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Training institutes have enough places for school leavers

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HUMAN Resources Ministry's Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) have enough places for school-leavers if there is a sudden surge in applications following the relaxation of quota system at the public higher learning institutes.

Human Resources Ministry secretary-general Datuk Dr Syed Muhamad Syed Abdul Kadir said there are currently 19 ITIs and advanced technology training centres in the country, which can take in 17,000 trainees a year.

"With more institutes being built, the intake will be increased to 43,000 trainees a year by the end of the Eighth Malaysia Plan (2001-2005). "So, there will be no problem," he told reporters on the sidelines of the Association of South-East Asian Nations sub-committee on Labour Affairs meeting in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

Syed Muhamad was asked to comment on the ITIs' current capacity to accommodate possible increase in applications from school-leavers, especially the Bumiputeras, to undergo training at the ministry's institutes.

School-leavers, especially the Bumiputeras, are expected to look for alternative learning institutes after the recent Government announcement to relax the quota system for Bumiputera and non-Bumiputera in public universities. Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the Government would consider allowing the non-Bumiputeras to get unfilled university seats reserved for Bumiputeras.

On another development, Syed Muhamad said the ministry does not expect to face much difficulty if there is mass retrenchment following the unfavourable global economic condition.

He said the taskforce set up under the ministry to monitor retrenchments in the country has formulated various strategies.

"Some of them have been implemented such as the job fairs to match employers and job-seekers. "We have also informed employers on procedures they have to take in retrenching workers," he said.

Syed Muhamad, who is leading the taskforce, said retrenchment is not a problem in Malaysia as there are many vacancies in the country.

"All we need to do is match the laid off workers and vacancies," he said, adding that the job fairs which were held before had received overwhelming support.

He said the ministry will organise more job fairs in the country.

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