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Mahathir-Workers

MANUFACTURING SECTOR ENCOURAGED TO USE AUTOMATION

LANGKAWI, Jan 27 (Bernama) -- The local manufacturing sector should use greater automation to overcome the problem of manpower shortage as the government no longer encourages the recruitment of foreign workers, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

"We don't have enough people of our own. That is why some air-conditioned factories are filled with foreign workers. We want these factories to use more methods of automation," the Prime Minister said.

He said the government needed to reduce the number of foreign workers, including Indonesians, to check the outflow of money from the country.

It would be better for jobs in this country to be filled by locals to prevent money from flowing out and to avoid the risk of violence, he told reporters after the presentation of prizes for the men's professional category at the Ironman Langkawi, Malaysia championship here.

Dr Mahathir said this when asked to comment on the statement of Home Ministry Secretary-General Datuk Seri Aseh Che Mat in Kuala Terengganu today that the government planned to cut by half the number of registered Indonesian workers in the country.

Aseh was reported as saying that registered Indonesian workers now totalled about 900,000 and the government planned to reduce it to between 450,000 and 500,000.

In the triathlon championship, defending champion Bryan Rhodes of New Zealand retained his title while second place went to Jason Shortis of Australia and third place to Lothar Leder of Germany.

The Prime Minister commended the organisation of the championship, saying it showed that Malaysia had the capability to hold major international sporting events.

"We hope to organise this championship every year and attract more entries, especially among the locals. The government wants to encourage the organisation of more X-treme sports for our youths to participate," he said.

-- BERNAMA

MAN RON YBY