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Jun 14, 2003

Indonesia looks to curb log smuggling

JAKARTA - The Indonesian government is hoping to hold bilateral talks with Singapore and Malaysia to discuss the issue of log smuggling, Forestry Minister M Prakosa said.

"We will hold bilateral dialogues on the issue to reach an agreement on how to handle the problem," Prakosa said on the sidelines of a workshop on state-run forestry companies.

Illegal logging activities have cost the Indonesian government some US\$600 million. "We will trace which companies are involved in the smuggling. The government will take stern measures against them," Prakosa said, adding that efforts to cut the network of illegal logging and smuggling would involve at least 11 government institutions.

Prakosa called on industries linked to forestry to reduce their raw-wood intake, considering that natural resources in the sector had dropped drastically.

In an attempt to recover forestry resources, the ministry will reduce its logging quota from 6.89 million cubic meters in 2003 to 5.7 million cubic meters in 2004. The policy to reduce logging is aiming to balance forest capability and industry demand.

(Asia Pulse/Antara)

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