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Syed Hamid-Malaysia/Japan

JAPAN, M' SIA DISCUSS SETTING UP ASEAN-JAPAN VARSITY, SAYS SYED HAMID

PUTRAJAYA, Jan 10 (Bernama) -- Malaysia and Japan today discussed the setting up of the Asean-Japan University, which would stress on technical training and information technology, with Kuala Lumpur offering to host the proposed university

Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said establishing the university was one of the issues discussed at the meeting between Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi with Malaysian Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir at the Prime Minister's Office here today

He said Koizumi was keen to take up the matter which include providing skilled Japanese workers to teach in technical fields at the university.

"Malaysia offered not only technical training but wanted it upgraded to university level. Malaysia is willing to provide the location for the Japanese-Asean University.

"It will be able to train people not only from Asean but also from other regions," he told a media briefing after the meeting of the two leaders.

Koizumi arrived here today for a one-day visit on the second leg of his five Asean-member nation tour.

Syed Hamid said Malaysia's Look East Policy introduced 20 years ago had been a strong point in Tokyo-Kuala Lumpur relations.

"We still have more than 1,000 Malaysian students studying in Japan but it is very expensive for students to study there," he said.

On the contrary, if the proposed university is set up in a country like Malaysia, it would benefit Japan in providing the necessary manpower while making Japanese know-how on technical fields more accessible to people in Asean at a reduced cost, he said.

The Asean-Japan University was proposed by Dr Mahathir at the Asean Summit in Brunei Darussalam last year also attended by Koizumi.

Syed Hamid said Malaysia also emphasised on the importance of the Japanese economic revival as this would help the region to become economically stronger and resilient.

"The discussions covered all dimensions of the ties between the two countries," he said.

The two leaders also agreed that countries in the world should take new approaches in the way things were done in the aftermath of the Sept 11 terrorist attacks on the US.

"They also agreed that under the WTO (World Trade Organisation), economies of countries must be strong to withstand the onslaught of foreign-owned multinational companies," he said.

Syed Hamid said Dr Mahathir and Koizumi also agreed that the East Asian countries need to interact more cohesively to become mainstream of regional or world economies.

He said they also discussed the Palestinian issue which was crucial to world peace and to wipe out global terrorism.

Asked if the proposed East Asian Economic Caucus (EAEC) was discussed, he said it was not on the agenda.

"But overall, the Japanese guaranteed to continue to play a major role in the region...they want to get their act together," he said.

On the whole, the two leaders had a very productive discussion, be it bilateral, regional or international, he added.

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