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Secretariat plan in quest to put Malaysians on Nobel Prize winners' list

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PUTRAJAYA, Thurs. - The Government may set up a secretariat in the Academy of Sciences Malaysia in its quest to put Malaysians on the Nobel Prize winners' list by 2020.

Speaking to reporters after the official announcement of the Nobel Prize Centennial Exhibition and the launch of its logo at the Shangri-La Hotel today, Academy of Sciences Malaysia vice-president Datuk Dr Mohd Salleh Mohd Nor said the academy's proposal, entitled the "Nobel Path", was being considered.

He said the secretariat would receive funds to manage and promote fundamental research in the six Nobel Prize categories - physics, chemistry, physiology or medicine, literature, peace and economics - in local universities.

Setting up the secretariat would be the first step in realising Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's aspiration to see Malaysians receiving the prestigious award.

In his speech in 1998 at the academy's dinner, Dr Mahathir challenged the scientific community to produce a Nobel laureate by 2020.

Speaking after launching the logo for the Nobel Prize Centennial Travelling Exhibition in conjunction with the 100th anniversary of the Nobel Prize which would be held here next year, Science, Technology and Environment Minister Datuk Seri Law Hieng Ding said in the quest to produce a Nobel Prize winner, the search would not be confined to local talents, but also Malaysians working overseas.

"There are hundreds of Malaysians abroad who are doing well in various disciplines. Historically, we have seen Asian winners like the Japanese and Chinese who started their careers abroad."

On Malaysians winning the Nobel Prize by 2020, Law said it was a big challenge to Malaysians particularly the scientific community.