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Chong-Work Pass

STAFF OF FEDERAL STATUTORY BODIES IN SABAH TO BE EXEMPTED FROM WORK  
PASS

KOTA KINABALU, Aug 21 (Bernama) -- All staff from peninsular Malaysia and Sarawak serving in federal statutory bodies in Sabah will soon no longer be required to apply for the work pass.

Sabah Chief Minister Datuk Chong Kah Kiat said today that the exemption would take effect once he issued a directive on the matter to the Immigration Department Director.

"I have informed the state cabinet about my intention to exempt them (staff) such as those serving at the Inland Revenue Board and the Malaysian Cocoa Board from the requirement for work pass.

"I hope this will ease a lot of inconvenience," he told reporters after chairing the weekly state cabinet meeting at Wisma Innoprise, near here.

Chong said a similiar exemption for civil servants from peninsular Malaysia and Sarawak working in federal government departments in Sabah was already in place.

There are about 3,000 staff attached to 31 federal statutory bodies in Sabah.

On a different note, Chong dismissed claims that Filipinos were ill-treated while being deported on ships to the southern Philippines.

"They should send officers here to see for themselves whether the Malaysian government ever ill-treated Filipinos," he said.

Yesterday, Philippine President Gloria Arroyo asked Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad for help in regulating the massive repatriation of illegal Filipino workers in Sabah.

Arroyo made the request in a meeting with a Malaysian delegation led by Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Tan Sri Bernard Dompok.

Press Undersecretary Roberto Capco was reported as saying that during the meeting, Arroyo said that her government was "hoping that there would be humane treatment of Filipinos being deported from Sabah".

Chong said that if the Philippine government was serious about looking after its nationals, it should set up a consulate-general in Sabah.

Asked on the haze problem in Sabah, he said the state government had appealed to the authorities in Kalimantan, Indonesia, to remedy the situation.

-- BERNAMA

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