

Nation to increase number of skilled workers by 2020

CERTIFICATION:

Human Resources Ministry to double intake of vocational training institutes

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THE Human Resources Ministry is working towards increasing the number of skilled workers in the country by 2020.

Its minister, Datuk Seri Richard Riot Jaem, said only 28 per cent of Malaysia's 14 million workforce were skilled, far below Singapore, of which 58 per cent of its workforce was considered skilled workers.

"We are targeting an increase to 33 per cent (of the workforce) by 2015, and 50 per cent by 2020. It is not easy, but we are confident that we can achieve our target."

Riot said the government had tasked 11 ministries to increase the percentage of skilled workers in the country, with the ministry spearheading the mission.

Richard said the ministry already has 32 vocational training institutes operating under its wing, with two institutes offering advanced certificates.

The ministry, he said, would be doubling the intake of its 16 vocational training institutes to produce more skilled workers, adding that the ministry had also introduced the Recognition of Prior Learning certification, which hands out accreditation to workers who do not have paper qualifications, but have skills in hand.

"The certification will be given by the government, through Sijil Kemahiran Malaysia.

"The certificate will increase a worker's chances of employment

and will also help them negotiate better pay," he said, adding that the government was also working towards reducing the country's dependence on foreign workers.

"We cannot afford to be over-dependent on foreign labour. The upskilling of our workforce, will, hopefully, help reduce their numbers," he said. There are 2.9 million registered foreign workers in the country.

"We estimate that the ratio of legal to illegal workers is one to one.

"That amounts to a total of almost 5.8 million foreign workers in the country," he said.

He advised locals, especially the younger generation, to not be too selective when looking for employment.

"We have more than 600,000 small and medium enterprises in the country. It is just a matter of you going and knocking on their doors."



Datuk Seri Richard Riot Jaem says certification will increase chances for employment