

Look East Policy will go on, says D-G

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PUTRAJAYA: Financial aid from Japan for programmes under the Look East Policy will end in 2004 but this will not mean the end of the policy, Public Services Department director-general Tan Sri Jamaluddin Damanhuri said.

He said the Government had started looking for new sources of funds to finance the academic and technical training programmes under the policy upon expiry of the Japanese grant.

"Although there are some aspects of the policy we need to review, we will continue with it, especially in sending civil servants and students for short and long-term courses to Japan.

"The expiry of the Japanese grant will have no effect on the training programmes.

"In fact, we will be sending more trainees next year," he told reporters at a Hari Raya open house here yesterday.

The Government is expected to send 40 trainees for academic courses and 20 for technical courses in Japan next year.

Jamaluddin said the department

had issued show-cause letters to scholars suspected of getting themselves in trouble while studying abroad.

Citing those involved in brawls as an example, he, however, said the number of such scholars was small.

On the government decision not to extend the retirement age of civil servants from 56 to 58, Jamaluddin said the decision was final.

He said Cuepacs president Datuk N. Siva Subramaniam had been informed of the decision and the reasons behind it.

"He (Siva Subramaniam) has informed us that Cuepacs will no longer raise the issue."

Jamaluddin said. Last Tuesday, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the Government had rejected the joint proposal by Cuepacs and MTUC to extend the retirement age as it would have far-reaching financial implications for the Government and would also deter promotion prospects for employees.

Last year, the retirement age was raised by one year from 55.