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Improved terms to woo Malaysian scientists home

SHAH ALAM, Thurs. - The Government is improving the terms and conditions offered to woo Malaysian scientists working abroad as the steps taken so far have not produced the desired results, Science, Technology and Environment Minister Datuk Seri Law Hieng Ding said today.

Offering attractive paying jobs alone was not enough, he said. Conducive and attractive business opportunities should also be made available for them to start businesses.

"The important factor (for them to return) is the opportunity made available to them. Their needs, if they return, should be taken care of. If they want to work, they should be able to get jobs with attractive salaries, and if they want to start businesses, there should be an avenue for them to do so."

Law said the tax exemption for high capital start-up businesses announced by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad in the last Budget was one of the measures to lure the scientists.

He said among the reasons cited for the negative response from the overseas-based scientists were the lack of facilities here and the high salaries they received overseas.

He said until 1997 (when efforts to woo the scientists was stopped temporarily for two years), only about 100 professionals had returned to take up jobs locally.

Law said the Ministry was working on organising workshops for young entrepreneurs and have invited young businessmen from South Korea and China to participate.

"There are many young entrepreneurs between 30-45 years in Malaysia. With proper guidance, they can create the environment for businesses to be set up."