



KEMENTERIAN TENAGA DAN SUMBER ASLI

KERATAN SURAT KHABAR

SURAT KHABAR	:	NST			
TARIKH	:	7/7/2021 (RABU)	MUKA SURAT	:	12
JABATAN	:	JPNP			

BATU TALAM PERMANENT FOREST RESERVE

ENFORCERS FACE HURDLES IN BID TO CLEAR DURIAN TREES



Police personnel standing guard during the operation to cut durian trees at the Batu Talam permanent forest reserve yesterday. PIC BY MOHD RAFI MAMAT

They believe durian farmers operating illegally at the site are resorting to delaying tactics

laying tactics to prevent officers from accessing the farms and cutting the trees.

On Sunday, enforcement officers en route to the farms had their path blocked by a four-wheel-drive vehicle with a punctured tyre.

The vehicle belonged to one of the farm owners. It was parked in the middle of the narrow road leading to the farms.

On Monday, the enforcement team spent several hours repairing a damaged concrete bridge along their path.

State Forestry Department assistant director (enforcement) Nor Azirim Ahmad said these obstacles had resulted in delays in reaching the plantation site.

"Our team had to use ropes to lift the broken concrete pieces from the stream to repair the bridge. It was quite challenging

as we had to ensure the bridge is safe for vehicles to travel."

He said the enforcement team consisting of state Forestry Department, state Enforcement Unit and policemen would be joined by the General Operations Force's (GOF) Tenggara Brigade from the Bukit Galing camp in Kuantan.

"The GOF will provide more security during the operations and ensure that work can be done according to schedule."

The operations, which cover an area of 101ha, began on July 3 and will end on Aug 2.

Checks at the permanent forest reserve on Monday showed more than 200 Musang King durian trees had been felled.

Eighteen farmers have since been detained for allegedly encroaching into the permanent forest reserve and remanded to

facilitate investigations.

Pahang Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Wan Rosdy Wan Ismail said the enforcement operations did not violate any law or breach the Court of Appeal's orders.

The operations, he said, were mounted after obtaining feedback from the state legal adviser's office.

"The state legal adviser's office was consulted regarding the operations and the area where the enforcement was conducted. The office had referred the matter to the Court of Appeal.

"The operations did not contravene court orders and the area is outside the durian farms which are supposed to be owned by Royal Pahang Durian Resources-PKPP Sdn Bhd," he said in a statement.

"Individuals or farmers caught trespassing will be arrested and

vehicles found within the operation site will be seized. To date, 22 people have been arrested for investigation under the National Forestry Act 1984."

Wan Rosdy said the operations were similar to the ones conducted by enforcement agencies at Sungai Ichat and Lembah Bertam in Cameron Highlands (vegetable farming) and Kechau in Lips (gold mining), and hoped that it would not be turned into a racial issue.

The operations had irked durian farmers who were prevented from entering the farms to collect the fruits. The Court of Appeal had allowed them to enter pending a full appeal in the appellate court.

Some quarters had alleged that the operations were conducted at durian farms that had cases pending in court.

T N ALAGESH AND MOHD RAFI MAMAT RAUB news@nst.com.my

ENFORCEMENT officers have encountered unexpected "hurdles" in their bid to clear illegal durian trees at the Batu Talam permanent forest reserve.

They believe that durian farmers operating illegally at the site are responsible for a series of de-