



KEMENTERIAN TENAGA DAN SUMBER ASLI

KERATAN SURAT KHABAR

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PAHANG REGENT STEPS IN

CHINI FOREST RESERVE TO BE EXPANDED

Protected area around Unesco site to be widened to 7,000ha

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PAHANG Regent Tengku Hassanal Ibrahim Alam Shah Al-Sultan Abdullah has ordered that the Chini forest reserve in Pekan be expanded, to better protect the wildlife and forests near the lake.

Comptroller of the Royal Household for the Sultan of Pahang, Datuk Ahmad Khirrizal Ab Rahman, in a statement said Tengku Hassanal ordered that the current 4,600ha permanent forest reserve that includes Tasik Chini, be widened to 6,000 or 7,000ha.

"Expanding the Chini forest reserve will safeguard the flora and fauna near Tasik Chini and the

surrounding areas. Tasik Chini is an environmental jewel in Pahang and the first Unesco (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation) Biosphere Reserve site in the country... this world-class recognition has to be preserved.

"Being accorded the Unesco status, Tasik Chini should be given priority in terms of financial assistance and sustainable development by both the Tourism, Arts and Culture Ministry, and the Environment and Water Ministry," the statement said.

Khirrizal said the regent suggested that mining around Tasik Chini be halted and the area be rehabilitated.

"Enforcement has to be... carried out in an integrated manner regularly with the involvement of



Pahang Regent Tengku Hassanal Ibrahim Alam Shah Al-Sultan Abdullah

enforcement agencies at both state and federal levels. Ongoing rehabilitation and maintenance at the lake by the state and federal government have to be further intensified," he said.

Khirrizal said the regent closely followed reports of mining near the lake, which went viral on social media, and made a surprise visit to Tasik Chini on Sunday.

"Tengku Hassanal went to see the situation at the lake. The regent had studied the report presented by the menteri besar (Datuk Seri Wan Rosdy Wan Ismail) on the rehabilitation efforts by the state government.

The regent endorsed the state government's move of halting new mining approvals since 2019.

The regent hoped all parties,



A hill overlooking Tasik Chini, believed to have been cleared by a company operating a mine in the area. PHOTO BY FARIZUL HAFIZ AWANG

including government agencies, private sector, non-governmental organisations and locals, would work together to protect the lake and the Orang Asli community in the area."

He said Tengku Hassanal would monitor the state government's efforts to protect the environment and urged all quarters to adopt environmental, social and governance standards so that such natural treasures could be enjoyed by future generations.

Tasik Chini came under the spotlight last week when it was alleged that the Pahang government had approved a company linked to the palace to mine an

area near the lake.

The Orang Asli who live near Tasik Chini and rely on the lake for clean water, pleaded with the state government to stop the iron ore mining, which had been ongoing for more than a decade.

On June 12, the state Land and Mines director's office said no new mining licences were awarded since March 2019, and there would be no mining near the lake next year when the licences of the two existing operators expired.

An area measuring 4,498ha at Tasik Chini, which is equal to 6,000 football fields, was gazetted as a permanent forest reserve in March 2019.



A segment of the Tasik Chini bank affected by pollution photographed last week.