

**Government Allocates RM1 Billion To Increase Involvement Of Bumi Entrepreneurs
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ALOR GAJAH, Jan 28 (Bernama) - The government has allocated RM1 billion this year to develop and enhance participation and equity of bumiputera entrepreneurs in economic development.

Rural and Regional Development Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Shafie Apdal said of the 800,000 small and medium companies nationwide, only 200,00 are owned by bumiputeras.

"Of the 200,000, about 88 percent are small and micro companies making less than RM250,000 per year.

"This shows that there is significant gap between bumiputera entrepreneurs and other races and more efforts must be done to narrow the gap," he told reporters after opening Melaka Entrepreneurship Carnival 2012 here.

Programmes such as entrepreneurship carnivals, business coaching courses and financial assistance have been organised to open up more opportunities for bumiputera entrepreneurs to share, gain and enjoy the fruits of economic growth.

Shafie said the government via Mara has allocated RM14 million this year to the Melaka state government to help small entrepreneurs who could also get loans amounting RM500,000 and below without collateral.

On another note, the minister said he supported Umno president Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak's decision to activate the disciplinary committee before the general election.

Shafie who is also Umno vice-president said the move is important to help monitor and take pre-emptive action against members who sabotage the party.

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