

BERNAM EDITORIAL NEWS EXTRACTS
14 MARCH 2000

NANYANG SIANG PAU EDITORIAL EXTRACT

NANYANG SIANG PAU urges youths of Chinese origin to respond positively to the recruitment of teachers.

According to reports, 182 of the 514 trainee teachers recruited, failed to report to the various teachers training colleges on February 21.

They were among the more than 800 youths who attended the special interviews early this year.

Originally, the Education Ministry planned to recruit 840 trainee teachers for the Chinese stream to help overcome the shortage of teachers faced by Chinese primary schools.

However, many of the applicants failed to meet the necessary requirements.

Sources say some of those who failed to report to the training colleges are reluctant to leave their families because they have been sent to colleges far away from home.

Could this be a valid reason? asks the paper.

The president of Headmasters' Association Chang Siew Khoon explains "this is a normal practice".

"This should be a challenge for those who accept teaching as a career".

The daily feels those who have been recruited should not miss the opportunity of becoming a qualified teacher.

Moreover, the salary of trained teachers have been upgraded to RM1258 per month on graduation.

They should not place too much emphasis on "money".

They should not disappoint the Chinese community and should think of the wellbeing of the community as a whole, says NANYANG.

CHINA PRESS EDITORIAL EXTRACT

CHINA PRESS criticises the absence of MCA MPs and assemblymen at the launching of the Chinese Festival by Pulau Pinang Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr. Koh Tsu Koon.

MCA MPs and assemblymen claimed that they had duties to perform on that day. It was not a deliberate boycott.

The paper says ties between MCA and Gerakan, both Chinese-based parties, have soured after the last general election when MCA failed in its bid to get an extra deputy chief minister's post in the state.

As a result MCA elected representatives were conspicuously absent from the swearing in ceremony of the chief minister and other EXCO members.

The move has incurred the displeasure of the community, but MCA appears to have ignored the criticism.

It points out the Chinese Cultural Festival was organised by Hua Zong, the Federation of Chinese Associations, a non-political body.

As such it is wrong to bring any political squabble inside such a festival.

According to CHINA PRESS the decision, undoubtedly will leave a stigma in the history of the Chinese culture in the country.

NEW STRAITS TIMES EDITORIAL EXTRACT

(EXTRACT: Writing on NRS, NEW STRAITS TIMES says more importantly, the task

of evaluating a person's productivity should not be the the sole responsibility of department heads. It should be conducted by a panel of heads and an accessible and open means of appeal must be provided for the appraisee. Values of equity, objectiveness and openness should be paramount in the system.)

LONGER VERSION:

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NST, in its editorial entitled " A TIMELY RECONSTRUCTION" says the willingness of the Public Service Department to consider changes to the New Rmneration System shows that the department has, finally, come to terms with it and its weaknesses vis-a-vis its implementation.

According to NST "The endless complaints indicate that the system, as currently structured, is inequitable, unsustainable and perhaps even dysfunctional."

NST recalls introduced in 1992 to reward outstanding staff, the NRS was envisioned to replace a system whereby salary increases, motivation awards, promotions and professional development opportunities resulted more from longevity in service than from productivity incentives.

"As merit-based system, it was designed to motivate public sector employees to attain higher productivity and efficiency.

"The irony is that the NRS arose as an antidote to the insecurities of public sector employment but hardly after few years, it has itself become a wellspring of anxiety and contention.

"There are three categories of salary movement under the system: diagonal, vertial and horizontal."

NST feels on the surface, such mechanisms seem good.

"But these became the kingly prerogatives of heads of department and hence, tales of prejudice, favouritism and bias abound.

"There were, reporteldy, failures by the departmeent heads to distinguish between efficient and effective workers.

"Efficiency means doing things well while effectiveness means doing the right well."

NST points out when less-than-effective workers are given diagonal wage moment, their effective comrades will be persuaded to do more but not necessarily right.

"The result?

"The system is a disincentive to productivity improvement.

"The truth is a performance rating system is deceptively simple but in practice, it generates controversies.

"As seen in some instances, the NRS has produced a behaviour that is actually antithetical to good results."

According to NST the nub of the problem lies in the lack of objective data and procedures for making the appraisal system work effectively.

"There is an apparent need for transparent, if not rigorous, standards for judging whose performance is rewarded and whose career is advanced and why.

"Well-formulated measures can provide administrators with an impartial way of determining and rewarding merit.

"More importantly, the task of evaluating a person's productivity should not be the the sole responsibility of department heads.

"It should be conducted by a panel of heads and an accessible and open means of appeal must be provided for the appraisee.

"Values of equity, objectiveness and openness should be paramount in the

system."

NST agrees doubtless, performance-appraisal is an exacting and excruciating undertaking.

"However, there are numerous indicators, particularly within the private sector, that suggest the problems are far from insurmountable and the task far from hopeless.

"Clearly, changes are necessary.

"Surely, the PSD does not need an unduly long time to study "the viability of making changes."

"Rather, it should study what sort of changes are needed to ensure the reconstructed system poses no perplexities to both heads and subordinates."

NST notes the complications surrounding the NRS is a simple reminder that people and their feelings are key factors in productivity.

"The ability of the Government to function effectively and efficiently is related in no small measure to quality, competency and motivation of the workforce."

BUSINESS TIMES EDITORIAL EXTRACT

(EXTRACT: BUSINESS TIMES says with Port Klang, Penang Port and now Port of Tanjung Pelepas, Malaysia can quite confidently boast of an array of very modern and very efficient gateways for international as well as local manufactures and traders. There is no reason for any shipment entering or leaving any point on the west coast of the peninsula not to pass through any of the three ports. This can present Malaysia a formidable advantage, especially since the road, rail and air systems from the ports to any part of the country, and from Malaysia to Singapore, are excellent.)

LONGER VERSION:

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BUSINESS TIMES, in its editorial entitled " CHALLENGES AHEAD FOR PTP" says everthing needed to make Port of Tanjung Pelepas (PTP) a success seems to be in place.

"The Government has invested some RM700 million on road and rail services to support the port's infrastructure and accorded it a free zone status, exempting all activities within the port area from taxes and duties.

"It has also been given a licence to operate its own container haulage services.

"Geoprapically, the port, which officialy opened for business yesterday, lies in a most strategic position to challenge the even most established port in the region.

"As Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad observers, "Generally, the port has no obstacles that could retard its growth."

BUSINESS TIMES feels PTP is in an extremely competitive business where cut-throat means are often applied in order to get and stay ahead.

"Does it have what it takes to take on the others and established itself as a major hub in the region, or the country?

"It has state-of-the-art infrastructure and the backing of the Government but success will not come overnight."

BUSINSS TIMES points out strategic location and competitive rates will attract the liners and help PTP pinch some business from other ports in the region but they may not be enough to threaten their positions.

"Singapore, for example, is certainly aware of the competition that Malaysia's newest port could bring and has probably prepared counter measures to safeguard its position.

"The republic has the advantage of an international reputation and decades of lead time over the Johor port.

"PTP, as the new player, will have to do all the work to impress the international shipping community."

But before it even attempt to do that, it is important that PTP finds success in bringing back the cargo volume that has leaked out to Singapore for all these years, notes BUSINESS TIMES.

"This has always been a problem to Malaysian ports and for many years these ports were clueless as to why local cargo from as far north as Penang would still be exported through Singapore.

"Some of the manufactures and exporters use Port Klang as an feeder port for sending out or bringing in goods from Keppel Harbour."

BUSINESS TIMES points out there are various reasons or excuses for doing this, ranging from the local ports' inefficiency to the fact that Singapore boasts of a more comprehensive international shipping schedules.

"More recently the people operating the ports began to discover some other pertinent factors, including Singapore's free zon status and the strong support from banks in the republic with regards to payments and other credit matters."

BUSINESS TIMES went on to say: "However, with Port Klang, Penang Port and now PTP, Malaysia can quite confidently boast of an array of very modern and very efficient gateways for international as well as local manufactures and traders.

"There is no reason for any shipment entering or leaving any point on the west coast of the peninsula not to pass through any of the three ports."

"This can present Malaysia a formidable advantage, especially since the road, rail and air systems from the ports to any part of the country, and from Malaysia to Singapore, are excellent.

"But such a cooperation among the local ports does not yet exist and needs to be fostered

"It will be a great pity if PTP and West port of Port Klang, for example, were to fight over the same small piece of cake instead of finding ways to reduce the share of their common rival in the region, which has not only been enjoying the chunk of the cake but their icing as well."

BUSINESS TIMES feels this will require a little effort on the part of the local players.

"As the new kid on the block, PTP may want to take the initiative and invite the others to trash out issues affecting them and start a process whereby instead of competing, the local ports will complement one another for the larger interest of the nation.

"It will require a lot of give and take, but the ideal situation is these Malaysian port operators operate as subsidiaries of Malaysia Inc and move as a unit to establish the country, not the individual ports, as a regional hub."

BERITA HARIAN EDITORIAL EXTRACT

BERITA HARIAN feels more efforts should be undertaken to increase the number of bumiputra entrepreneurs. The government on its parts has been providing a lot of assistance to increase the number of Malay entrepreneurs. Bumiputra entrepreneurs should make full and prudent use of opportunities given to them by the government. The Malay daily is happy to note that there several successful

Malay entrepreneurs in the country. BERITA HARIAN urges them to help new Malay entrepreneurs as their service to the country and the community.

BERNAMA