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Jamaluddin-Policy

ALTERNATIVE SOURCE OF FUNDS FOR EAST BOUND STUDENTS

By: Ahmad Fuad Yahya

TOKYO, Dec 12 (Bernama) -- The Government will study sources of alternative funds to finance the education of Malaysians under the Look East Policy programme, Director-General of Public Service Department Tan Sri Jamaluddin Ahmad Damanhuri said.

He said such a study was necessary as based on the present format, the loans received from the Japanese Government for their education in that country would have been fully utilised by 2004.

"The PSD will discuss this matter with the Economic Planning Unit (EPU) and find an appropriate approach to finance the education programme after 2004," he told Bernama after attending a dinner with Malaysian students who are studying in Japan under the Look East Policy Programme, here last night.

Jamaluddin is a member of the Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's delegation now visiting Japan.

Dr Mahathir arrived here early today for a two-day official visit in conjunction with the 20th anniversary of the launching of his Look East Policy.

Jamaluddin said the Japanese Government had given a RM474 million loan to Malaysia in 1999 for the education and training of Malaysian students in Japan under the Look East Policy programme.

The loan was given when Malaysia was facing funding problem for the purpose during the economic slowdown then.

He said the PSD sent about 250 students annually to Japan under the policy for diploma and degree programmes.

The number represented about 25 per cent of the 1,000 students sponsored by the PSD every year for study overseas.

Earlier speaking during a dialogue with the students, Jamaluddin said he believed that the Government would continue with the Look East Policy as it had benefited Malaysia.

He said the Government was committed to the policy and the PSD itself had been urged to increase the number of scholars under that education programme.

"Before 2004, we will make an entire review and find ways, even without the loan, to secure funds so that the programme can be continued," he said.

Jamaluddin said even before Japan gave the loan, students were sent to Japan from the government's own funds.

Malaysia was grateful to Japan for helping out during the economic slowdown period, he added.

Malaysian students were also sent to South Korea under the Look East Policy.

Jamaluddin also believed that the Look East Policy would be continued even after the change in leadership in Malaysia next year.

-- BERNAMA

AFY MFJ AAM