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50,000 students sign for peace

IPOH, Tues. - About 50,000 students and staff of 13 polytechnics in the country put down their signatures in support of the Malaysians for Peace campaign.

The Education Ministry's polytechnic management division director, Ibrahim Samad, who was present during a signature campaign at Politeknik Ungku Omar here today said: "This is our way to protest against war."

Also joining in the campaign are the co-ordinator of the students division of the Malaysians for Peace secretariat, Datuk Suhaimi Ibrahim and Ungku Omar Politeknik director Lt Kol (B) Mohammed Zakaria Mohd Nor.

Suhaimi said more students were expected to join the campaign.

To date more than 1.3 million signatures of people of all ages had been collected. About 5,000 signatures were collected from students and staff of Politeknik Ungku Omar yesterday.

In Kuala Lumpur, the campaign received a further boost today with a pledge of support from the tourism industry, a key sector in national development.

Among those which came forward to lend their voice for peace were the Malaysian Association of Hotels (MAH), Malaysian Association of Hotel Owners (MAHO), Malaysian Association of Tour and Travel Agencies (Matta) and Selangor and Federal Territory Taxi and Hired Car Operators Association.

Culture, Arts and Tourism Minister Datuk Paduka Abdul Kadir Sheikh Fadzir said after the support-pledging ceremony that hotels in the Klang Valley had agreed to set up special counters at their lobbies to gather signatures for the campaign.

Meanwhile, Youth and Sports Minister Datuk Hishammuddin Tun Hussein, who was present at the ceremony, said he was very satisfied with the campaign, which was launched six weeks ago by the People's Alliance for Peace Malaysia (Peace Malaysia).

He said the Peace Malaysia secretariat was now working on a peace declaration which would be handed over to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad at a rally at the National Stadium in Bukit Jalil on Feb 23. The declaration will be given to all leaders attending the 13th Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Summit, which will be held from Feb 20 to 25.

Hishammuddin said the declaration would incorporate the resolutions adopted at events organised by Peace Malaysia.

He urged all parties to fly the "Malaysians for Peace" flag in conjunction with the NAM meeting.

Meanwhile, eight Chinese youth movements have pledged to get their 10,000 members to attend the Peace Malaysia rally on Sunday.

The eight organisations are the Young Malaysian Movement, Malaysian Young Graduates Association (Graduan), Gerakan Belia Bersatu Malaysia, Young Entrepreneurs Association of Malaysia, Malaysian Christian Youth Organisation, Persatuan Belia Xiang Lian Malaysia, Young Buddhist Association of Malaysia and the KL Mandarin Junior Chamber.

Graduan president Quek Ngee Meng told a Press conference today the rally was expected to be a milestone event in the country's history, bringing together Malaysians from all walks of life in support of world peace.

The eight associations urged all Malaysians to attend the rally and concert.