

Boost for Sabah's R&D development

KOTA KINABALU: The state government is supporting the development of research and development (R&D) activities by both the public and private sector.

The support comes in various forms including tax incentives.

"It has been quite some time now that the government implemented policies and programmes to encourage R&D development in various fields so that Malaysia will become a creator and provider of new knowledge to the world," Finance Minister Datuk Musa Aman said yesterday.

He said this after witnessing the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MOU) for research and

development between the Sabah Foundation and Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) here yesterday.

Musa said he was very happy with UMS for its efforts to develop and promote R&D activities in Sabah.

"I am aware that UMS is directly responsible for much of the ongoing R&D activities in Sabah which involves the state's rich biodiversity on land and sea," he said.

The Finance Minister said he was especially happy to learn that UMS and Sabah Foundation had found common ground in initiating research and development that would assist Sabah's forestry sector as it was making serious efforts to



Musa (centre) witnessing the signing of the MoU between Sabah Foundation represented by Khalil (left) and UMS by its vice-chancellor Tan Sri Prof Abu Hassan Othman at Menara Tun Mustapha yesterday.

preserve and protect its biodiversity.

"UMS is very much involved with the Luasong Centre which in a very short time had achieved a reputation for the quality of its research and work in bio-sciences," Musa said. "No doubt we will see more R&D activities being initiated in Sabah by UMS."

Musa also commended the Sabah Foundation for its efforts to enter into more collaboration with UMS in education and R&D.

"Education has always been the thrust of Sabah Foundation's work and it's only right that as education

moves to a higher level, R&D becomes integral to the process of high education," Musa added.

After witnessing the MoU signing yesterday, Musa said Sabah Foundation director Tan Sri Khalil Jamalul had informed him the Foundation had conducted both ground and aerial surveillance of the Kalabakan area and did not detect any illegal logging activities within its concessions.

"Tan Sri Khalil has also prepared a detailed report on the situation to dispel unfounded claims by certain parties over illegal logging in Kal-

abakan and said he would make the details available to the media in the next few days," Musa said.

The government's efforts to stamp out illegal logging had been going well and instances of illegal logging have lessened.

"Of course, it is impossible to completely eradicate illegal logging but we can at least keep it to a minimum and take firm action against those who break the law," he said, "The BN government will not compromise with illegal loggers and those who damage the environment."