

## **Malaysia: Rubber industry has potential to grow further, says Dr M**

KUALA LUMPUR: The local rubber industry has the potential to grow further with the government encouraging more research in this area, said former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

“The government should be more forthcoming in terms of research, in order to stimulate the rubber industry further. Although research does not guarantee results, the government has to adopt more willingness to undertake research,” he said.

Mahathir gave a speech titled Vision for the Rubber Industry at the International Rubber Technology and Economic Congress (IRTEC) held in Petaling Jaya yesterday.

Plantation Industries and Commodities Minister Tan Sri Bernard Dompok said technological innovation was pivotal for the future sustainability of the rubber industry.

“To me, innovation in the rubber industry offers a window for diversity, such as the development of entrepreneurship and new business opportunities,” he added.

In 2011, with 1.02 million hectares of planted area, Malaysia produced almost one million tonnes of natural rubber, of which 946,000 tonnes were exported.

The natural rubber industry generated RM39.83 billion in foreign exchange revenue last year and contributed 5.73% of the country’s export earnings.

In terms of technology in the rubber industry, six technologies were officially launched yesterday at the inaugural IRTEC organised by the Malaysian Rubber Board (MRB).

Among the six technologies is the I-Klon, the latest innovation developed by MRB that will serve as an alternative to the shortage of experienced clone inspectors.

Another technology, Rubber Information and Traceability System (RITeS), will create a stringent mechanism for monitoring and tracing the source of planting materials to ensure only high quality planting materials are supplied to the smallholders and industries.

The other technologies that were introduced are the Automatic Rubber Nursery Machine, the Automatic Planting Machine for Rubber Seedlings, the Latex Collection Vehicle and the Global Testing Centre for Rubber/Global Testing and Consultancy for Rubber (G-TACR).

Dompok told the media the crude palm oil (CPO) export tax would be reviewed tomorrow.

A proposal has been made to lower the CPO export tax, and is likely to see a downward revision to between 8% and 10% from the current

23%. Malaysia’s CPO export tax policy has been unchanged since 1970.