

Karenni Unemployed Youths Offered Work in Japan

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One Hundred youths from Karenni State under the age of 30 will be given job training in early February so that they can go work in Japan said the state prime minister, U Khin Maung Oo.

The training will last four months and during that time the Japanese companies will come and choose which trainees to employ, U Khin Maung Oo said at the Karenni State Day celebrations held in Loikaw on 15th January.



He said: "Training will be given, especially in the Japanese language, because when they go to Japan they must be able to speak the language, otherwise they can't go. They will also receive basic job-related training lectures in topics such as construction and agriculture. During that time the Japanese companies will choose who to take."

The programme was agreed upon when the state prime minister and government representatives went to Japan and met with about 20 Japanese companies on 7th December 2014.

Ko Pyay Nyein Aung who works at a construction site said that since there is a scarcity of jobs for youths in Karenni State this kind of opportunity could help those who do not have enough of an income.

He said: "I have been working hard on a construction site. These kinds of jobs are the only ones that need employees here. Wages are also very low so incomes are insufficient. If we were to try and go by ourselves to Japan we could not afford it at all. If they are going to carry out this plan I want to go there."

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Though some youths are working in the Maw Chi mining project, which is a big project in the state, overall there are very few jobs for youths in the state according to community based organisations (CBOs).

Ko Kyaw Htin Aung from Union of Karenni State Youth (UKSY) is sceptical of the government's motives. He pointed out that the government has been in power for four years but that they have only just started the scheme now, less than a year before the elections. He wonders if the scheme has been organised purely out of goodwill or if the government have just done it in the hope that it will make them more popular before the election.

Every year an increasing number of youths go to neighbouring countries to look for work because there are no jobs for them in Karenni State.

The state prime minister said the state government has an agreement with the Japanese companies that the youths can work for three years in Japan and if they want to continue working there they can extend their stay.

He said: "We got an agreement for a three year period in a memorandum of understanding (MOU). If they are needed for a longer term they [the Japanese] will extend the term to five years. If the workers want to come back that is also okay. They can use their skills here and since they have been trained in modern skills it will be very useful for their families and also for Karenni State."

The state prime minister said that the programme was jointly organised by the Karenni State Government, the Japanese Government and the Japanese companies. The youths will be able to legally work in Japan and the state government has guaranteed that it will be easy to send money directly back to their families in Loikaw.

To be picked for the scheme youths have to be educated to at least eighth grade and be no older than 30 years old. There are proposals to employ women and the state government will hold meetings to decide on whether to send women to work in Japan.

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