

18 AUG 1997

Taib-Squatters

SQUATTER PROBLEMS IN SARAWAK RESOLVED, SAYS TAIB

MIRI, Aug 18 (Bernama) -- Sarawak has been successful in relocating thousands of families living in squatter areas to more comfortable surroundings, Chief Minister Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud said today.

He said efforts to relocate the squatters began 15 years ago through various means like providing land lots to poor families and the construction of more low-cost houses.

"We want the people to stay in comfortable homes because we don't want the image of a government that allows its people to stay in unkempt and dirty areas," he said at the ground breaking of the Miri City Fan and Cultural Centre project here which was performed by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

If the people continued to stay in squatter areas, it could effect foreign investors' confidence in the government, said Abdul Taib.

He said there was a high rate of rural people migrating to towns and they resorted to squatting.

Forty per cent of Sarawak's two million people was staying in urban areas compared to only 20 per cent when Sarawak joined Malaysia in 1963, he said.

"This is because of the fast development taking place in the state," he said.

However, Abu Taib said Sarawak would not be able to achieve the level of development in the peninsula because its population was small and the private sector was not prepared for large scale investments in building the infrastructures like roads and bridges due to the slow returns. --BERNAMA

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