Taib: Coastal areas to be 'e-linked' using wireless mode

Mukah to have telecentre

by Toman Mamora

KUCHING - In line with the Government's effort to extend IT services to the rural areas and increase the level of computer literacy, a telecentre will be set up in Mukah this year while plans are afoot to extend similar service to other areas along the coastal belt.

The telecentre in Mukah would be directly linked to the hub in Sibu using the wireless mode and in turn would be connected to Balingian and Matu-Daro through a local network, said Chief Minister Datuk Patinggi Tan Sri Dr Haji Abdul Taib Mahmud yesterday when closing the Third International Conference on Information Technology in Asia (CITA'03) here yesterday.

The ICT exercise, which will be implemented in collaboration with Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (Unimas), costs about RM2 million. Explaining why a wireless mode had to be used to electronically link Mukah and the coastal area with the main centres, Taib said: "The fibre optic links were installed along the main trunk road, and because of that Mukah was bypassed. Now that Mukah has become a Division and that economic activities are going to accelerate in about 4 to 5 years from now, we need an e-link since installing fibre optic links is expensive and takes time."

Taib also pointed out that the only solution to overcoming the problem of spreading out IT services in the coastal area was to develop the existing wireless technology so that the services rendered would be both effective and cost-efficient.

"We have to seriously take a close look at the development of wireless technology in our effort to spread out ICT as it's been proven now that wireless technology can accommodate more lines than before," he said.

He added: "The coastal area is not as difficult as the interior to link up, as it is easier for the wireless airwaves to reach most areas along the relative flat coastal plain."