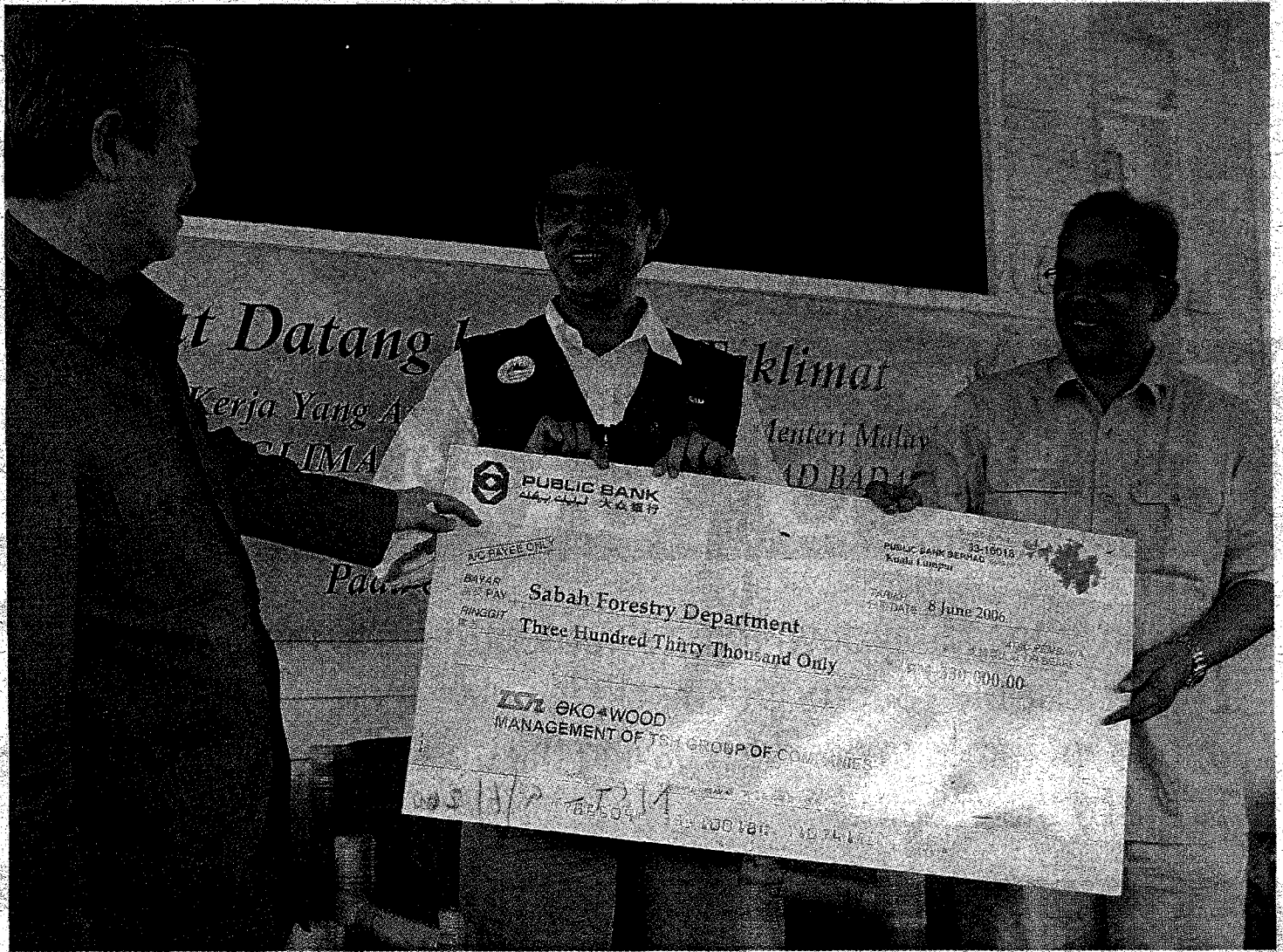


PM wants loggers to return what they take

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Kalimullah (right) presenting a mock cheque to Sabah Forestry Department Director Sam Mannan, witnessed by Abdullah (left).

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KOTA KINABALU: The days of indiscriminate logging are over with Malaysians required to actively pursue reforestation, Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said.

The Prime Minister wants to see aggressive efforts to reforest logged-over areas with Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) principles.

"You must return what you have taken from the forest," he said af-

ter visiting the Deramakot Forest Reserve, about 200km from here, for an overview of SFM.

Reafforestation was crucial not just to address the issue of sustained timber production but also ecological sustainability to conserve biodiversity.

He said State Governments should have the will to implement all policies pertaining to sustainable management of forests.

"If States are not firm, reafforestation and conservation would come to naught," he said.

Gazetted as a Commercial For-

est Reserve in 1961, logging at Deramakot was discontinued in 1989 to make way for the initiation of the SFM pilot project.

Covering 55,083ha of lowland mixed dipterocarp forest, it was the first in Southeast Asia to be certified under Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) standards and principles for SFM.

Impressed with the success of the Deramakot SFM model project, Abdullah hoped that other States would adopt the concept.

During the visit, Abdullah witnessed a demonstration on plan-

ning for forest harvesting and silviculture.

He also witnessed the presentation of contributions from Eko-wood Sdn Bhd and the Alexander Abraham Foundation (AAF), a New York-based non-governmental organisation.

Eko-wood, represented by chairman Datuk Kalimullah Hassan, contributed RM330,000, while AFF through its managing director, Nancy Abraham, donated RM380,000 to the Forestry Department for the implementation of sustainable forest management practices.