

A BATU CAVES DAY TO STOP THE QUARRYING

KUALA LUMPUR, Fri
The DAP wants to organise a Batu Caves Day to get Malaysians to demonstrate their concern for the caves.

On this day the party hopes that Malaysians of all races and faiths will gather at Batu Caves and by their presence show their concern for this national heritage.

The party's secretary-general, Mr Lim Kit Siang,

announcing this today, said the gathering was not to start any fight but to "celebrate the spirit of Batu Caves."

He sees the gathering as something of a festival where "families and children come for picnics, talks, songs and dances" — with the aim of saving Batu Caves.

Mr Lim said that Batu Caves Day would serve as notice to the two quarries and the Selangor State Government that all quarrying activities be stopped immediately.

He proposes holding it on Sept 7 to "give the two quarries and the Selangor Government three weeks' notice to stop quarrying."

He said the DAP has formed an Action Committee to discuss its programmes of activities to save the caves.

He added that he will discuss the proposal with all conservation, environmentalist and other concerned groups to get their agreement.

EXTENSION

Mr Lim's proposal was the party's reaction to the granting of a further six-month extension to the two quarries to continue quarrying.

The two quarries are Dolomite Industries and Kennison Brothers, who were recently given alternative quarrying sites by the Selangor Government.

Mr Lim described the extension as a breach of faith of the State Government, which had stated that all quarrying activities would be stopped by June 19.

He charged that the granting of the extension showed that the quarries had operated "in close collaboration and co-operation with the State authorities."

He said that the proposal to turn about 385 acres of the areas at Batu Caves into a National Monument

under the Third Malaysia Plan might not materialise.

"It is possible that the roof of the Caves might collapse within the six months' extension — and if this happens, then there will be no National Monument but a National Disaster," he said.

He argued that the Batu Caves collapse would be a great disaster because it would "destroy a 200-million-year-old natural heritage, desecrate the religious shrine of 200,000 Hindus and threaten the health of the 50,000 residents in and around Batu Caves."

"Everyday of blasting is a day of danger to Batu Caves," he added.

Meanwhile, support from environmentalist and conservationist groups to Batu Caves Day appeared to be cautious.

The president of the Environmental Protection Society of Malaysia, Mr Gurmit Singh, said that while the society welcome the proposal it should not be seen as support for a political party.

"We welcome any moves by any political party interested in preserving Batu Caves."

"But we would like to see all political parties, especially the ruling party, take steps to save the caves," he said.

But the president of the Malayan Society, Dr Saifuddin bin Mohamed Nor, would prefer to have it done through other means.

"A Batu Caves Day is one form of creating greater public awareness of the importance of the caves."

"But it will be against our society's principle if we endorse a physical demonstration of concern," he said.

"We would prefer to do it by continuing to enlighten the Government on the dangers to the caves through letters and forums."

Bahan asal dari Arkib
Negara Malaysia