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Fong: 86,275 in search of right kind of work

IPOH, Sun. - The number of jobs that have been taken up is still small compared with the number of vacancies available nationwide in the first nine months of this year.

Human Resources Minister Datuk Dr Fong Chan Onn said of the 95,315 jobs available, only 14,066 vacancies have been filled from January to September.

He said although the number of job seekers registered with the Manpower Department was 86,275, these people were still not able to find jobs that suited their qualifications.

He said this was because the large number of workers who had been retrenched were from the electronics sector, while vacancies were mostly in the plantation and manufacturing, including food, textile, chemical and timber sectors.

He however said recent statistics from the Manpower Department revealed that the situation in the electronics sector was stabilising, especially since there had been new orders in the sub-sector for communication and security equipment.

Speaking to reporters after opening the Perak Job Fair 2001 at the Ipoh Parade shopping complex, Fong said the unemployed should not be unduly worried as the ministry had recently introduced two schemes, costing RM267 million, for retrenched workers hit by the economic slowdown.

"Under the schemes, retraining programmes will be held for the retrenched workers so that they can be placed in other jobs," he said.

The two schemes, reported earlier this month, were part of the RM4.3 billion stimulus package announced by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to cushion the impact of an imminent global economic slowdown.

Fong said forms for the retraining programme would be made available to the public in two weeks, either published in major newspapers or posted on the ministry's website at jtr.gov.my.

According to the ministry's statistics from January until last month, 29,837 workers had been retrenched involving 974 companies nationwide.

The number of workers retrenched this year had increased by 63.14 per cent from the 18,289 workers last year during the same period.

Fong said other avenues available for the unemployed were the job fairs organised by the Manpower Department, such as the one-day Perak Job Fair 2001, that were being held nationwide.

The Perak Job Fair is the third one being held, the first two were in Johor and Penang respectively.

Fong said response to the job fairs had been overwhelming and today at the Ipoh Parade some 5,000 job seekers had registered at the various booths.

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