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Adequate rubberwood to meet local demand, says Hishamuddin

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MALAYSIA has enough rubberwood to meet the demand of local industries hence an export ban on the commodity at present is unnecessary.

Deputy Primary Industries Minister Datuk Hishamuddin Hussein said measures initiated by the ministry, such as promoting rubber forest plantations and the use of new clones among smallholders and estate owners will further ensure adequate rubberwood supply in the country.

He said this in reply to a question by Jimmy Donald (BN-Sri Aman).

On possible deterioration in interest towards the rubber sector following the strong performance of the palm oil industry, Hishamuddin said he is confident that the rubber industry will continue to be one of the key sectors in Malaysia's primary industries.

\* MALAYSIA remains an attractive investment destination to foreign investors with a long-term view despite the current regional economic problems, Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said.

In his written reply to a question by Kamaruddin Ahmad (BN-Arau), he said existing investors like the multinational companies have given their commitment that they will increase their investments in the country.

To a supplementary question by Kamaruddin on the quick disposal of shares on the Kuala Lumpur Stock Exchange, Anwar said the Government has no plans to impose conditions to prevent such an activity.

"To introduce regulation to reduce such an activity is not the best solution to strengthen the country's economy ... Our efforts are more focus on maintaining a sustainable growth, strengthening the economic fundamentals and stabilising the ringgit," he added.

Other measures include improving Malaysia's export competitiveness, reducing import and promoting the use of local goods among Malaysians.

\* MALAYSIA's existing railway system has resulted in the country's expenditure in the proposed trans-Asian Railway project, linking Singapore up to Kunming in China, to be minimal.

Transport Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik said: "There is no extra cost for Malaysia in this project as all railway lines in the country have already been completed."

Replying to a question by Lim Siang Chai (BN-Petaling Jaya Selatan), he also said the on-going engineering study on the construction of the trans-Asian Railway line is expected to be completed next month.

Malaysia has been given the mandate to coordinate the implementation of the multi-billion ringgit project that will establish railway lines passing through the Mekong Basin.

Dr Ling said the Government has allocated RM2 million for the expenditure in conducting feasibility studies on the project, while a private consortium has volunteered RM3 million for the same purpose.

KTM Bhd has been appointed as project manager, while KL Consult of Malaysia has been named as head consultant by the consortium.

Dr Ling said the trans-Asian Railway project was mooted by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, and it was approved by the Asean heads of governments at the 5th Association of South-East Asian Nations Summit Meeting in Bangkok on December 15, 1995.

\* COME January 1 next year, packaged goods will carry a recommended retail price label, Deputy Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Datuk S. Subramaniam said.

Replying to a question by Wong Kam Hoong (BN-Bayan Baru), he said manufacturers and the related industries have agreed to this dateline.

Subramaniam said the price labelling will prevent retailers from fixing the prices of goods according to their whims and fancies.

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