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Amending laws to boost the economy

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TAIPING, Sun. - The Government might amend some existing laws to overcome the present economic woes faced by the country, Deputy Finance Minister Datuk Wong See Wah said yesterday.

Speaking to reporters after attending a Small and Medium Scale Industries Seminar organised by the North Perak Chinese Chamber of Commerce, Wong said among the laws that could be amended were the National Land Code, Land Acquisition Act and the Banking and Financial Institutions Act.

He said this when commenting on a statement by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad that more drastic measures were needed to improve the nation's economy.

Wong added that an official announcement about a comprehensive approach to overcome the economic woes - including amendments to certain laws - would be made by the Finance Ministry tomorrow.

"By Tuesday, the proposals will be tabled in Parliament which will set a few days to debate them and amend some of the existing Acts," he said.

Meanwhile, Wong urged banks to be less stringent in approving loans to SMIs under the RM1.5 billion fund for SMIs set up by the Government in January.

He said until June 30 this year RM188 million in loans had been approved to 134 SMIs.

Wong said the approved amount was only 12.5 per cent of the fund and this was very small.

He said a special committee to monitor and scrutinise the management of the fund and to ensure its proper utilisation had also been set up by the Ministry.

Wong also said the Government had relaxed some conditions for SMIs to get the loans.

"Formerly, only manufacturing industries with capital investments and which are export-oriented were given the opportunity to apply for the loans," he said.

Wong added that so far in Perak alone, only 10 of the 134 applications for loans by SMIs had been approved by banks.

"This is very small as it is less than 10 per cent of the applications sent in."

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