

'Sarawak industries need foreign workers'

KUCHING: Sarawak's industries have asked to hire a total of 62,000 foreign workers, with the recently announced 12,000 Bangladeshis being the first batch, said Human Resources Minister Datuk Seri Richard Riot.

More government-to-government deals were being worked out with Nepal and Myanmar to meet labour shortfalls, Riot said.

The shortage of labourers in Sarawak is mostly in the oil palm sector caused by an exodus of Indonesian workers.

The minister said he would discuss with Land Development Minister Tan Sri James Masing to work out ways to ensure foreigners would not end up as illegal workers.

Riot also defended the Government's decision to allow such a large number of labourers into Sarawak.

"(The total of) 62,000 was not what we said. It's what the industries requested," Riot said after opening the new Human Resources Development Fund office at Wisma Perkeso.