

UMS to lead in biotechnology

By Glenda Wong

KOTA KINABALU: The RM100 million Biotechnology Research Institute (BRI) complex at Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) here would be ready by January next year, said UMS vice chancellor Professor Datuk Seri Panglima Dr Kamaruzaman Hj Ampon yesterday.

"The Biotechnology Research Institute (BRI) complex is expected to be fully completed and inaugurated in January 2011," he said.

Kamaruzaman added that the BRI complex would intensify its efforts and be more active in biotechnology development.

He said the setting up of the BRI complex is part of UMS' efforts in transforming UMS into a leading research university in the region.

"UMS's mission is to become a leading research university in the field of biotechnology," said Kamaruzaman after opening the Biotechnology Symposium IV 2010.

Kamaruzaman said that the BRI complex would be equipped, among others, with the Biosafety Level Three Lab to conduct researches on pathogens such as the H1N1.

He added that it would also have a Transgenic Green House for transgenic plants containment.

"Once the BRI complex is up and running, UMS will be the only place in Borneo which has the Biosafety Level Three Lab.

"Right now we are working hard to increase the number of researchers and students in this university to be involved in biotechnology research," said Kamaruzaman.

Towards this end, he said the BRI is using the School of Science and Technology and is now in the process of acquiring new equipment to enable it to carry out more research programmes and initiatives.

Kamaruzaman meanwhile encouraged UMS researchers to seek funding from the private sector and also to work hard and compete with other

universities to qualify for the funds being allocated by the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation (MOSTI).

On another development, he disclosed the UMS' plan to build a resort which could serve as an accommodation for foreign researchers while conducting their research studies in Sabah.

He said that the setting up of new facilities would attract more foreign researchers to come to UMS and help promote Sabah to foreign countries and encourage the inflow of money at the same time.

UMS is currently having 34 on-going research programmes of which the BRI conducted eight, the Marine Borneo Research Institute (four), the School of Science and Technology (seven), Institute of Tropical Biology and Conservation (two), School of Medicine (two), School of Food Science and Nutrition (three), School of Engineering and Information Technology (four) and the School of Sustainable Agriculture (four).