



KEMENTERIAN TENAGA DAN SUMBER ASLI

KERATAN SURAT KHABAR

SURAT KHABAR	:	NST			
TARIKH	:	26/8/2021 (KHAMIS)	MUKA SURAT	:	12
JABATAN	:	JMG			

OBJECTIONS IGNORED

NST, 26 Ogos
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'STOP QUARRY OPERATIONS NOW'

Cracks in walls and floors, dust and 'flying rocks' alarm residents

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MORE than 7,500 residents of Setia Pearl Island here fear for their safety due to daily quarry activities less than 200m from their homes.

Blasting has become increasingly frequent this year, causing grave concern among residents in this dense residential area.

They claim at least three blasts are heard daily about noon at 20- to 30-minute intervals.

Last Thursday, rocks flew from the quarry site during a blasting session and damaged the roof of a house nearby.

Businessman Askin Meera, 55, said the rocks, which landed on his neighbour's roof, could have easily hit a person, causing serious injuries or even death.

He said when he first moved into the neighbourhood back in 2016, there was already a signboard near the quarry site about a bungalow development.

"We thought it was for the bungalow project, and had no issues with that. But we didn't know there were quarry activities taking place. And every time the blasting takes place, we can feel the vibrations in our houses.

"It is not only the blast we have to bear with but the crushing of the rocks to smaller pieces. It is noisy and there is dust everywhere.



Blasting at a quarry in Sungai Ara, Bayan Lepas, is believed to have sent rocks hurtling into a residential area nearby.

PIC COURTESY OF RESIDENT

"Last Thursday's incident was not the first. Many of us had cracks inside our houses while others experienced leaks in their balconies.

"We have raised these issues and concerns with numerous departments and agencies, including the state government, but to no avail. We are left with no choice but to publicise this matter so the quarry activities can be stopped in the interests of safety and health of the residents here," he told the *New Straits Times*.

Sahabat Alam Malaysia (SAM) urged the Penang government, the Penang Island City Council, the Penang Land & Mines Office, the Southwest District and Land Office, the Department of Minerals and Geoscience and the Department of Environment to review the operations of the quarry in Sungai Ara.

According to SAM president Meenakshi Raman, the residents are faced with stone crushing ac-

tivities in the quarry, causing the housing area to experience cracks in the walls and floors, as well as endless dust. The most dangerous are flying rocks that pose a great danger.

In addition, she said, residents were also concerned that lorries carrying loads of quarried rock material could endanger road users. The residents heard frequent loud explosions, believed to be from the rock quarry here.

She added that residents in Setia Pulau Mutiara I, II and III, as well as Stramax Residences, had sent a letter to the Penang chief minister in July to voice their objections against the quarry operations.

"The residents expressed hope that the quarry activities will be stopped immediately as in the case of the quarry in Juru, where operations were stopped recently.

"The residents have also lodged complaints, objections and at-

tended meetings with the authorities over the past few months but lament that firm action was not taken and they are still facing problems and dangers from its operations.

"SAM is concerned that if this matter is not addressed immediately, the residents will continue to be at risk, besides the adverse effects on the environment.

"We understand this quarry is related to earthworks for the development of a new housing project here. Experience has shown that development on hillsides can have dire consequences in the event of landslides, especially during this heavy rain season."

Meenakshi urged the Penang government and the relevant parties to seriously consider the residents' objections.

"The quarry operations near the residential area should be stopped immediately before a tragedy occurs."