Preserving what’s left

Ban on logging necessary as only 30% of forest left in Selangor

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The move for a temporary ban on logging in Selangor was made to safeguard the remaining green lung in Selangor, state Agriculture, Natural Resources and Entrepreneurial Development committee chairman Yaakob Sapari said.

He said the temporary ban was necessary as there was only about 30% of forest left in Selangor.

"Logging cannot be allowed in Selangor - it is not needed.

"We do not have any more forest to be logged in the state," Yaakob said, commenting on the state's decision to freeze logging.

The freeze was enforced since July 22 while concessionaires who held logging licences to log the mangrove forest were allowed to continue until the end of the year.

It meant that all inland forest logging should have ceased two months ago.

The ruling however, does not cover the clearing of privately-owned land.

"The state has not given any new licences for logging this year and has called for a freeze in the state," he said, adding that any logging still going on in the state would be illegal.

However, he added that the freeze was temporary and the Forestry Department was producing a detailed report on the logging issue.

In accordance with the requirement of National Forestry Act 1984, the state forestry departments were expected to submit annual reports to both the state authority as well as the Peninsular Malaysia Forestry Department.

Yaakob said the report would be used in making a comprehensive decision and to review the current rulings involving forest management in the state.

He added that all applications had to go through the state executive council meetings for discussion and approval.

When asked whether it was feasible to impose the ban on logging in the state due to the demand of timber and wood-related products, Yaakob said it was time to use alternative material instead of timber and wood.

"The construction industry should use other material like concrete and metal for piling and frames instead of wood.

"It is common practice in the developed countries," he said.

The Selangor Forestry Department director Dr Yunus Zakaria earlier confirmed that the department had not issued any new licences for logging concession this year.

According to the Peninsular Malaysia Forestry Department 2008 statistics, a total of 243,176ha out of 791,084ha of land in Selangor is still covered with forest.

An area of 547,908ha is recorded as non-forest land. Some 241,568ha have been marked as permanent reserved forest in the state with 11,381ha marked as forest plantation (forest which has been planted with various species of timber to be logged in later years) and 1,608ha for wildlife reserve.

The National Forest Council had set a quota of 1,970ha of forest in Selangor that could be logged annually.

The figure is the maximum area that could be harvested for timber every year.

However, the Selangor Forestry Department had recorded less than a quarter of the 1,970ha had been harvested for timber this year.

Not allowed: Selangor’s decision on freezing logging activities in the state means any logging activities still being carried out on the inland forest in Selangor is illegal.

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YAAKOB SAPARI