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FOREIGN SPOUSES CAN NOW WORK IN M'SIA

KUALA LUMPUR, May 6 (Bernama) -- Foreign spouses of Malaysian citizens and permanent residents as well as spouses of expatriate workers would be allowed to work in the country to alleviate the current labour shortage in the country, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today.

Work permits would be issued to them depending on the type of skills they possessed, he told a dialogue with the private sector organised by the ministry of international trade and industry here.

Answering a question from the floor in reference to the employment of such people, he said although the Cabinet had made a decision on this, its implementation on the ground may have been hampered because of wrong interpretation by some officers.

"But we will correct this situation," he said. "If we need the services of these people, we will allow them to work."

Dr Mahathir was also told of the difficulty in getting work visas by foreign expatriates.

He replied that some government officers involved in the issuance of permits still held the outdated view of Malaysianisation.

Given the full employment situation in the country, he said the fear that foreigners would take over the jobs of Malaysians, including professional ones, was misplaced.

Already the country was having about one million foreign guest workers, he said, adding that he would look into the speedier issuance of work permits and visas. -- BERNAMA

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