

Money

Malaysia's 2017 timber exports to improve 5pc

APRIL 18, 2017

KUALA LUMPUR, April 18 — The export of Malaysian timber is expected to increase five per cent this year from RM21.86 billion in 2016, supported by demand from India, said Plantation Industries and Commodities Deputy Minister Datuk Datu Nasrun Datu Mansur.

He said the export value of sawn timber, plywood and medium density fibreboard to India recorded an increase of more than 25 per cent last year compared to 2015.

"This has prompted the establishment of a regional Malaysian Timber Council (MTC) office in the south Indian city of Bangalore.

"The office, expected to be up and running by June 2017, will play a major role in further facilitating and increasing Malaysia's export of timber and timber products to India," Datu Nasrun told reporters after the opening of the MTC Marketing Seminar 2017 here today.

He said the office will also serve as a gateway for Malaysian exporters to tap India's growing market as well as penetrate its highly populated neighbours such as Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh.

Besides India, Japan, which is the biggest importer of Malaysian timber at RM3.73 billion last year, and comprising mainly veneers, fibreboards, and chipboards.

The timber industry is a major contributor to the nation's export earnings.

Timber and timber products accounted for 17.92 per cent of the total export earnings by the commodities sector and 2.78 per cent of Malaysia's total export earnings in 2016.

Earlier, Datu Nasrun who read Plantation Industries and Commodities Minister Datuk Seri Mah Siew Keong's speech at the opening, quoted him as saying the MTC had allocated about RM5 million annually for its Import Assistance Programme, aimed at assisting small and medium enterprises to import raw materials to supplement and augment supply.

"I urge industry players to expand their businesses, particularly to bilateral and regional free trade agreement markets that Malaysia has established, and also leverage on prospective markets such as China, India and ASEAN countries," he added.

Mah also said 2017 would provide opportunities for the timber industry and the commodity is expected to continue benefiting from a strong greenback as the United States continues to be the largest market for Malaysia's furniture exports.

"Apart from that, we are hopeful that the confidence of consumers and timber importers, particularly in the European Union, will be restored following the recent acceptance of the Malaysian Timber Certification Scheme under the Dutch Public Procurement Policy for Sustainable Timber," he added.

He said the acceptance marked a significant achievement for the Malaysian timber industry and opens up greater market access for "Made in Malaysia" timber and timber products to the European Union countries. — Bernama

