

Govt studying subsidy plan for graduates

Subsidy has been suggested to be channelled to companies that employ these graduates

by NG MIN SHEN

THE government is considering a proposal to give subsidies to fresh graduates to encourage them to take on jobs including positions which are predominantly performed by foreign workers, said Prime Minister (PM) Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

The PM said the government has received the proposal with a suggestion that the subsidy be channelled to companies that employ these graduates.

"We received a proposal, but no decision has been made. We will study this to see if we have enough money or not. This is just a proposal," he said after launching the BOCE Malaysia/Asean e-commerce platform in Putrajaya yesterday.

Dr Mahathir said companies can volunteer to participate in the proposed subsidy scheme if it is implemented.

The unwillingness of Malay-



(From left) Khairuddin, Dr Mahathir, BOCE chairman Yan Dongsheng and Agriculture and Agro-based industry Minister Datuk Salahuddin Ayub during the launch of the BOCE Malaysia/Asean commodity trading platform in Putrajaya yesterday

Pic by Muidh Amin Naharul

sians to perform certain menial jobs has led to the influx of millions of foreigners; many are working without permits.

Dr Mahathir attributed the dependence on foreign workers to locals refusing to perform the work due to low pay.

"That's why some parties have suggested that we have an indirect subsidy. That way, the salaries will increase and our workers will work and no longer depend on foreign workers because every year we

lose billions of ringgit when foreign workers send their earnings back to their own countries," he said.

Dr Mahathir was asked to confirm on a Chinese daily report quoting sources, that the government is looking to distribute RM6 billion in allowances and salary subsidies for fresh graduates to help young people find employment.

Putrajaya is said to be considering allowances of between RM700 and RM1,000

for each worker.

On Wednesday, Dr Mahathir at the Labour Day celebration in Putrajaya, had called on Malaysians to perform "dirty, difficult and dangerous" jobs, saying that although the salaries might be low, they will still be paid.

He also warned that foreign workers would take the place of locals if Malaysians continue to shun certain jobs.

On outgoing IGP Mohamad Fuzi Haron's statement that the

police had rejected the proposal to set up the Independent Police Complaints and Misconduct Commission (IPCMC), Dr Mahathir said the government would evaluate the issue.

"There are, of course, people who are not for it, but there are also people who are for it. So, we will always listen to public opinion and then make a decision," he said.

BOCE Malaysia/Asean, the first e-commerce commodity trading platform, is aimed at facilitating cross-border trading between Malaysia, Asean and China.

Commodities Global Trade Sdn Bhd (CGTSB) has been given an exclusive right by the Tianjin Bohai Commodity Exchange (BOCE) to operate the platform, which is based in Putrajaya.

CGTSB also signed a cooperation letter of intent and an International Regional Cross-Border E-Commerce Service Provider Cooperation Agreement with BOCE during the China International Import Commodities Fair in Shanghai last November.

"The sealing of this agreement signifies effective regional cooperation to develop economic partnerships on the Belt and Road Ini-

tiative," CGTSB chairman Datuk Seri Khairuddin Abu Hassan said.

He said the exclusive right and collaboration enables domestic and Asean businesses to enter China's market via a safe, secure and efficient digital platform of BOCE Global.

Malaysia is the sixth country to operate the platform outside of China, apart from the US, Canada, New Zealand, Ukraine and Australia.

Dr Mahathir added that the e-commerce link is expected to enhance trade between Malaysia and China in particular, as well as with other countries.

"With this trade arrangement and agreement, we foresee that trade is going to contribute a lot towards the growth of Malaysia," Dr Mahathir said.

Khairuddin said the platform was set up via investments largely from private-sector parties hailing from both Malaysia and China, although he declined to reveal an investment figure.

He added that the platform, which has been operating in China for about seven years, has a total trading volume of one trillion yuan (RM614.21 billion) in China.