

31 JUL 2000

Hasina-Workers

M'SIA TO RECRUIT MORE BANGLADESHIS, SUBJECT TO VACANCIES

PUTRAJAYA, July 31 (Bernama) -- Malaysia will continue to recruit Bangladeshis if vacancies exist, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has told his visiting Bangladesh counterpart Sheikh Hasina.

Foreign Minister Datuk Syed Hamid Albar said that during Dr Mahathir's meeting with Hasina at the Prime Minister's Department here today she was informed that Malaysia adopted an open policy on recruitment of foreign labour based on a rotation basis.

"Foreign workers whose term has expired will return to that new ones can come," Syed told a news conference after the meeting.

There are now 119,000 Bangladeshis working in Malaysia.

Syed Hamid said Dr Mahathir also emphasised the importance of systematic recruitment of foreign labour to prevent exploitation by irresponsible elements.

Sheikh Hasina, accompanied by a 73-member delegation, arrived here this afternoon for a four-day visit to enhance economic cooperation and bilateral ties.

Syed Hamid said regulated recruitment of foreign labour and through proper channels was vital to ensure that offers of employment were based on availability of jobs in the country.

"We prefer not to have workers from whatever country coming here without jobs waiting for them as this would create different kinds of problems," he said.

Syed Hamid said proper recruitment was also necessary to prevent disillusionment for foreign workers dreaming of a better life in Malaysia.

Malaysia would have to deport foreigners failing to secure employment in the country, he said.

Syed Hamid said Sheikh Hasina, impressed by Malaysia's progress, expressed interest in emulating Malaysia to bring about development to Bangladesh.

"Malaysia will open its book to show examples and experiences in development that Bangladesh can benefit from," he said.

Syed Hamid said that as even outsiders appreciated Malaysia's advancement, Malaysians themselves should be similarly appreciative.

Bangladesh Minister of Labour and Employment MA Mannan and State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abul Hassan Chowdhury were among eight Bangladeshi officials who also attended Sheikh Hasina's meeting with Dr Mahathir.

Sheikh Hasina's entourage includes 35 entrepreneurs.

-- BERNAMA

AFY AHH RYN