



KERATAN AKHBAR

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Earthworks and hill-cutting at Mount Erskine yesterday. – **BBXPIX**

SAM raises alarm on hill-clearing at Mount Erskine

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GEORGE TOWN: Sahabat Alam Malaysia (SAM) wants the authorities to state whether it has approved the massive earthworks and hill-cutting on steep slopes at Mount Erskine.

If approved, it wants to know whether guidelines on such works are adhered to.

SAM president Meenakshi Raman said she was alerted of the matter by residents who had shared photographs of the ongoing earthworks at the area.

Meenakshi said a significant part of the

hill-cutting involves slopes above 75 metres and are on a steep gradient of above 25 degrees.

“Our fellow NGO, the Penang Hills Watch, had informed the state over the matter in September but until now, there is no formal notification from the state,” she said yesterday.

Meenakshi said parts of the slope have been laid bare.

“It can cause serious soil erosion and we do not want to see a repeat of the landslides, which occurred at Paya Terubong and Tanjung Bungah.”

She pointed out that under the proposed

Penang Structure Plan, the state prohibits any earthworks on slopes which exceed the 25 degree gradient.

Meanwhile, a state government spokesman said state executive councillor Jagdeep Singh Deo's office is probing the claims made by SAM.

It appears to be a temporary project to strengthen the slopes through mitigation works but the state views such claims seriously and they would investigate, the spokesman said.

Penang had two deadly landslides in the past years with more than 20 lives lost.