

MPIC targets 20 per cent construction materials based on kenaf

SETIU, Dec 12 --The Ministry of Plantation Industries and Commodities (MPIC) targets all construction projects nationwide to use at least 20 per cent of kenaf-based building materials in the future.

Its Minister Datuk Dr Mohd Khairuddin Aman Razali said the ministry, through the National Kenaf and Tobacco Board (LKTN), was actively holding discussions with various parties including the Ministry of Housing and Local Government and the Public Works Department to realise the aspiration.

"The target requires a substantial effort and, god willing, it will be realised. One of the benefits of using kenaf in the construction industry is that it is environmentally friendly.

"So, this move is in line with the development targets and use of green technology innovations that the government wants to achieve all these while," he said.

He said this to reporters after visiting the Kenaf-based Tasblock Industrial Building System (IBS) construction site, exhibition space and office built by LKTN at the Kenaf Product Processing and Production Centre, here, today.

In the meantime, he said, realising that the level of awareness and knowledge of Malaysians on kenaf was still low, various measures had been taken by the ministry in introducing and promoting the use of this fibrous plant species, including the organisation of construction courses using kenaf fiber.

"Kenaf will be in demand if its use is widespread, so the way we can expand the use is through construction because construction will not end whether they are the building of small-scale houses or office buildings," he said.

Meanwhile, he said the construction of showrooms and offices using the Tasblock IBS system based on kenaf which he visited today was the first in Terengganu, where it would be used as a reference and promotion centre for kenaf as a new commodity in the construction industry.

He said about 600 kilogrammes of kenaf fiber was used to build the 700 square foot exhibition and office space, and it was expected to take only 30 days to complete at an estimated cost of RM81,000. -- BERNAMA