

Deputy minister selective with facts, says Ramasamy

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Penang DCM II says companies are also moving into Penang.

PETALING JAYA: Penang deputy chief minister II P Ramasamy has accused Balik Pulau MP Dr Hilmi Yahaya of being selective with his facts about the state.

Ramasamy said this in response to an earlier report that quoted Hilmi, who is also the deputy health minister, as saying that about 6,000 factory workers in Penang lost their jobs due to many big companies closing their factories in the state.

Although Ramasamy admitted to FMT that companies were moving out of Penang, he said there were also companies moving in.

“Why hasn’t Hilmi talked about the companies that are moving into the state? This (companies moving in and out) is all just part of the global restructuring that is happening all over Malaysia at the back of a bad economy,” he said.

He noted that Hilmi had also failed to mention the unemployment rate in the state which he claimed was low.

“The unemployment rate in Penang is at 2.9%. He didn’t mention this. Companies are moving in and as a result are creating more jobs for the people of Penang.”

In the earlier report, Hilmi had also claimed that the Penang government had failed to address the issue of urban poverty which has led to public mistrust.

Ramasamy said poverty was an issue all around Malaysia and he believed the reason behind it was a lack of adequate skills among workers. He also attributed this to the high number of foreign workers.

“There are too many foreign workers in the country, both legal and illegal. I believe a reason for this is because of the lack of proper skills among locals and we in Penang, are trying to address this problem.”

He claimed universities and colleges in the country had failed to produce workers tailored to industries which required specific talents.

“There has never existed a situation where universities and colleges produce talent tailored for industries that require them and I’m talking about the manufacturing sectors, the high end services industries and even the tourism industry.

“Penang, despite its limitations, has been doing very well especially in terms of tourism and this has been acknowledged by the Tourism and Culture Minister Mohamed Nazri Aziz.”

Pearl of the Orient

Earlier this year, it was reported that Penang had once again received international recognition and had been named as one of the 17 “must visit destinations” in 2017 by CNN.

The state, known as the Pearl of the Orient, was second behind Prince Edward Island, Canada, and was among three destinations in Asia listed in the CNN list, other than Thailand and China.

Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng said the recognition would spur the tourism sector of the state, which was now renowned abroad.

In 2016, George Town was named by Forbes magazine as the 10th best budget tourism destination for 2016.

Los Angeles Times picked George Town as among 16 destinations which must be visited last year.

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