

UMS to set up School of Agriculture: Minister

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By Sunar Tumiran

KOTA KINABALU: The Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) would soon set up School of Agriculture to produce skilled manpower in helping accelerate agriculture development in the State.

However, as to when such faculty will be set up is not known yet, Minister of Agriculture and Agro-based Industry Tan Sri Muhyiddin Mohd Yassin said.

"I was made to understand that UMS would soon set up such a faculty," he said at a meet-the-people cum dialogue

session with him at Wisma Pertanian here yesterday.

He said Sabah is in need of skilled manpower in the agriculture sector, so the setting up of the faculty would be timely.

Muhyiddin also said that the Federal Government would set up a Land Bank to buy lands belonging to states for the purpose of agriculture development.

"I have received many complaints from the private sector that they are facing difficulties in leasing lands for commercial agriculture projects, so the setting up of the Land Bank would be helpful," he said.

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Muhyiddin



Land Bank to lease lands

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The Land Bank, with RM200 million initial allocation, will lease lands like in Sabah or other states for between 10 and 30 years, he said, adding it would then be re-leased to interested private companies to be developed into commercial agriculture projects.

Muhyiddin, who is also UMNO vice president, said projects to be carried out would be the one that could yield produces within two years.

"Gone are the traditional agricultural projects, which could only yield produces within eight years or more," he said.

On Sabah State Government's offer of an area in Tawau for the setting up of the National Marine Aquaculture Centre, he said the Federal Government has yet to make a decision yet and will hold a meeting to discuss the offer.

Also present at the event were Minister of Agriculture and Food Industry Datuk Abdul Rahim Ismail and his two Assistants Japlin Akin and Bobby Suan.