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ASEAN INDUSTRIAL METROPOLIS TO BE SET UP IN BUKIT KAYU HITAM

BUKIT KAYU HITAM, Feb 8 (Bernama) -- A free trade area known as Asean Industrial Metropolis 2010 measuring 2,400 ha, would be set up at Bukit Kayu Hitam, which is near the Thai border.

Kedah Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Syed Razak Syed Zain said the project would comprise areas for heavy industries, small and medium industries (SMIs), Immigration and Customs complex, commercial centre and housing.

He said that the project is estimated to cost RM3 billion and is scheduled for completion in 2010.

"When fully operational, the project will attract investments worth RM20 billion and create 20,000 job opportunities for locals and Thais," he told reporters after a briefing on the project at the Black Forest Golf Club here today.

Syed Razak said that initial work will commence next month. Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad is expected to officiate the ground breaking ceremony on March 5.

Bukit Kayu Hitam already has an industrial area, which among others sited the plant that manufactures fixed trailing edge parts for wings of all 7 series commercial aircraft types in the Boeing series.

Syed Razak said that the set up of one more industrial area in Bukit Kayu Hitam would firm up economic growth between Malaysia and southern Thailand.

He said that the Asean Industrial Metropolis 2010 is one of the most modern and largest free trade areas in Asean.

The project is implemented by Northern Gateway Sdn Bhd where Kedah State Development Corporation has a 30 percent equity, and the rest held by Benua Bayu Sdn Bhd.

The project comprises three phases. The first -- the setting up of the free trade area, housing, Immigration and Customs complex, and commercial area, will take four years, while the second and third phase is the continuation of the setting up of the commercial and industrial area. --

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