

'Interstate migration nothing to do with governance'

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By Robin Augustin

An economist notes that Malaysians were moving to Selangor and Penang even when BN was ruling the two states.

PETALING JAYA: A veteran economist has rubbished a claim by DAP election strategist Ong Kian Ming that people are moving to Penang and Selangor because they have confidence in Pakatan Harapan's governance.

Reacting to Ong's interpretation of the latest interstate migration report, Hoo Ke Ping said statistics over the years clearly showed Malaysians had been moving to Selangor and Penang even when both states were ruled by Barisan Nasional.

According to the recently released Migration Report 2016, data from 2011 to 2016 showed that the net migration figures to Selangor and Penang were 125,400 and 49,800 respectively, making them the two most attractive states for interstate migrants.

Ong read this as an indication of the preference of an increasing number of Malaysians for the system of governance in the two states.

Hoo, speculating on the basis of data from 1991, said many of the migrants to Selangor could be from Kuala Lumpur. According to the 1991 census, one third of Malaysian migrants to Selangor were from Kuala Lumpur.

He noted that as far back as 30 years ago, people living in Kuala Lumpur were encouraged to move out to newly developed townships on the fringes of the capital city.

He said Penang's popularity was due to its high level of industrialisation. "People were migrating to Penang even when BN ruled the state," he said.

According to a 2010 report by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Penang has been experiencing net migration since 1990.

"So it's a bit simplistic and narrow to imply that people are moving to Selangor and Penang because they have confidence in the opposition and conveniently ignoring trends and facts," Hoo said.

Deputy Federal Territories Minister M Loga Bala also disagreed with Ong's interpretation of the report, saying that it was normal for people to move out of city centres to places where the cost of living was lower.

“In Kuala Lumpur, land prices are very high,” he said. “It’s not the same throughout Selangor because the state is so big and not every inch of it is developed like Kuala Lumpur.”

He also said the high cost of living in Kuala Lumpur was typical of major cities around the world.

He said his ministry was trying to help bring down costs in the city through the construction of 50,000 affordable homes, the provision of free school bus services for those staying in People’s Housing Projects (PPR) and the introduction of the Kad Ceria for poor folk.

Kad Ceria is targeted at people living in PPRs and other public housing projects. Card holders enjoy discounts of up to 70% at shops of participating merchants, who in turn enjoy incentives from Kuala Lumpur City Hall.

“For the federal government, it’s not a competition,” Loga said. “We care for all Malaysians and that’s why we spend billions on infrastructure projects to connect Selangor to KL, because we know many people live in Selangor and work in KL.

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