

Development corridor for Sabah in the pipeline

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KOTA KINABALU: A development corridor for Sabah to tap the state's rich land resources will be implemented soon.

The project would be spearheaded by three key state agencies — Sabah Foundation, Sawit Kinabalu Bhd and Sabah Economic Development Corporation.

Its implementation would also involve participation from the private sector and federal agencies, Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi announced at the opening of the Kota Kinabalu International Airport's new Terminal Two building yesterday.

"I have discussed with (Sabah Chief Minister) Datuk Seri Musa Aman that it (proposed corridor) has to be made officially known,"

the prime minister told a news conference.

He hoped that the development of the corridor could begin as soon as possible.

The concentration of the corridor would be on how to take advantage of Sabah's vast tracts of fertile land as a means to hasten the economic development of the state.

Abdullah said the approach to speed up the development of Sabah did not necessarily need to be those that had already been planned and budgeted for under the Ninth Malaysia Plan.

"It is important that some aspects of development be introduced by using the Private Funding Initiative formula.

"The PFI formula would be able to encourage domestic investments and, at the same time, cre-

ate the possibility of local companies forming joint ventures with foreign firms."

Abdullah said there were many projects which could be introduced to Sabah due to the size and fertility of the land.

Citing an example, he said agriculture and livestock could be taken up as a major industry here.

Sabah's tremendous tourism potential was another sector which the prime minister said the state should take full advantage of.

Abdullah noted that member countries of the East Asean Growth Area (EAGA) had recently signed an agreement to increase flight frequencies to cities within the area.

EAGA covers Brunei Darussalam, Kalimantan in Indonesia, Sabah and Sarawak in Malaysia and Mindanao in the Philippines.

"The signing of the agreement means there will be more flights coming into Sabah than before."

He was also glad to note that AirAsia X would be operating flights from Macau and Kunming in China to Kota Kinabalu.

The new KKIA Terminal Two building would be catering to not only low-cost carriers operating domestic routes but also to similar carriers operating international flights.

Abdullah congratulated the building contractor for completing it in a short period.

Global Upline, the company awarded the project, had completed it in seven months — 29 months ahead of schedule.

The prime minister expressed hope that services would match the excellent facilities available at the new terminal.