

Bakti raises RM2.5 million for Japan relief efforts

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KUALA LUMPUR: The Association of Wives of Ministers and Deputy Ministers (Bakti) has helped raise a total RM2.5 million for ongoing relief efforts in disaster-hit Japan.

Contributors included eCosway.com, 7-Eleven Malaysia and BerMaz Motor Sdn Bhd, with US\$100,000 (RM301,300) in donations each. Bakti gave RM100,000 while the welfare organisation of the wives of Selangor assemblymen and former Barisan Nasional assemblymen (Kasih) donated RM100,000.

Bakti president Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor presented the donation to Japanese Ambassador Masahiko Horie here yesterday.

Also present were Bakti deputy president Puan Sri Noorainee Abdul Rahman and Berjaya Corporation CEO Datuk Robin Tan, who presented the mock-cheque from 7-Eleven to Horie.

"It is our hope that this (donation) would, in a small way, help alleviate the pain and suffering of those affected by the disaster," said Rosmah. "Our prayers go out

to the victims, especially the elderly, women and children."

She commended the corporate sector for coming forward with generous donations.

Other donors are SP Setia Bhd, Yayasan Al-Bukhari, Pan Malaysian Pools Sdn Bhd, Selangor Turf Club, Penang Turf Club, Lembaga Totalisator Malaysia, Eu Yan Sang Sdn Bhd, and Limkokwing University of Creative Technology. They donated some RM1 million collectively.

The money will be channelled to the victims through the Japanese Red Cross Society.

Horie said he was moved by the continuous generosity of Malaysia in helping his nation recover from the disaster.

"The Japanese government is doing all it can to contain and control the damage from the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant.

"I believe my people will live to overcome this tragedy and difficulties faced in the past three weeks, and I believe that we will be able to do it with the support of our Malaysian friends," he said. Horie.



Horie (left) with Rosmah, Noorainee and Robin Tan after receiving the mock cheque from 7-Eleven yesterday.

ZULKIFLI ERSAL/
THE SUN

Long-term resident passes make debut

> An initiative to retain highly skilled foreign workers, says minister

BY HEMANANTHANI
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KUALA LUMPUR: Highly-skilled foreign workers and expatriates can start applying for the newly-introduced resident pass - which gives the holder the long-term right to live and work in Malaysia - starting today.

Home Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein said the resident pass is among the initiatives aimed at attracting and retaining the best foreign and local talents, whose skills and expertise will play a vital role in the success

of the Economic Transformation Programme (ETP) and for Malaysia to achieve developed and high-income status.

"The implementation of the resident pass is an alternative to the issuance of entry permits as the pass holders enjoy the same facilities of those entry permit holders," said Hishammuddin in a press conference after a meeting with Talent Corporation Malaysia in Parliament yesterday.

He added that resident pass holders will have the advantage of not being tied to an employer and are allowed to live and work in Malaysia for a longer period of 10

years. The pass will also be renewable beyond this period.

"However, these pass holders are not eligible for an unlimited period of stay, nor can they obtain permanent resident status or apply for citizenship," he said.

Hishammuddin said immediate family members will also be given resident passes and can enjoy the same benefits as the principle holder.

"For example, the spouse of the principle resident pass holder can also seek employment in Malaysia," he said.

"The resident pass will also be made available to our diaspora -

those originally from Malaysia - as well as their offspring who no longer hold Malaysian citizenship," he added.

Applications for the pass can be made at the Immigration Department.

Among the criteria to apply for the pass is that the applicant must be qualified and experienced in the 12 critical sectors identified under the National Key Results Areas.

Last December, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Abdul Razak announced the introduction of the resident pass when he launched Talent Corporation Malaysia.

Najib launches RM100m start-up fund

BY ALYAA ALHADJRI
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SHAH ALAM: Budding local "technopreneurs" now have another option of realising their dreams with the launch of Malaysian Technology Development Corporation (MTDC) RM100 million Business Start-up Fund (BSF).

The fund, launched by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Abdul Razak yesterday, is meant to encourage innovation and boost participation of local companies in technology-based areas.

"There are many local companies that can come up with innovative ideas, but do not have the resources to commercialise and market their inventions," said Najib in his speech at the event in Universiti Institut Teknologi Mara (UiTM) here. Also present was Higher Education Minister Datuk Seri Mohamed Khaled Nordin and MTDC CEO Norhalim Yunus.

Najib, who is also finance minister, said having a small bank balance and relatively new track record often affects the chances of these companies to obtain funding from commercial banks.

"This is where there is need for an evaluation that cannot be done by a commercial bank, as while it is a high risk venture, there is also a very high potential for growth," he said, when touching on the fund's creation, first announced during the 2011 Budget.

Under the scheme, a company can obtain funds without the need to provide a collateral and repayments will only be triggered after recipient companies begin to generate income.

Key target groups of the BSF include companies set up by universities and self-financed companies that have yet to yield significant income.

Najib said it was important for local entrepreneurs to engage with the industry, in order to come up with innovative and competitive products.

At the event, Najib also witnessed the exchange of a memorandum of agreement between UiTM and MTDC to build a Technopreneur Centre at its Shah Alam campus.

Norhalim, in his speech, said through the fund, MTDC hopes to further create successful 'technopreneurs' by supporting them through the often difficult early years.

Govt won't bow to pressure, Interlok issue closed: DPM

PAGOH: The government would not bow to pressure over the *Interlok* novel as the issue had been resolved and the final decision already made, said Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin.

He said raising of the issue again to gain support was irresponsible and ill-intended. "The government had made its decision. We had announced this in parliament and it was endorsed, so we will hold on to that.

"If the opposition parties are exploiting the issue by getting non-governmental organisations to again voice objection (against use of the novel as a school textbook), perhaps it's because of the upcoming (Sarawak) election."

Muhyiddin said this after handing over aid to flood victims in the Pagoh parliamentary constituency at the Pagoh Sports Complex, here, yesterday.

Muhyiddin, who is also Pagoh MP, said the Opposition purposely did not want the issue to end, but to create anti-government feelings. "The government, however, will not compromise as this involves national security." - Bernama

No arrests in sex video screening: Hishammuddin

KUALA LUMPUR: Home Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein confirmed that no arrests have been made in relation to the screening of a sex video allegedly implicating an opposition leader.

Hishammuddin said thus far, around eight police reports had been filed related to the video, but added that the current police investigations are based on the initial report filed last Tuesday by opposition leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

On March 21, a trio calling themselves "Datuk T" held a private screening of a video recording showing a man resembling Anwar having sex with a Chinese woman for selected members of the media and politicians at Carcosa Seri Negara.

The trio later came out to reveal their identities at a press conference. They are former Malacca chief minister Tan Sri Rahim Tamby Chik, businessman Datuk Shazryl Eskay Abdullah and Peraka treasurer Datuk Shuib Lazim. All three were later were called in to give their statements at the Federal police headquarters at

Bukit Aman.

Some websites, however, reported that the trio had been arrested in connection with the sex video and released on police bail. But Hishammuddin confirmed that they had not been arrested.

"None, to my knowledge," he said, on the purported arrests at a press conference at a meeting room in Parliament yesterday.

Asked if the police will arrest the trio for holding a media screening of the sex video, he said it is up to either the police or Attorney-General's chambers.

"We have to go through the process. I don't know, you have to ask the prosecutor or the police. But I think the IGP (Tan Sri Ismail Omar) said in the past week, when they want to arrest, they will arrest (the suspects).

"He promised that no stone (will be) left unturned," Hishammuddin said.

On responses by various Christian groups that the Alkitab Malay language bible should not be collected due to the stamping by the Home Ministry, Hishammuddin said he had been getting mixed

responses on the matter.

"Some said they would need more time, some said they would collect it... But I stand by what I said that at the end of the day, people want a solution that is fair and reasonable on the issue of the bible.

"I believe (Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Idris) Jala and Christian associations are working very hard to find a solution," said Hishammuddin, adding the talks are ongoing.

The ongoing row is over the release of the 35,000 copies of the Malay language bibles which were languishing in Port Klang and Kuching Port.

On March 15, the ministry announced two conditions for the release of the Bibles - that they have an official ministerial stamp saying the books were for use for Christians only; and that the bibles bear serial numbers so that their port of entry can be traced.

The Christian Federation of Malaysia has refused to collect the bibles, which they say have been defaced by the Home Ministry stamp.