

2 JUL 2002

Taib-SMI

SMIS NEED TO DIVERSIFY, SAYS ABDUL TAIB

KUCHING, July 2 (Bernama) -- Sarawak's small- and medium-scale industries (SMIs) need to diversify their businesses and tap into potential areas which promise better returns, Chief Minister Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud said today.

"The SMIs also need to develop their human resources to maintain a competitive edge over foreign companies," he said when opening a state seminar on "Investment in the manufacturing sector", here.

He encouraged local investors to exploit the opportunities in resource-based activities like the agro-based industry, especially the manufacturing of food products and biotechnology.

Abdul Taib said that Sarawak, with its rich natural resources, provided considerable potential for the development of resource-based industries.

"But companies venturing into the food industry need to emphasise the highest level of hygiene in food processing, complying with the stringent ruling imposed by importing countries," he said.

Abdul Taib said those interested to invest in deep-sea fishing, which had not been widely exploited, were assured of big returns.

He also said that the people of Sarawak were happy with the smooth transition of power by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi next year.

He paid tribute to Dr Mahathir for steering the country to what it is today, promoting investment in areas where others fear to venture into and excelling in the process.

"The Barisan Nasional (BN) government under the leadership of the prime minister and his deputy has continued to spur political stability," he said.

-- BERNAMA

FLL JK