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PNB-SARAWAK

TWO PNB UNITS INVEST RM484 MLN IN SARAWAK'S OIL PALMS SECTOR

KOTA SAMARAHAN, Aug 10 (Bernama) -- Two companies owned by Permodalan Nasional Berhad (PNB) -- Golden Hope Plantations and Austral Enterprise, which in turn is owned by Island & Peninsular -- have invested RM484 million in the oil palms sector in Sarawak.

PNB chairman Tan Sri Ahmad Sarji Abdul Hamid said Austral now owns 39,000 ha of plantation land in the state and 30,000 ha have been planted with oil palms with an investment of RM320 million.

"Golden Hope has planted 12,000 ha with oil palms at an investment of RM164 million and it has also pioneered the building of a central township at its estate in Bintulu as a management centre," he said at the state-level launch of Amanah Saham Nasional (ASN) 2 here. It was officiated by chief minister Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud.

The "Desa Lavang" central township is a pioneer project to raise the level of oil palm estate management. The project was started in 1996 and is expected to be fully ready by January.

The central township measuring 12,000 ha and located about 70 km from Bintulu has recreational facilities such as a community hall, soccer pitch and post office.

Ahmad Sarji said palm oil production from two of PNB's companies here would contribute to the 30 percent of Sarawak's palm oil output.

These two firms also provide job opportunities to 3,700 people in the state.

Besides these two firms, Ahmad Sarji said PNB is also active in Sarawak through another subsidiary, Sime Darby, through the ownership of buildings, workshops and warehouses covering 27,524 sq metres and through Kontena Nasional which owns KONNAS Sarawak Sdn Bhd.

Ahmad Sarji said ASN2, which was launched by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on June 9, has attracted 722 investors in Sarawak with investments totalling RM5.6 million.

As at Aug 6, 11,766 individuals in the country had invested RM100.72 million

-- 10,250 with direct investments totalling RM83.29 million and 1,516 investors

through their savings of RM17.43 million in the Employees Provident Fund.

-- BERNAMA

RDY SHY