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Law - Antarctica

PM TO DECIDE ON OUR OWN RESEARCH CENTRE IN ANTARCTICA

BINTANGOR, Sarawak, Feb 22 (Bernama) - The Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohammad, will decide if we should have our own research centre in the Antarctica, Science, Technology and Environment Minister Datuk Seri Law Hieng Ding said today.

He said when he accompanied the Prime Minister on his trip to Antarctica he saw Malaysian scientists doing research there and they briefed Dr Mahathir on their work.

"The scientists who have been there since 1999 had identified certain projects."

"I think our Prime Minister is now considering or looking into the possibility of Malaysia having its own research centre there."

Law said this to reporters after hosting a Chinese New Year open house jointly with Meradong state assemblyman Datuk Ting Chek Sii at the Basketball Stadium here.

"The national technical co-ordinator of our Antarctica Scientific Research Programme, Dr.Azizan Abu Samah has suggested that the country should have its own research centre there," Law said.

"This will demonstrate the ability and stamina of local scientists in exploring new high profile scientific fields."

Besides, he added it was important too in the long term to further develop and strengthen the national science research mission particularly in areas where the country had lagged behind.

According to him, at present, our scientists were sharing the facilities of New Zealand's Scott Base and Australia's Casey Station.

"We are paying fully for the cost of our research and since we have laid our foundation for research works, we should consider setting up our own station," Law said.

He said it would cost around RM20 million annually to set up and maintain a station there.

On the Antarctica trip, Law described it as a once-in-a-lifetime experience for him and his wife and "we are grateful to the Prime Minister for inviting us to come along."

-- BERNAMA

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