

Business training for former soldiers with no pensions

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PUTRAJAYA: The Defence Ministry has introduced an entrepreneurship development programme to assist former soldiers not eligible for pension to venture into business.

Deputy Minister Datuk Dr Abdul Latiff Ahmad said the former servicemen would be given intensive training by experienced entrepreneurs.

He said not all pensionless former soldiers, estimated to be about 175,000, would automatically qualify for the programme.

"We are very selective as this is an outcome-based programme. They would have to undergo a test, conducted by the Universiti Putra Malaysia, to ascertain whether they have what it takes to be successful entrepreneurs," he said here yesterday.

Pensionless former soldiers are those who

served less than 21 years and had left on a voluntarily basis, normally after being in the service for between 13 and 18 years and were given gratuity.

Dr Abdul Latiff said for a start, the scheme would target at producing 1,000 entrepreneurs annually.

"The target is small compared with the total number of pensionless former soldiers as we are focusing on quality. We want to ensure this programme achieves the objective," he said, adding that RM50mil had been allocated for the programme.

Dr Abdul Latiff said a laboratory comprising academicians, government agencies related to business funding and the private sector had been established to draw the training module.

The SME Bank and Mara were among the government agencies while the private sector was represented by Pernama and 7-eleven Malaysia Sdn Bhd in the laboratory.