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Rafidah-Japan

RAFIDAH TO JAPAN IN APRIL TO WOO SMIs TO INVEST IN M'SIA

KUALA KANGSAR, Jan 21 (Bernama) -- International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz will leave for Japan in April to woo Japanese entrepreneurs involved in small-and medium-scale industries (SMIs) to invest in Malaysia by teaming up with local companies.

She said there were many family-owned SMIs in Japan which find it hard to invest outside from where they operated, even within Japan itself.

The ministry was making efforts to encourage Japanese SMI entrepreneurs to form joint ventures with their Malaysian counterparts so that they need not have to come to Malaysia, she told reporters after hosting a Hari Raya Aidilfitri open house here today.

Earlier, Rafidah, who is also Kuala Kangsar Member of Parliament, opened a community service centre for the parliamentary constituency at the Kuala Kangsar Umno division building here.

She said her ministry had taken the initiative to attract Japanese SMI operators since several years ago and had succeeded in bringing some companies to Malaysia.

Nevertheless, problems arose if the SMIs were family-run businesses as the entrepreneurs refused to leave their country to come to Malaysia, she said.

"They are managing the SMIs on their own and if they shift their industries to Malaysia, they need to come here, this is the stumbling block," she said.

Rafidah said Japanese entrepreneurs could find their joint-venture partners among Bumiputera and non-Bumiputera businessmen in Malaysia whom they could rely upon to take care of their projects.

By doing so, the Japanese entrepreneurs need not have to come to Malaysia and only send their technical experts if the need arose, she said.

"This is the only way to overcome the problem," she said when asked to comment on Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's statement in Osaka yesterday that Malaysia was keen to attract Japanese SMIs which are facing difficulty in finding people to run them.

Rafidah said interested local entrepreneurs could join her trade delegation in April as meeting personally with the Japanese entrepreneurs could help establish personal contacts to build the confidence and trust between both sides.

She, however, reminded local businessmen not to focus attention merely to secure business deals and to hold majority stake in the partnership.

" We do not want our people to hold majority stake because the company, technology and the products belong to the Japanese. They want to shift here and we must learn first. It's alright if we take a small stake of 30 per cent," she said.

Once the Malaysian entrepreneurs had acquired the technology and established a good working relationship with the Japanese, then they could increase their equity ownership, he said.

"We must think in terms of long-term benefits," she added.

-- BERNAMA

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