

Hisham: NS to proceed as planned in January

KUALA LUMPUR: The National Service Training Programme (NS) will proceed as planned in January, the Dewan Rakyat was told.

Defence Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein, in answering a supplementary question by Nasrudin Hassan (Pas-Temerloh), said the programme should not be postponed further.

“The programme, which will be conducted using revised modules, will benefit the youth, especially in developing soft and hard skills. With the cooperation of 10 other ministries, we are able to use available resources to save cost. It should not be politicised, as the children, who are supposed to benefit from the programme, will become victims (if it does not take off).

“The pioneer project for the revised modules started on Oct 17 and involved 470 trainees. We are happy that 369 or 78.5 per cent of them signed up voluntarily, exceeding our expectation of 70 per cent voluntary participation.”

He said the reviewed programme focused on six important aspects — module, trainees, trainers, facilities, alumni and media communication plan.

“It consists of 2 phases. The first

phase, or Integrated Learning Process, will be carried out in 8 weeks to train participants in leadership, soft skills, exposure to technical skills, as well as attitude assessment. The second phase, which is optional, are for those who are interested to continue. They will go through hard skills training and certificates will be given to the participants by the National Service Training Department and skill training institutes.

“Since NS’s establishment on Feb 16, 2004, 864,947 teenagers have participated in the programme. In a survey done in collaboration with Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) in 2010, 80 per cent of NS alumni, parents and employers that were interviewed agreed that the programme had a positive impact on the youth,” said Hishammuddin in replying to a question by Tan Sri Annuar Musa (BN-Ketereh).

He said despite the numerous challenges, including the country’s economy, the programme must be defended as it was part of nation-building for youth.

“That is why we approached 10 ministries to get feedback, as well as gather input from stakeholders. NS can continue without affecting the budget.”