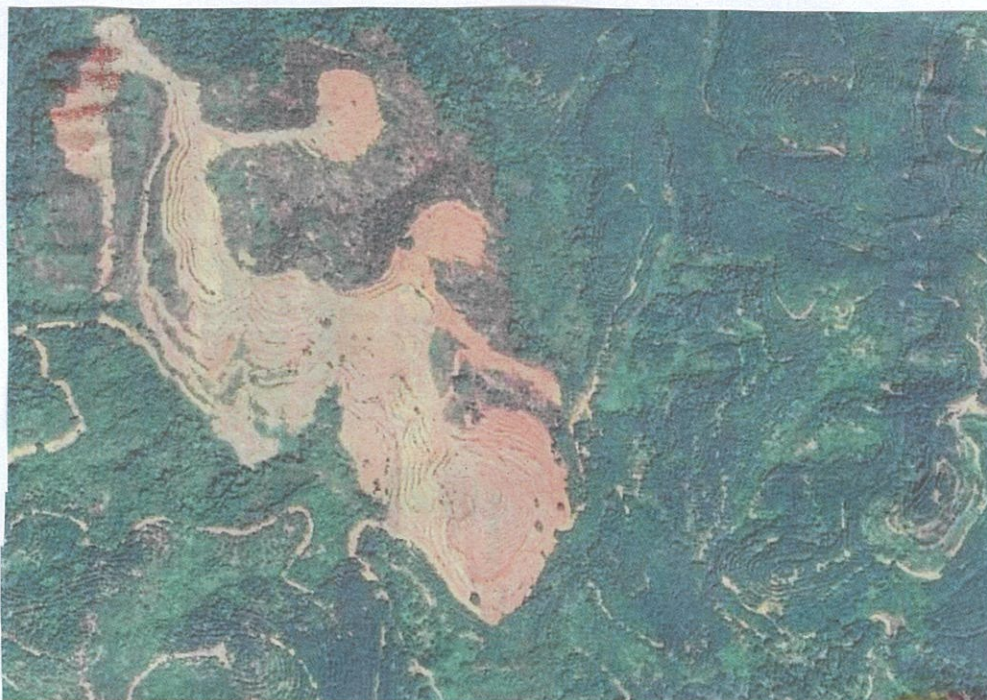




SURAT KHABAR	:	SUNDAY STAR			
TARIKH	:	12/1/2020	MUKA SURAT	:	12
JABATAN	:	JPSM			
KLASIFIKASI	:	PERHATIAN			



Less green: A Google satellite image showing a large area of forest land, believed to be of the Bintang Hijau Forest Reserve, that had been cleared.

Peka: Satellite reveals clearing at Bintang Hijau

Forestry Department says area is not in forest reserve but Felda Lawin Selatan

By IVAN LOH
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IPOH: An environment group has once again called for a moratorium on logging activities following the emergence of satellite pictures said to be of a cleared area within a forest reserve, which the state Forestry Department denied.

Pertubuhan Pelindung Khazanah Alam (Peka) Malaysia president Puan Sri Shariffa Sabrina Syed Akil said the government must put a stop to all logging activities while setting out plans to protect nature.

"The government needs to be responsible with our forests. We also need to change our policies and Acts.

"We cannot afford to lose more forests, especially with the current global issue of climate change," she said, adding that she was sad to see rampant deforestation, especially in Perak.

"There is no point in talking about the economy if we destroy our environment. Some 10 years from now, it's going to be a big problem," she said.

She was responding to satellite images of cleared land, said to be those of Bintang Hijau Forest Reserve, having surfaced on social media.

While the size of the area involved is unclear, it appears vast.

Shariffa Sabrina said she was informed about the cleared land by fellow environmentalists on Friday.

"We have Google experts who would check on maps every now and then and update us. From the images, we believe that the land clearing was recent, probably a few months ago," she said.

Shariffa Sabrina said the Bintang Hijau Forest Reserve was gazetted as a wildlife conservation area in 2013.

"If the land has been cleared, it opens up paths for poachers into the forests while wildlife could also come into contact with humans.

"The forest reserve is also a water catchment area.

"The destruction of such forest land can

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There is no point in talking about the economy if we destroy our environment.

Puan Sri Shariffa Sabrina Syed Akil

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affect the water sources and dry up rivers. It will cause further problems to the people near the area," she said.

"Bintang Hijau should be further gazetted as a conservation area," she said.

However, the Perak Forestry Department said the cleared land shown in the images was not located within the Bintang Hijau Forest Reserve.

"Based on the images from Google Maps and our own global positioning system, the said area is not within the reserve.

"Having also checked the area, it is located in Felda Lawin Selatan," it said, adding that the 147-ha site was for an orchard to grow musang king and black thorn durians as well as papayas.

In December, *The Star* highlighted that some 20ha of hills near the Bukit Kledang range had been cleared as part of a 151.49ha orchard project under the Perak State Development Corporation.

A group of Orang Asli, represented by Sahabat Alam Malaysia field officer Meor Razak Meor Abdul Rahman, had on Wednesday presented a memorandum to urge the state government to stop its plan for monoculture plantations in forest reserves.