

03 MAY 1998

Abdullah-Japan

JAPAN INTERESTED IN CONTINUATION OF LOOK EAST POLICY

PETALING JAYA, May 3 (Bernama) -- Japan is interested in the continuation of Malaysia's Look East Policy, Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said tonight.

"Japan has indicated to us that it is interested in the continuation of the Look East Policy and we have also said that it is our wish that Japan continue to help implement the policy beyond the year 2000, " he told reporters after talks with his Japanese counterpart Keizo Obuchi here.

Abdullah said Obuchi also suggested the possibility of introducing twinning programmes under the Look East Policy to help Malaysian students.

Hence they need not spend a longer period in Japanese universities which necessitated a lot of expenditure.

"If we have a twinning programme, then Malaysian students can study for a certain period in Malaysia and continue the last year in Japan to get their degrees," he said.

Abdullah said the proposal was conveyed to Obuchi by members of the Japanese University Alumni during his meeting with them this afternoon.

The Look East Policy, introduced in 1982 by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad is aimed at inculcating good work ethics among Malaysians by looking to Japan and South Korea and since then the number of Malaysians sent to Japan for skills and educational training had increased.

On an unrelated subject, Abdullah said both agreed that it was important to ensure that the election in Cambodia was credible. Cambodian Co-Premier Hun Sen has called for new elections to be held on July 26.

"We welcome the statement by Hun Sen that he wants to have a credible election and will honour the outcome of the election," he said.

Abdullah said that Japan was also interested in wanting to know when Cambodia would be formally accepted into Asean.

"My reply is that after the new government is formed."

On Myanmar, Abdullah said he and Obuchi agreed that the policy of constructive engagement must continue.

"We agreed that while we continue economic relations, the policy of constructive engagement must also continue," he said.

Abdullah said his Japanese counterpart had sought Malaysia's views on the matter so that he could convey them to the ministerial meeting of the Group of Seven industrialised countries and Russia in London next week.

Abdullah also said that Kuala Lumpur and Tokyo were happy over the good bilateral relations.

"We are happy that Japan and Malaysia are now enjoying very healthy and very good relations," Abdullah added. -- BERNAMA

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