

# Stop reclamation projects, Penang govt urged

**GEORGE TOWN:** Environmental group Sahabat Alam Malaysia (SAM) has renewed calls to the Penang government to cancel the decision to implement reclamation projects in the state.

This follows numerous incidents which it claimed had threatened the lives of fishermen at existing reclamation sites, such as Pantai Jerejak.

In one such incident on July 23, fishermen Mohd Maidin Abd Hamid, 63, crashed his boat into a buoy at a reclamation site in Pantai Jerejak while returning from sea at 1.30am.

SAM research officer S. Mageswari said the group was worried over continuous threats the projects posed to the livelihood of more than 4,000 coastal fishermen in the state.

She said despite objections by affected coastal fishermen and

non-governmental organisations, including SAM and Consumers Association of Penang, the Penang government had yet to assure that the projects would not threaten the environment and fishermen's livelihood.

"Taking into consideration the adverse impacts of reclamation to the coastal and marine ecosystem, and subsequently the fisheries sector, SAM urges the state government to immediately cancel the decision to implement reclamation projects in the state, especially the proposed Penang South Reclamation project involving more than 1,618ha," she said.

Mageswari said SAM had received numerous complaints from fishermen on the decline of their catch and income arising from reclamation projects that had been implemented in several



*Fisherman Mohd Maidin Abd Hamid (second from left) with Sahabat Alam Malaysia officers protesting against land reclamation projects in Bayan Lepas yesterday. PIC BY SHAHNAZ FAZLIE SHAHRIZAL*

areas in the state.

"Marine water pollution and ever-decreasing fishing zones due to reclamation at the coastal areas have caused dwindling fisheries resources and thus catches, at times deteriorating to 70 per cent of their daily income.

"Among areas affected by reclamation projects on the island are Tanjung Tokong, Sungai Gelugor, Jelutong, Batu Uban, Persiaran Gurney and Queensbay," she added.

On the Penang South Reclama-

tion at the southern coastline of the island, which involves the creation of three man-made islands, Mageswari said the environmental impact assessment of the project stated that in 2015, a total of 2,757 licensed fishermen operated within the impact zone of the project.

The wholesale value of fish landed at the area was estimated at RM42.09 million, which amounted to 12.4 per cent of the total wholesale value of fish landings from the island, she added.