

Pak Lah: SME loans are for all

'It should not be based on racial status'

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KUALA LUMPUR: The Government wants all loans available to small and medium enterprises to be given out regardless of their racial status, said Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

The Prime Minister said the matter was raised at the Sixth National SME Development Council meeting yesterday.

"It is not just the government institutions but the commercial banks and financial institutions.

"They have given out financial assistance to the SMEs. Which means that there is the prospect for them (SMEs) to get loans."

He was asked about concerns raised by the non-bumiputra SMEs on the difficulty in securing funds for their business.

The Selangor MCA Youth recently brought the issue to the Finance Ministry of non-bumiputras not getting loans from SME banks.

This year, Abdullah said, the council approved 190 key programmes for SME development, with RM3.7bil being committed.

Of the programmes, he said, 134 were aimed at building the capacity and capability of SMEs.

With the implementation of these programmes, Abdullah said, about 110,000 SME accounts were expected to receive a total of RM51bil in loans from financial institutions.

This would be complemented by about 37,000 loans to be approved under the various Government schemes.

SME Association of Malaysia president Chua Tiam Wee called on the Government to inject more funds into SME banks to ensure that disbursement of funds could be carried out fast and be given out to all races.

"Currently, we understand that these banks are either under-capitalised or had given out loans meant for bumiputras on behalf of other agencies like the Entrepreneur and Cooperative Development Ministry."

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