

PM to launch seed centre

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Scientists from China to help in research and development

KUALA LUMPUR: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi will perform the ground-breaking ceremony for the Seed Research and Development Centre in Perlis, the first of its kind in the country.

The ceremony is part of Abdullah's visit to Kedah, Perlis, Penang and northern Perak to launch the Northern Corridor Economic Region (NCER) on Monday.

Perlis Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Shahidan Kasim said the state-of-the-art centre, to be located either in Kangar or Arau, is expected to be ready within seven months.

The centre is being initiated by Sime Darby Bhd, which has been entrusted with drawing up the NCER masterplan.

Shahidan said the centre would

produce high quality seeds both for local consumption and export.

"Sime Darby and the Chinese Academy of Agriculture Sciences will sign a Memorandum of Understanding during the launch," he told a press conference at a hotel here yesterday.

The Chinese Academy of Agriculture Sciences, set up in 1957, is China's most important national agricultural research organisation and is under the direct leadership of the Agriculture Ministry in Beijing. The academy has over 10,000 staff and 38 research institutes across 17 different provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions.

Shahidan said scientists from China would be helping in the research and development (R&D) on



seed cultivation.

He said to support the centre, the state will set up a cluster of factories.

"This, in the long-term, will also provide some 10,000 jobs both at the centre and the factories.

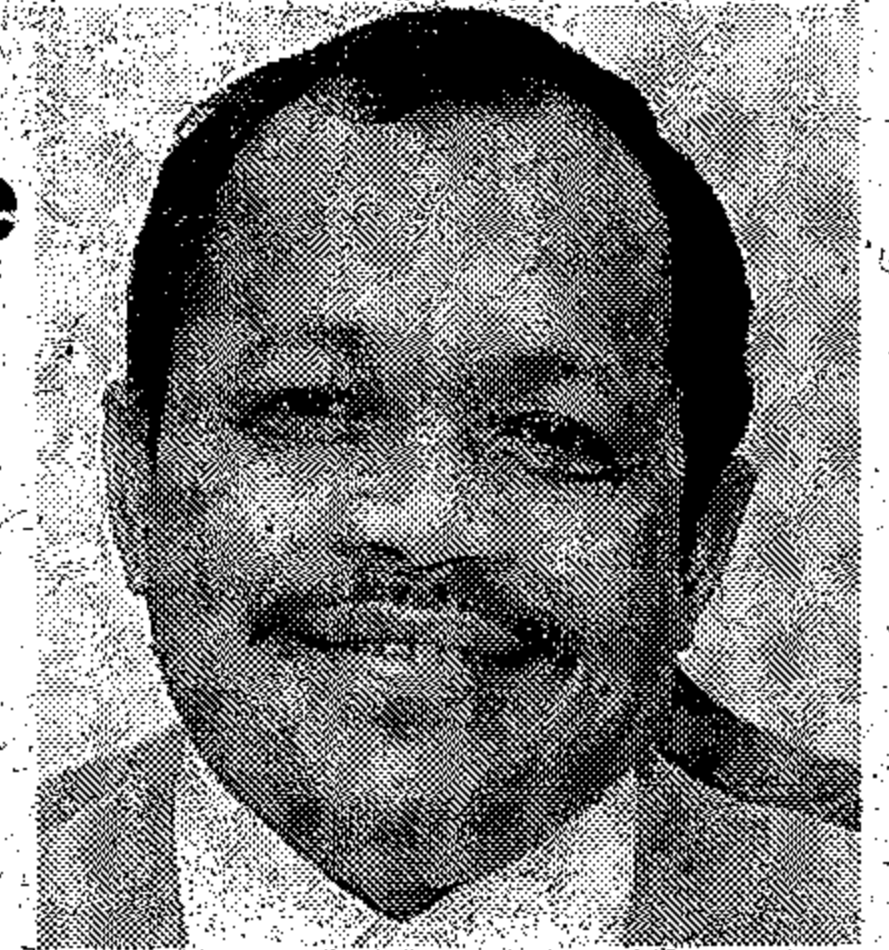
"Sime Darby chose Perlis as the location to set up the centre due to its extreme weather as during the day the temperature can go up as high as 40°C. At night, it can come down to as low as 20°C to 25°C.

"Therefore we have a conducive environment to produce high quality seeds, and we are happy and excited that the centre is going to be based in the smallest state in the country," he added.

Shahidan said to complement the

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PERLIS MB DATUK SERI SHAHIDAN KASIM



centre, a RM100mil technology park, similar to the one in Bukit Jalil, would be set up in Perlis for R&D and to produce herbal products.

"Of the RM100mil, RM70mil is the state's allocation under the Ninth Malaysia Plan while the remaining RM30mil will be from the Science, Technology and Innovations Ministry," he added.

Shahidan said Abdullah would launch the park in September.

"Herbal products from the state have high nutritional value, and we have proved we can come out with some good products.

"On Monday, the prime minister will also unveil the first product with medicinal values, which is made from honey and herbs," he said.