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Russia to Increase University Places for North Korean Students, Cultural Diplomacy Agency Says

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KCNA

Russia plans to increase the number of university spaces reserved for students from North Korea, the head of state-funded cultural diplomacy agency Rossotrudnichestvo said.

Moscow and Pyongyang have deepened political, military and cultural ties since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, with a mutual defense pact signed last December.

"There is a growing demand for a higher quota, which is supported by the government. We will announce the expansion [of this quota] shortly," Rossotrudnichestvo head Yevgeny Primakov told the state-run RIA Novosti news agency.

Russia currently allocates 100 places annually for North Korean students. The concrete number of additional slots has not yet been determined, Primakov said.

"These are talented, motivated students, who tend to return to the DPRK after their studies,"

Primakov said, using the abbreviation for North Korea's full name.

"Many enroll in the Far Eastern Technical University, schools in Kazan and Bauman Moscow State Technical University, focusing on areas such as computer science and materials science," he added.

Primakov also indicated readiness to offer similar opportunities to Afghan citizens, though admissions for these students are currently "on hold" until Afghanistan's Taliban leadership makes a "clear decision," specifically their consent for Afghan youth to study in Russia.

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The statement comes as Russian university students are facing a significant rise in tuition fees after President Vladimir Putin called to restrict the scope of higher education and train more graduates for industrial careers to alleviate current labor shortages.

According to data from RAEX, tuition costs have risen by at least 25% at seven out of the 10 leading Russian universities over the last year, affecting disciplines including applied mathematics, computer science, technical physics and nuclear physics.

The largest increase was reported at the Moscow Institute of Physics and Technology, where tuition for one of the most popular majors, applied mathematics and informatics, rose by 64% from 467,000 to 767,000 rubles ($6,000 to $10,000).

Other disciplines, such as computer science, engineering, nuclear physics and technology and technical physics, saw their fees rise by 48%.

At Moscow State University, tuition for general medicine increased by 40%, while tuition for Oriental and African studies rose by 32%.

Other universities — including RANEPA, Bauman Moscow State Technical University, MEPhI and St. Petersburg Polytechnic University — recorded increases ranging between 15% and 41%.

In May, the State Duma introduced legislation authorizing the government to regulate scholarships and university admissions.

The bill also seeks to reduce the number of academic majors for which students can take out loans. Officials from the Education and Science Ministry indicated that this measure will primarily impact disciplines such as law, economics and management.

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