



Janda Baik site for stem cell manufacturing facility

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KUANTAN: Pahang will host the world's largest stem cell manufacturing facility when US-based Bio-Cellular Research Organisation (BCRO) sets up operations in Janda Baik, Bentong, this year.

The deal will be formalised in a memorandum of understanding to be signed between the state government-owned Pahang Technology Resources Sdn Bhd (PTR) and BCRO Stem Cell Xenotransplantation Sdn Bhd tomorrow.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi is expected to witness the signing ceremony.

According to State Science, Innovation, Information and Information Technology Committee chairman Datuk Mohd Sharkar Shamsuddin, it would be PTR's first major biotechnology joint venture project.

"It marks a milestone for Pahang and its venture in biotechnology. We hope it will lead to more of such projects in the future," he said when contacted in Temerloh yesterday.

"The company will lease the land from PTR. It is estimated that it will cost RM280mil over the next three years to transfer its technical

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DATUK MOHD SHARKAR SHAMSUDDIN

know-how and build the facility.

"The facility itself is expected to be operational in the next few months," he added.

Mohd Sharkar also said the project, which was the brainchild of Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Adnan Yaakob, was given a fast-track approval by Abdullah, who was impressed with the state's commitment to getting the project off the ground successfully.

Mohd Sharkar also said the project would be the catalyst to spur development in biotechnology activities, one of the sectors identified in the East Coast Economic Region (ECER) masterplan. He also said the stem cells would be from a "halal" source.