

Dr M on why Govt is looking East...

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KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today his administration is "looking East" to countries like Japan and South Korea because their development is much more relevant to Malaysia's growing economy.

Also, there is "a need to balance our people so that they will have a world view which is really a world view, not a world view which is slanted towards one particular group of countries."

The Prime Minister,

speaking to reporters after briefing Malaysian envoys gathered here, on the new Government's domestic and foreign policies, said the present emphasis is "to look East — the Eastern countries that we think we can learn a lot from, namely Japan and South Korea."

In the past, Malaysia had emphasised more towards the West for the training of her people and education.

"For example, we have something like 10,000 students studying in the West.

Only a few hundred in Japan and none at all in Korea. This has given us a lopsided view of the world," said Dr Mahathir.

The Prime Minister said he has asked his deputy, Datuk Musa Hitam, who left for Japan last Friday for a few days' visit enroute for a holiday in the United States, to bring up two matters with the Japanese.

Datuk Musa, who met Premier Zenko Suzuki, was to raise the subject of more Malaysian students to be

sent to Japan, more for on-the-spot training than entrance into universities.

The other matter is the abolition of the visa requirement for travel between Japan and Malaysia.

Said Dr Mahathir: "The best thing we can do is to send students for direct apprenticeship or practical training, not necessarily in Japanese universities but in the industries where it is much easier to gain entry."

"There is, of course, a language problem. But it is worthwhile facing that problem because of the benefits we can get."

He said special institutions would have to be set up to teach the Japanese and Korean languages to students who are bound for these two countries.

On bringing the Japanese and Korean instructors here, Dr Mahathir said that depends on the need. In fact, there is already a suggestion that they should come here to help train Malaysian workers.