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Dr M: Rubber City picking up pace

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PETALING JAYA: A large-scale rubber industry development dubbed Rubber City located at Kota Putra near the Kedah-Thai border is set to pick up pace, said adviser Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Last month, on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (Apec) Leaders Summit held in Russia, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak and his Thai counterpart, Yingluck Shinawatra, announced the joint initiative of establishing

Rubber City at the Kedah-Thai border which seeks to spur economic prosperity and stability in Thailand's restive south.

Najib then appointed Dr Mahathir to identify suitable projects for implementation at the Rubber City.

The former prime minister, in addressing an audience of 400 of his vision for the rubber industry at the International Rubber Technology and Economic Congress 2012 here yesterday, said the Rubber City initiative with Thailand is a win-win collaboration.

"Thailand has the labour force and consistent supply of natural rubber while Malaysia can impart its skills in the research and marketing of innovative rubber products," said Dr Mahathir.

"Both countries can harness and share their capabilities and resources to make this Rubber City a success," he added.

With the development of Rubber City, Dr Mahathir said both smallholders from Malaysia and Thailand will be able to get good prices for their rubber produce.

He also noted that Malaysia is the

world's biggest medical device producer in the form of medical gloves, catheters and condoms while Thailand is world renowned as the producer of many internationally branded motor vehicle tyres.

On the same note, Dr Mahathir urged the Malaysian government to be more forthcoming in allocating more money for research in the resource-based sector.

He said the success of the rubber industry is dependent on innovative product development and investment into better efficiencies at the production facilities.