

Log export ban on the cards

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Datuk Amar Awang Tengah
Ali Hasan

KUCHING: The Sarawak government plans to gradually reduce log exports up until a time when a total ban is imposed, says Deputy Chief Minister Datuk Amar Awang Tengah Ali Hasan.

He revealed that the state is presently exporting 20 per cent of the 5.1 million cubic metre yearly production, with the rest for domestic use.

“We are now exporting 20 per cent of our log production and we will reduce it gradually...and there will be a time when we will totally ban the export of our logs.

“We want to do it (total ban) because we want all those involved in the forest plantation to expedite the development of forest planting, because in the near future most of our timber resources will come from our forest plantation,” he told reporters yesterday.

Awang Tengah further disclosed that at the moment, only about 421,000 hectares have been covered with planted forest out of the targeted one million hectares by 2020, forcing the Sarawak government to extend the period to 2025.

He earlier officiated at the monthly staff gathering of Sarawak Timber Industry Development Corporation (STIDC) at Wisma Sumber Alam in Petra Jaya.

Awang Tengah, who is also Minister of Industrial and Entrepreneur Development as well as Second Minister of Urban Development and Natural Resources, pointed out that no timeframe has been set up for the total ban of logs in order to give time to local timber industry players to make the necessary adjustments.

“It will be unfair to totally ban logs now because what is important is that we give time for the local timber players to make adjustments for themselves.

“We want them to upgrade themselves and go for high-value-added products to sustain the timber industry,” he asserted, adding that timber production from natural forests will definitely decline.

According to him, he had already alerted industry players that a time will come when the Sarawak government will totally ban log export.



Awang Tengah signs the STIDC Balanced Scorecard. From left are Mohd Naroden, Hashim, Len Talif and Wan Lizozman.

He also said the government has made it mandatory for all long-term timber licence holders to have forest certification management, which must be complied in order to penetrate international markets.

Earlier, Awang Tengah, who is STIDC board of management chairman, said the timber industry would focus on high-value-added products and upgrading of technology.

“STIDC is to spearhead the development of the timber industry in the state and we are also in the process of consolidating some of the non-performing subsidiary companies to enable us to focus more on feasible and profitable sectors,” he said, adding that STIDC has also set up Pusaka Capital Sdn Bhd as its investment arm.

Meanwhile, Awang Tengah said STIDC had won several accolades, among them State Federal Secretary Quality Award 2017, State Government Key Focus Activity Award 2018, and Five Stars Award for Accountability Index from the National Audit Department.

Among those present yesterday were Assistant Minister of E-Commerce Datuk Mohd Naroden Majais who is also Assistant Minister of Entrepreneur and Small and Medium (SME) Enterprise Development; Assistant Minister of Urban Planning, Land Development and Environment Datu Len Talif Salleh; STIDC general manager Hashim Bojet, and Ministry of Urban Development and Natural Resources permanent secretary Wan Lizozman Wan Omar.