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Kennett-Visit

PREMIER KENNETT TO VISIT KL TO COUNTER HANSON

By: Neville D'Cruz

MELBOURNE, Sept 10 (Bernama) -- Victorian State Premier Jeff Kennett is to visit Kuala Lumpur in early December to defeat the perception that Independent MP Pauline Hanson was representative of Australian views.

"Wherever you go in Asia, you cannot escape the perception...that she represents something bigger than one person," he said when launching a statewide school programme and a facts file promoting the benefits of immigration.

"Unfortunately that is very damaging and all of us in positions of authority

-- whether we be businessmen, politicians, journalists -- must do everything to overcome this incorrect perception of Australia.

"At the end of the day, Pauline Hanson's views must be defeated," he said.

Kennett, an outspoken critic of Hanson, will also visit Hong Kong later this month where he will allay fears of the Hanson factor.

The popular Premier, who wrote to Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad assuring the Prime Minister of protection for foreign students soon after a Malaysian student was racially abused at a 7-Eleven store here last year, said the views of Hanson had no place in a progressive and caring society as Australia.

Today is the first anniversary of Hanson's anti-immigration maiden speech to Federal Parliament ahead of the maverick MP forming her One Nation Party in March. In her speech, she said Australia faced being swamped by Asian migrants. This sparked a heated race debate which is still raging in Australia and overseas.

Kennett said Hanson used democracy to divide people and he hoped democracy would defeat her views and her candidates at the next Federal election.

"Over the past year, the amount of misleading or inaccurate information used in the migration debate has been of concern," Kennett said.

The schools programme will encourage students to have their say on multiculturalism and discuss the social and economic benefits of immigration to Australia. -- BERNAMA

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