KEMENTERIAN TENAGA DAN SUMBER ASLI

KERATAN SURAT KHABAR

SURAT KHABAR	:	THE STAR			
TARIKH	:	5/8/2021 (KHAMIS)	MUKA SURAT	:	8
JABATAN	:	KeTSA			

MTIFA appeals for reopening of logging activities

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The Star, 5 Ogos 2021_8

GEORGE TOWN: The Malaysian Timber Industry Forum Association (MTIFA) has appealed for the reopening of logging activities, saying the next few months will be crucial to sustain their business.

Its president Datuk Wira Sheikh Othman Rahman said some of the association's members would need to stock up logs for their production before the coming monsoon season between October and February next year.

He said the move was vital, especially for those in sawmills and factories involved in plywood, medium density fibreboard, particleboard, moulding and furniture making.

He said reopening would greatly improve the supply chain, adding that it is easy for the industry to comply with Covid-19 standard operating procedures (SOP).

"Logging activities take place in the forest, hence in the open air with good ventilation.

"The operations are carried out by machinery, with easy compliance to SOP.

"The shutdown has severely impacted concessionaires, with log prices and production costs being forced upwards due to the mismatch in supply and demand during the current Covid-19 pandemic," he said yesterday.

MTIFA is the umbrella body for Malaysian Panel-Products Manufacturers Association, Association of Malaysian Bumiputra Timber and Furniture Entrepreneurs, Malaysian Furniture Council (MFC) and Timber Exporters Association of Malaysia.

Sheikh Othman said MTIFA had sent a letter to the Prime Minister's Office on July 21, outlining the importance of reopening the industry.

He said some log yards had more than 2,000 cubic metres of logs, adding that it would take more than 20 days just to clear the existing logs.

"Further degradation of logs will lead to additional losses to the loggers as well as the industry.

"The existing logs should be allowed to be transported out of the log yard without any restriction," he added.

He said that allowing a 100% reopening of logging activities would help spur the supply-chain activities of other sectors.