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Senate-Winding

MINISTRY MULLS OVER POINTS SYSTEM FOR NATIONAL SERVICE

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 21 (Bernama) -- The Defence Ministry is considering to use a system of awarding points to participants of the national service to be introduced in 2004.

Deputy Defence Minister Datuk Mohd Shafie Apdal said the points accumulated could be a plus to the youths when applying for admission to colleges and universities or jobs.

That would make the programme more attractive, he said when winding up the 2003 Budget debate in the Dewan Negara here today.

He said the curriculum of the proposed national service would be tailored to create fun in the programme.

On housing for armed forces personnel, he said the problem was expected to be solved soon with the completion of 3,963 houses of various types built by the Syarikat Perumahan Negara (SPN).

The housing problem was only faced by soldiers in the urban areas, he said.

He said 1,367 soldiers had yet to be given housing as only 34,655 family houses were available while 36,022 personnel were eligible for the facility.

Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Tengku Azlan Sultan Abu Bakar said information on the problem of delay in the settlement process of various cases in the Syariah Court would be disseminated through pamphlets, dialogues and information counters.

It was hoped that this could reduce society's negative perception on the conduct of the Syariah Court so that they would not solely blame the court for problems faced, he said.

"The government admits that the Syariah Court system and procedure is one of the reasons for the long time taken for disposal of certain cases but the problem of getting both parties to cooperate is also a major factor in the delay," he said.

Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said calls for Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to become the UN Secretary-General were a big agenda and so far the Prime Minister had not spoken on the matter.

He also expressed regret over the recent fight involving Malaysian students in Jordan, saying it had affected the image of Malaysia, which is respected by many countries.

The House will sit again on Monday.

-- BERNAMA

ZMN HK YBY