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Immigration uncovers new tactic by foreign men

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THE Immigration Department has detected a new tactic employed by foreign men to gain permanent resident status or work legally in the country.

They would get married to local women, with some of the brides fit to be their grandmothers - reported Berita Minggu in a front-page report yesterday.

The report stated that foreigners as young as 19 years old were found to have tied the knot with 60-year-old women.

Immigration Department public relations officer Ahmad Shukri Abd Majid said although the men claimed it was love at first sight, the department was not convinced.

"The foreigners have no qualms about marrying even widows with children," he said.

He said the department "smelt a rat" as most of the men got married in their seventh year in the country, the last year of their work permits.

He said most cases involved men from Pakistan, India and Bangladesh.

Shukri said the local women claimed they were attracted to men from these countries as they had the "looks of their favourite Bollywood film stars".

For marriages involving men from Western countries, Shukri said it was the converse, with most brides being young women from well-to-do families and who had studied in universities abroad.

In another page one story, the paper reported attempts by certain quarters to derail the Government's move to list Felda on the Kuala Lumpur Stock Exchange.

The report quoted Felda chairman Tan Sri Dr Yusof Noor as saying the detractors had alleged the Government planned to take over land belonging to smallholders before mortgaging it.

"But the truth is the listing will only involve land owned by Felda and not those whose titles have already been given to smallholders," said Yusof.

He advised smallholders not to be influenced by the attempt to incite them to oppose the Government.

Mingguan Malaysia reported that some 95,000 people who had registered as voters in the last three months would be able to cast their ballots in the upcoming general election.

Fifty per cent of them, according to Election Commission secretary Datuk Wan Ahmad Wan Omar, were between the ages of 21 and 40.

However, he said, there were still 1.6 million citizens aged 21 and above who had not registered.

"We hope they will register in the next three months to enable them to vote if Parliament is dissolved in the first quarter of next year."

Wan Ahmad said the EC was also processing 34,000 applications from voters who had changed addresses.

On the front page, the paper quoted Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad as saying that the 10th Organisation of the Islamic Conference Summit was the most "worrisome" international meeting that he had ever chaired.

"I have chaired many international conferences like the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation and the Non-Aligned Movement, but the OIC was the one which caused me to worry for months."

He spoke of the difficulties in preparing his speech for the opening, and of his concern that it might anger heads of state and delegates.

However, he said, the contrary happened. The speech was welcomed by OIC leaders but criticised by Western leaders and their media.