

18,000 not 80,000 are jobless

KOTA BARU: Only 18,070 graduates are jobless and not 80,000 as claimed by certain groups, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Mustapa Mohamed clarified yesterday.

He said the figure made up only 5% of the total 350,000 unemployed, including diploma, SPM holders and Form Five

dropouts.

There were 23,710 jobless graduates in the third quarter of last year, he said.

He added that the Statistics Department's latest figures showed that the majority of them had found jobs

According to the fourth quarter figures released recently, he

said only 37,820 diploma holders and 10,000 SPM holders were jobless.

"What has happened is that the 350,000 jobless people have been broken down to several categories based on their education level," he said.

He said the bulk of the unemployed were those who

did not reach Form Five and the unskilled.

Mustapa said the unemployment rate in the fourth quarter was 3.3%, which was 0.1% lesser than the third quarter.

Malaysia's unemployment rate was among the world's lowest, against Germany's 12%,

France (9.9%) and Japan (4.5%), he added.

He said the low unemployment rate showed that the Government's initiatives to address the problem was bearing fruit. He pledged that the effort to overcome the problem of unemployment among graduates and school leavers would

be given top priority.

To assist in this effort, Mustapa said the department would be releasing monthly reports to enable the government to act fast.

"What we know is that many graduates are no longer choosy and this augurs well for them," he said. — Bernama



SUNDAY WORSHIP: Part of the 4,000-strong crowd who had gathered for the combined Easter service organised by the Calvary Church at Stadium Putra in Bukit Jalil yesterday listening to the sermon by Dr Guneratnam (inset).

Thousands flock to stadium for Easter service

KUALA LUMPUR: Christians joined hands to celebrate the joyous occasion of Easter Sunday in a combined worship service organised by the Calvary Church of Kuala Lumpur at Stadium Putra here yesterday.

The church's senior pastor, Datuk Dr Prince Guneratnam,

presided over a crowd of over 4,000 at the indoor stadium, in front of a translucent backdrop featuring a huge cross outlined in red.

In his remarks, Dr Guneratnam warmly welcomed both Christians and non-Christians to the service and urged worshippers to play a more

active role.

The combined service from 10am to almost 1pm was being held by the church for the 21st successive year.

As before, the church choir and stage team sang and performed dances.

Dr Guneratnam's sermon in

English was also translated into Chinese so that all at the event could hear his message for peace.

Besides parishioners from the main Calvary Church in Bukit Damansara, those from Calvary's satellite churches in Damansara Perdana, Jalan Ampang and Cheras also

attended the service.

Funds were collected for the proposed Calvary Convention Centre estimated to cost RM50mil.

Held concurrently with the service was a special Easter Adventure & Discovery Programme for children aged between four and nine.

Christians unite to celebrate Holy Week

PENANG: The Holy Week which ended yesterday was observed here with Catholics and Protestants uniting in true Christian spirit.

On Good Friday, Holy Saturday and Easter Sunday, churches were busy holding various activities to commemorate the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

There was a different "air" at the Penang Christian Centre in Jalan Khaw Sim Bee with its spacious and modern hall, compared with the traditional trappings of the Church of Our Lady of Sorrows in Macalister Road.

The centre is equipped with modern equipment, while the cathedral's interior glowed with the light from seemingly countless candles lit by parishioners. The atmospheres were different but the reason for their celebration and time of remembrance was the same.

The centre presented a soul-searching drama entitled "Behind the Mask" to portray how people hide their vulnerabilities when things fall apart.

Over at the church, liturgies were read and baptisms were conducted.



RELIGIOUS THEME: Members of the Penang Christian Centre acting out a scene from the drama 'Behind the Mask' yesterday as part of activities to mark Easter.

Work experience training for students

PENANG: Umno Youth has offered 100 students the chance to train at several government-linked companies (GLCs) and multinational corporations (MNCs) to kick-start its *Program Pintar* initiative to help overcome the problem of jobless graduates.

"The early exposure will give them a clearer view of what to expect in a working environment, including the relevant skills to master," said deputy chief Khairy Jamaluddin.

The programme, involving the movement as well as several GLCs and MNCs, would provide students from institutes of higher learning the necessary working experience, he said.

"Our programme, which is scheduled to begin next month, would start with 100 students being offered internships in several GLCs and MNCs," he said after opening the Datuk Ahmad Ibnihajar Cup *sepak takraw* tournament at Komtar Dome yesterday.

At another function in Bukit Mertajam, Khairy said any decision to scrap the use of English in the teaching of Mathematics and Science in primary schools should only be made following a comprehensive study of the issue.

Changes should not be made just because certain quarters questioned the effectiveness of using English to teach these subjects, he said after receiving bottles of mineral water from the Bagan Umno division on behalf of Aman Malaysia, to be distributed to tsunami survivors in Aceh and Sri Lanka.

Cops finish probe on Pudu shooting

KUALA LUMPUR: Police have completed their investigations into the shooting of a sub-contractor in Jalan Pudu on Friday.

Sources said a 52-year-old businessman, remanded for three days, could be charged with allegedly shooting Yew Chee Leong, 46, at his office following a dispute.

Yew, who was shot in the right rib, is recuperating at the Kuala Lumpur Hospital after doctors removed a slug from his body.