

Shafie Apdal's Visit To Japan Opens New Chapter Of Rural Development
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TOKYO, Oct 3 (Bernama) -- Malaysia's rural transformation initiatives have gone global with the adoption of the Japanese model of success in a bid to achieve the government's aspirations to make Malaysia a high-income nation.

The Rural and Regional Development Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Shafie Apdal's recent visit to the Land of the Rising Sun had also opened a new chapter of rural development initiatives and the government's efforts to boost the economy.

In achieving the status of a fully developed nation by 2020, the Look East Policy mooted by former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad in 1982, had clearly brought about continuous positive impact, while Japan remained a relevant model in all aspects.

Five days of numerous meetings with rural community leaders, as well as the visit to rural industrial areas and traditional handicraft workshops in Japan, also showed how serious Mohd Shafie was in trying to develop the rural community in Malaysia.

The information garnered directly from the rural community leaders on how to develop rural economy, must have inspired Mohd Shafie to do the same in Malaysia.

For example, during his visit to Oohara, Kyoto to monitor the implementation Japan's agriculture cooperative model, which is capable of generating a daily income of up to RM20,000, Mohd Shafie said, if successfully implemented in Malaysia, it would definitely change the people's perspective and the living condition of the rural community.

In fact, he said it could also close the socio-economic gap between urban and rural areas and reduce the people's dependency on the government.

Mohd Shafie said the setting up of the agriculture cooperative would be seriously considered and the proposal on the matter would be tabled to the Cabinet after a through study of suitability of implementation be done by the ministry.

With the visit, Mohd Shafie also opened the doors for Mara to strengthen their existing ties with top Japanese companies and to forge new cooperation in education with public and private universities in Japan.

This will enable more Malaysian students to pursue education and undergo industrial training in Japan, especially with the cooperation between Mara and the Organisation for Industrial Spiritual and Cultural Advancement (OISCA) International, which has existed over the past 40 years.

During the visit, Mohd Shafie, who is also OISCA Malaysia president, also met with OISCA International president Datuk Yoshiko Nakano and representatives from numerous private universities in Japan to discuss various initiatives to lure them to collaborate with the Mara Education Foundation (YPM).

So far, 15 public and private universities in Japan have forged cooperation with YPM, while approximately 900 Mara-sponsored students are pursuing their education in industrial fields in Japan.

Mara director-general Datuk Ibrahim Ahmad said the five-day visit also opened the doors for Malaysians to undergo industrial entrepreneur development training.

"This is where we can create new investment opportunity for Malaysia, that is through the collaboration between Mara and OISCA and cooperation from the industry players in Malaysia.

"What's important is to ensure that our entrepreneurs remain competitive and Mara to remain relevant in the entrepreneur development and education in Malaysia," he told Bernama recently.

The investment between Malaysia and Japan in education is estimated at RM880 million.

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