the country, Dr Mahathir said it would be as soon as possible.

He hoped that in this way Malaysia would be able to tap their expertise.

In his New Year message, Dr Mahathir said retirees and housewives would have to join the country's work force to check the alarming influx of foreign workers into the country.

He also warned then that if the influx was left unchecked, Malaysia would have 2.3 million foreign workers by the year 2000. -- BERNAMA