



KEMENTERIAN TENAGA DAN SUMBER ASLI

KERATAN SURAT KHABAR

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| SURAT KHABAR | : | NST | | | |
| TARIKH | : | 9/6/2021 | MUKA SURAT | : | 10 |
| JABATAN | : | KeTSA/ JMG | | | |



A section of hillside next to Tasik Chini in Pahang which has been cleared for logging and mining activities. PIC BY FARIZUL HAFIZ AWANG

MINING ACTIVITIES

'Revoke nod for works near Tasik Chini'

KUANTAN: An environmental group has urged the Pahang Menteri Besar (MB) to revoke the approval given for mining activities in the vicinity of Tasik Chini, the country's second-largest freshwater lake, in Pekan.

Malaysian Natural Heritage Protection Organisation (PeKa), in a letter to MB Datuk Seri Wan Rosdy Wan Ismail, said they were against the decision for mining works to be carried out near Tasik Chini, which has been categorised as an environmentally-sensitive area under the National Physical Plan.

Its president Puan Sri Shariffa Sabrina Syed Akl said the area near the lake has been plagued by logging and mining activities, resulting in the buffer zone becoming smaller.

"The lake is not well managed to meet existing standards. Problems related to environmental issues include worsening lake water quality, declining marine life, extinction of local biodiversity and the lake losing its aesthetic value.

"The pollution and ecological disturbances could lead to floods during heavy rain. Hilly areas that have been cleared for log-

ging and mining works can be a hotspot for landslides."

Shariffa Sabrina urged Wan Rosdy to cancel the approval, saying it will not benefit the government or its people.

"In case a disaster occurs during the monsoon season, the state government will face losses and have to spend more to repair their damaged infrastructure, and provide assistance to those affected, including some who may lose their homes or lives.

"Once mining works begin, mud floods and chemical pollution (related to mining works) may enter the tributaries near the lake... it will jeopardise soil quality and pose a threat to the wildlife habitat."

Expressing her disappointment, she said the ongoing environmental pollution has led to a drop in visitors to Tasik Chini and most of them seldom spend the night during school or public holidays.

"The move to gazette the area around the lake (in 2019) as a permanent forest reserve is supposed to help develop the lake as an eco-tourism or agro-tourism spot, and maintain its ecosystem stability and water catchment

area. The Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia's (Tasik Chini Research Centre) research centre has to be fully utilised towards efforts to rehabilitate the lake."

She stressed the lake had to be safeguarded, while all logging and mining activities should be stopped to ensure the Orang Asli living near the lake can enjoy a more conducive environment and become part of the attraction at the lake.

"The state government and related agencies cannot afford to slacken in rehabilitating the lake, and instead intensify efforts to revive it as a famous attraction. The lake's identity as one of Unesco's Biosphere Reserve status sites has to be preserved."

On June 3, an online portal reported that the Pahang government had given the green light for mining operations in the vicinity of Tasik Chini in Pekan to a royalty-linked company.

The project raised eyebrows as the state government had promised two years ago that it would not approve any new mining leases around Tasik Chini and would revive efforts to turn the lake into an eco-tourism site.