



KERATAN AKHBAR

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Fearful residents want hill project stopped

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IPOH: Logging and land clearing on Kledang Saiong hill, within the Kinta Valley Geopark, is creating fear among nearby residents who want authorities to stop the project.

Neighbourhood Watch Committee chairman Shamsul Kamar Ani said land clearing on the 151.49ha site started a month ago.

The impact not only affected the flora and fauna on the hills but was a safety concern for the 1,000 residents there, he said.

"About two years ago, when illegal corn farms were set up near the hills, each time during a downpour, our area was flooded.

"That issue is yet to settle, and now a new agriculture project is planned up on the piece of land belonging to the Perak State Development Corporation (PKNP).

"The project is making us fearful and worried. It may cause floods, landslides and even mudslides," he told a press conference at the surau in the residential area here yesterday.

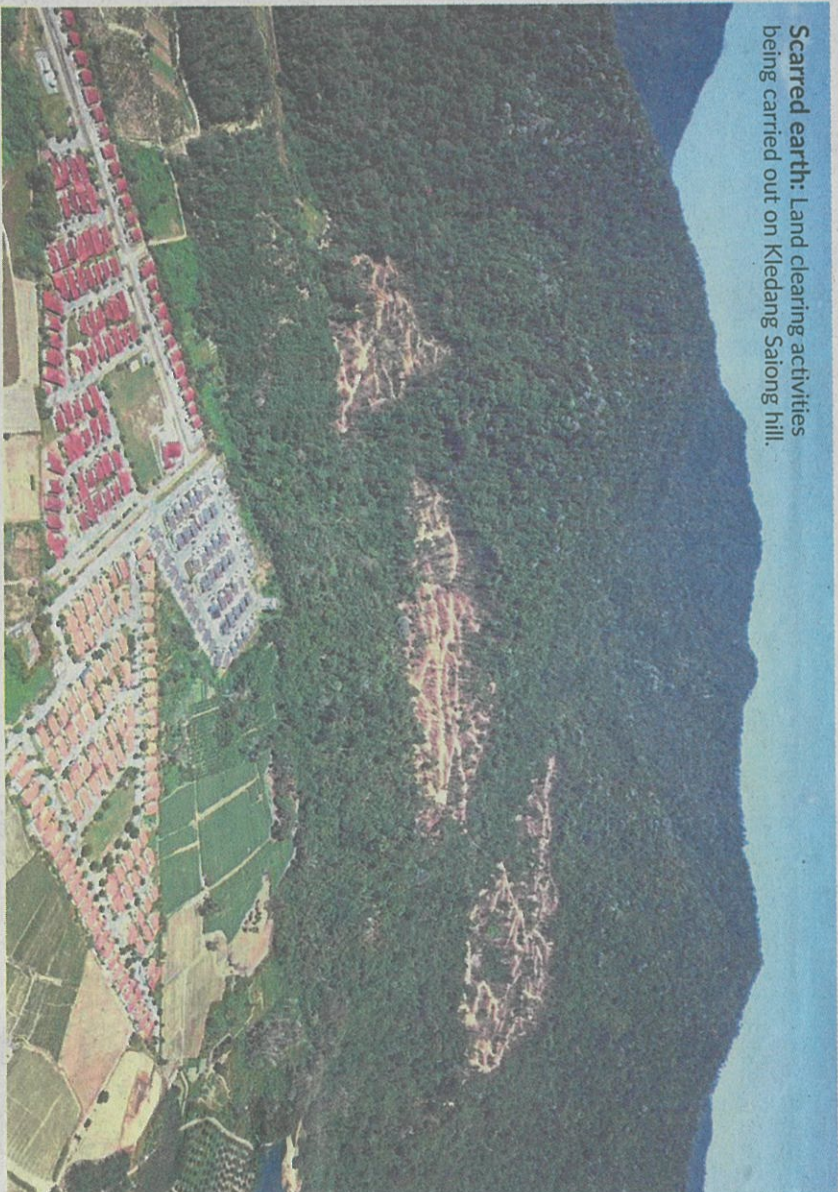
Present were surau chairman Datuk Ahmad Mohd, residents and Sahabat Alam Malaysia field officer Meor Razak Meor Abdul Rahman.

Drone images of the hill showed clearing works along with heavy machinery.

Ahmad said the authorities, in allowing the project to continue, were disrespecting the declaration of the Geopark by the Sultan of Perak in 2018.

He said since the project started, the streams had turned into "teh tarik" colour and residents were also worried that a waterfall, which attracted many people, would soon turn murky as well.

Scarred earth: Land clearing activities being carried out on Kledang Saiong hill.



"We lodged a police report on Saturday and we hope PKNP and the state government would immediately stop the project," he said.

On Dec 8, Meor Razak had said although the clearing activity was within the 500.2ha which had been degazetted from its forest reserve status, it is still part of the Kinta Valley Geopark.

He said the decision to degazette the area was made by the previous administration and the current state government should review the move.

On Dec 11, PKNP in a statement said approval was granted for the land to be cleared for an orchard and after an Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) dated on Jan 21, 2009.

"The statement also noted PKNP had appointed Insan Permata Sdn Bhd to conduct the clearing and licences were issued from the state Forestry Department, from Nov 1 until Jan 31 this year.

However, during the press conference yesterday, Meor Razak questioned the validity of the EIA

conducted in 2009.

"Usually upon approval, the EIA is valid for two years, but it is 10 years now. A new EIA must be done.

"If the project was approved by the previous government and no activity was carried out, why must the current government go on with the project?" he said.

Meor Razak said Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Ahmad Faizal Azumu, who is also PKNP chairman, must take immediate action to stop the project.