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Sirim chief's contract extended to 2005

SHAH ALAM, Sun. - Sirim Bhd president and chief executive Datuk Dr Ariffin Aton's contract has been extended by another two years starting tomorrow.

The extension has been agreed to by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who is also the Finance Minister.

The extension, which will end on Aug 31, 2005, will give Ariffin time to complete projects he initiated during the Seventh Malaysia Plan (SMP).

"I will be able to see the projects, both infrastructure and other facilities, completed before my term ends," he told the New Straits Times.

He wants to be involved in the projects, to avoid repeating mistakes.

Ariffin, who was the Petronas Research and Scientific Services Sdn Bhd managing director and chief executive officer, was appointed the president/CEO of Sirim Bhd when it was corporatised on Sept 1, 1996.

"I was appointed on a three-year contract and upon completion, my term was extended for two years and subsequently another two years, which ends today," he said.

"The post is a challenge for me and I intend to fulfil our leaders' dreams for Sirim Bhd," said Ariffin, a chemical engineer by training.

Sirim Bhd, which celebrates its seventh anniversary as a corporatised body, has seen many achievements in research and industrial development, although there were a few pitfalls at the beginning.

One of the first things that he looked into was improving the management system of the then Standard and Industrial Research Institute Malaysia, a statutory body.

"Most of the things was laid out for us. All that was needed was a few modifications to suit our operation. It should not be forgotten that Sirim was very much Government-driven," he said.

"Because it was corporatised, it required us to have a thorough relook at some of the systems."

He said it established the various levels of authority for a clear demarcation and accountability of various entities in Sirim Bhd.

"Once the corporate governance was put in place, I also established a Human Resource System with the help of consultants and eventually came up with a Performance and Development Appraisal System," he said.

He also helped set up Sirim Bhd's internal audit with the assistance from the Accountant General and a transparent procurement system.

Feedback received over the past two years has been positive.

"Observers feel that most of the Sirim staff are more professional now. The business circle has seen a radical change, in the sense that we are more concerned with delivery, both in terms of quality and timeliness," he said.

All of Sirim Bhd's departments, divisions and units have the ISO certification and this has indirectly helped the staff to upgrade their performance.

He plans to give more emphasis on industrial research to help small- and medium-scale industry entrepreneurs.