

# RM12bil of wood products exported in first half of 2021, says Commodities Minister



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BANTING: Wood sector exports have increased by 20.7% in the first six months of this year compared to the same period last year, says Datuk Zuraida Kamaruddin (*pic*).

The newly-minted Plantation Industries and Commodities Minister said that these exported products are worth RM12bil.

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"The timber industry is very lucrative for our country. Although we are in a pandemic, we can still increase the export of these products," she said on Saturday (Aug 4) while visiting the Olak Lempit vaccination centre under the Vaccination Programme for the Agri-Commodity Sector (Vacoms).

This was Zuraidah's first official visit in her new role.

When asked about the reason for the increase in exports, Zuraidah said that a low level of supply drove up the price of the products.

Also present at the event was Deputy Minister Datuk Seri Wee Jeck Seng, Plantation Industries and Commodities Ministry secretary-general Datuk Ravi Muthayah and Malaysian Timber Council CEO Muhtar Suhaili.

As for the vaccination programme, Zuraidah said that the Olak Lempit centre for workers in the timber industry has allocated 10,005 vaccinations, with about 9,000 individuals having completed two doses of inoculations.

The programme between the MTC and the Malaysian Timber Industry Board (MTIB) began on July 28 and will end on Monday (Sep 6).

The MTC has allocated RM1.3mil for vaccination programmes in Peninsular Malaysia, giving subsidies of RM30 for every vaccinated worker.

Zuraidah said that the Vacoms programme was launched to prevent workplace Covid-19 clusters and to create a safer environment so that the industry could operate.

"We hope more agencies open vaccination centres to ensure all workers in the agro-commodities industry get their vaccines and achieve herd immunity so that the country's economy can be boosted.

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