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Wolfensohn-Workers

M'SIA ASSURES WORLD BANK IT WILL RETAIN FOREIGN WORKERS

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 3 (Bernama) -- Malaysia has given the World Bank its assurance that it will not be sending back workers from Indonesia to help Jakarta ease its social and unemployment problems.

World Bank president James Wolfensohn said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad told him this when they met earlier today.

The World Bank chief was speaking at a news conference at the end of his two-day visit to Malaysia.

Wolfensohn said Dr Mahathir told him that foreign workers from Indonesia would be given alternative jobs which had not been filled by Malaysians.

Wolfensohn said he was told that there were about two million registered foreign workers in the country.

He said the World Bank was concerned about the unemployment rate due to the economic crisis and was trying to tackle the problem by coming up with programmes that would create employment so that the social unrest was minimal.

"Our experience in the bank is that the way you deal with social unrest and ensure peace is to get people enough food and economic hope and if you don't have that, then you have the condition for social unrest, he said.

Asked what kind of social programmes the World Bank had for Malaysia, he said: "We are not planning anything for Malaysia, it's up to the government to decide what it wants here.

"The bank is not recommending anything. Not having been here effectively for several years, it would be moderately arrogant to come in two days and tell you what to do," he added. -- BERNAMA

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