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Mass training in computers

Patrick Sennyah

KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad will launch a mass gathering here on Feb 17 where 1,000 computers will be used to train nearly 8,000 workers.

Human Resources Minister Datuk Dr Fong Chan Onn said today the workers would be trained for one or two hours to prove that they could become acquainted with computers in a short time.

"A certificate of attendance would also be given to each worker who attends," he told reporters after chairing his ministry's post Cabinet meeting.

Fong said the launching was in line with the Ministry's policy of mass launching of knowledge-economy training programmes this year.

The ministry also wanted to enhance efforts to maintain the industrial economy and create a caring society, especially with regard to occupational safety, health and workers' security.

"Each organisation has identified the necessary programmes to be held to assist the ministry achieve these goals and objectives," he said.

He added that ministry officials would meet these organisations once every four months to check on their progress.

Fong said that industrial relations among workers and employers had showed a marked improvement last year compared with 1999.

On the number of reported strikes, he said a total of 11 cases were reported in 1999 and 2000, while the number of man-days lost as a result was only 6,068 last year compared with 10,554.5 in 1999.

"This was achieved through fast intervention by the ministry," he said, adding that the number of industrial disputes dropped from 469 cases in 1999 to 409 last year.

On a separate issue, he said there were early indications that American multinational companies here were facing a slowdown in orders and the ministry was closely monitoring the situation.

"I have asked all State labour officers to keep close tabs on the situation and to date we have not received any report of retrenchments," he said.

Fong added that he would be receiving a full report on the matter from all states next week.

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