

22 JAN 1997

Sanusi-Land

ADMINISTRATIVE DELAY BLAMED FOR "MISSING LAND"

ALOR SETAR, Jan 22 (Bernama) -- Delays in handing over part of the land to be gazetted as forest reserve to the Forestry Department and miscommunication among government departments are the reasons for the land to be classified as "missing", Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Sanusi Junid said today.

Actually, part of the land had already been handed over to the State Forestry Department while part of it was still owned by the state government and are being processed to be gazetted, he said.

"The confusion arosed due to administrative delays. Actually, everything is there and in the process of gazetting to be handed over to the Forestry Department," he told reporters after chairing the weekly state executive council meeting at Wisma Darul Aman here.

Sanusi ordered for a full-scale investigation following a press report that almost half of the 35,567ha of land to be gazetted as forest reserves in Kedah had been classfied as "missing".

He directed the State Land and Mines Department to check all decisions on certain land deals made by the previous administration.

Sanusi said based on records some 36,000ha in Padang Terap, Kubang Pasu and Sik districts were earmarked to be gazetted as additional forest reserve and part of it had been handed over to the Forestry Department.

The "missing land" is actually the land which the state government has yet to surrender to the department, he said.

Sanusi also said the exco meeting today accepted the proposal by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to start an express train service from Bukit Kayu Hitam to Seberang Perai to facilitate movement of workers and public.

Dr Mahathir made the suggestion when speaking at a gathering of Barisan Nasional leaders here on Jan 9.

Sanusi said the train service would also help spur economic activities in smaller towns along the proposed rail route.

He said the meeting also decided to hand over old Chinese and Indian burial grounds sited at Alor Setar town centre to the respective community associations to be turned into economic activity centres.

The old cemeteries would be relocated to new burial grounds to make way for the redevelopment of the old graveyards into business centres, he said.

Sanusi said the decision was made following proposals by the Chinese and Indian community associations.

The state government had also decided to invite investors to develop Tasik Putat in Jitra, near the North-South Expressway, as a theme park and food centre, he said.

The project, once completed, would attract tourists from neighbouring Thailand and Pulau Pinang apart from locals, he added.

-- BERNAMA

MFJ TS