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Developer fined RM20,000 for breach of EIA

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KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. - Projek Ikatan Rapi Sdn Bhd, developer of the Ukay Perdana housing project in Hulu Klang, was fined RM20,000 by the Sessions Court today for breaching a condition attached to its Environmental Impact Assessment report.

The developer, represented by director Suhaimy Husin, admitted violating the permitted suspended solid level allowed from its siltation trap pond at the project site, Lot 13431, at noon on Jan 20.

Judge Hue Siew Kheng also allowed the prosecution's application for a discharge not amounting to acquittal on two other charges against the company for breaching two other conditions of the EIA report. These were related to the project site's topography, felling of trees and treatment of exposed slopes.

Projek Ikatan Rapi was charged on June 6 with three counts of breaching the conditions. It had claimed trial to all the charges.

Owned by Capital Advance Consolidated Sdn Bhd (a Larut Consolidated Bhd subsidiary), it was charged under section 34A(7) of the Environmental Quality Act 1974. The offence carries a fine of up to RM100,000 or imprisonment of up to five years or both.

According to the facts, the Selangor Department of Environment, upon receiving a complaint, had checked the project site.

An officer took a sample from the siltation trap pond. The suspended solid level of the sample was 100mg/l, exceeding the 50mg/l level permitted in the EIA condition.

In mitigation, defence counsel Muhammad Shafee Abdullah said the developer had already built four siltation trap ponds at the time of the offence.

He said the 50mg/l permitted suspended solid level was "next to impossible".

Showing the court two bottled water samples with suspended solid levels of 50mg/l and 100mg/l respectively, he said the 100mg/l appeared as clear as drinking water. He added that the Press had painted a picture far from the truth, as the site was not covered with rain forest but secondary jungle.

Muhammad Shafee said the developer had pledged to plant 12,000 trees and agreed to build 300 low-cost houses on its project site.

Prosecuting officer Hasila Awang said the offence had serious implications on the environment.

She said a severe sentence would remind other developers to safeguard the environment, and not merely seek profits.

It was earlier reported that the developer had been criticised for indiscriminate felling of trees and levelling of land on 82.8ha, out of 138ha earmarked for the project near Bukit Antarabangsa.

The environmental degradation at the project site was highlighted after Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad spotted the barren hill (project site) from a helicopter.

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