

## Researchers told to exploit Sabah's mega-biodiversity

KOTA KINABALU: Sabah's mega-biodiversity needs to be exploited by researchers to discover new commercial products to help boost the state's economy.

Chief Minister Datuk Seri Musa Haji Aman said that apart from the institutes of higher learning, the private sector could also play an important role by embarking on a joint cooperation with

the government in doing research.

He said the Korean Research Institute of Bioscience and Biotechnology (KRIBB) has some 30 big corporations working along with them and hoped that the private sector in Malaysia, particularly Sabah, could come up with similar collaboration.

Musa who is also the

Finance Minister said this during a press conference after opening the three-day Biotechnology Symposium II entitled "Signal Transduction: Mechanisms and Application" at Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) here yesterday.

He also witnessed the signing of a memorandum of understanding between UMS and KRIBB.

Musa said UMS was taking the lead and had collaborated with other organisations in doing research on the state's rich biodiversity.

"What we witnessed today between UMS and KRIBB is a good sign and the government fully supports the MoU because we think this will benefit our country especially Sabah," he said.

To oversee the develop-

ment and requirements of biotechnology in Sabah, Musa said a working committee was formed and headed by his Science and Technology Advisor Datuk Dr Maximus Ongkili.

"We are working together with UMS and other organisations. As you know Sabah is rich in biodiversity, rainforest and eco-marine. So if we can exploit these areas and do

more research and discovery it will surely benefit the state and the people," he explained.

Meanwhile, Musa said he was optimistic that the research and findings on the biotechnology carried out by UMS in collaboration with the Forestry Department and Institute of Development Studies (IDS) would achieve the desired results. — *By PAUL MU*