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IMT-GT NEEDS TO REVIEW EXISTING MOUs

By: Hafizah Kamaruddin

IPOH, Oct 12 (Bernama) -- There is a need to review existing memorandum of understanding (MOUs) signed between private sectors under the Indonesia - Malaysia - Thailand - Growth Triangle (IMT-GT) that have not taken off after several years.

The Perak branch of the Malay Chamber of Commerce (DPMM Perak) President, Datuk Mohamad Hamdan Hazizi, said the coming IMT-GT Joint Business Council (JBC) meeting, which will be held in Ipoh on Nov 4 and 5, should be the platform to discuss ways to expedite and revive the MOUs.

Since the inception of IMT-GT in Langkawi four years ago, 66 MOUs had been signed involving a proposed RM18.27 billion in capital investment, mainly for joint-ventures in the infrastructure and property development sectors and manufacturing.

Until today, only 16 of the MOUs valued at RM200.2 million had been implemented, he told reporters here today.

With about 50 MOUs still pending, steps need to be taken to check on the viability of the projects to identify ways to expedite the agreements or to weed them out, he said.

In February this year, Thai Prime Minister Chavalit Yongchaiyudh had raised the issue with Malaysian Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamed during his visit here over the speed of these projects.

In June, the head of the Trade and Industry Office of the North Sumatra (Kadin or Kantor Dagang dan Industri) Hj Yopie S Batubara said that he did not want the many MOUs signed between the IMT-GT entrepreneurs to be abused as personal gains.

He said he did not want the MOUs to be used by certain groups for pushing up prices of certain counters on the stock exchange.

There had been many cases of companies making huge profits on the stock exchange after announcing that they would be undertaking large projects in the three countries although to date many of them had yet to materialise, he said.

Commenting on the current economic slowdown due to the depreciation of currencies, Mohamad Hamdan said this could be a good time for businessmen in these regions, especially members of the IMT-GT, to consolidate and overcome their problems.

"Now is the time for the businessmen to fully utilise IMT-GT platform to spur economic development in regions facing economic slowdown," he said.

-- BERNAMA

HK SHY