

THE STAR

DATE: 11/08/2007

# PM: No more logging licences

The star - 11/8/2007.

## 'Important to maintain current forests'

By MUGUNTAN VANAR  
vmugu@thestar.com.my

**SANDAKAN:** No more logging licences will be given out as far as the Prime Minister is concerned.

"I will turn down anyone who comes to me asking for logging licences. If I want to make them happy, I will tell them to ask Musa (Sabah Chief Minister Datuk Musa Aman), knowing that he will say no too," said Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

Cautioning forest custodians to not simply give out logging licences when opening the RM9.2mil Rainforest Discovery centre about 30km from here, Abdullah said he would not entertain people requesting for logging licences from the states.

He said it was important to maintain the current natural forests as they were important to the eco-system.

Malaysia's commitment was reflected in its participation in the Heart of Borneo conserva-

tion initiative involving 240,000 sq km of forest conservation covering Sabah, Sarawak, Brunei and Kalimantan in Indonesia, he said.

"We should use more timber obtained from replanted areas," he said.

He noted that although in the early years of independence, the country allowed the opening up of forest land for settlers under Felda and other schemes, Abdullah said they could maintain 60% or 19.52 million hectares as forest reserves with about 14.39 million hectares gazetted as permanent forest reserves.

"Even if we cleared the forests, we still maintained greenery by planting oil palm, rubber trees and other commercial value crops," he said.

He said the setting up of the centre by the Sabah Forestry was an important step towards educating public on the importance of preserving God's gift.

The Prime Minister arrived here on Thursday night and was briefed on Sabah's development.