

12 SEP 2003

Budget-Skills

GOVT ALLOCATES RM319 MILLION TO INCREASE SKILLED WORKERS

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 12 (Bernama) -- The government allocated RM319 million in the national budget for next year to increase the quality and quantity of the country's skilled workers, Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

Prime Minister when tabling the 2004 Budget in Parliament, said, this would be done through expanding existing facilities and building new skills training centres.

The Human Resources Ministry would have the capacity to train 17,000 trainees in various skills when 10 new training institutions were operational.

Apart from that, a sum of RM245.5 million was also allocated to provide additional facilities and build 25 National Youth Skills Institutes that could train 11,000 trainees.

He said RM77.5 million was provided to complete 14 existing institutes and build three new institutes and RM107.3 million to meet the management costs of Mara Skills Institutes.

Dr Mahathir called on government-owned companies such as Tenaga Nasional Berhad and Telekom to provide technical and vocational training at their training centres.

The government also proposed that expenses incurred by employers in employing unemployed graduates registered with the Economic Planning Unit (EPU) be given double tax reduction for the period of two years.

For unemployed graduates requiring retraining, they could obtain financing from the Retraining Fund under the the Package of New Strategies.

He said under the package, the government had provided RM500 million for the Skills Development Fund to provides loans to trainees.

The training institutes include Industrial Training Institutes, MARA Skills Institutes, National Youth Skills Institutes and other selected private institutes.

Dr Mahathir said a special agency ala the National Higher Learning Education Fund Board would be set up to manage the Skills Development Fund with an interest rate of three per cent and the monthly repayment schedule would be made in stages.

Apart from these training institutions, Community Colleges would also provide vocational training while Pusat Giat Mara would be upgraded as Community Colleges with emphasis on vocational training.

-- BERNAMA

JM AHH RYN