

20/04/1997

Developer to be charged (HL)

Esther Tan

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. - The Department of Environment has been given the green light by the deputy public prosecutor to file charges against the developer of the Ukay Perdana housing project in Hulu Klang, for flouting environmental regulations.

DOE director-general Tan Meng Leng said preparations were being made to file the case against Projek Ikatan Rapi Sdn Bhd in a Selangor court.

Science, Technology and Environment Minister Datuk Law Hieng Ding had said last month that the developer would be taken to court for failure to comply with four Environmental Impact Assessment conditions.

He said the developer had carried out construction work on slopes of more than 20 degrees gradient although it was not allowed to do so, failed to carry out mitigative and stabilisation works on slopes it had cut, failed to maintain its silt trap and failed to submit plans before carrying out earthworks as required under the law.

Law had said the developer would be charged under the Environmental Quality (Prescribed Activities) (Environmental Impact Assessment) Order 1987 under the Environmental Quality Act.

The developer is liable to a maximum fine of RM100,000 or five years' jail, or both.

The Cabinet in its weekly meeting two weeks ago had asked the authorities to consider pressing charges against top officials, including chief executive officers of companies, involved in indiscriminate tree felling and hill cutting.

The environmental degradation at the project was highlighted after Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad spotted the bare hill from a helicopter last month.

The Cabinet subsequently directed the Housing and Local Government Ministry to investigate the land clearing works in Selangor and the Ampang Jaya Municipal Council issued a stop-work order to Projek Ikatan Rapi.

Larut Consolidated Bhd's assistant general manager (project) Ting Jian Guo said officials from the council were expected to inspect the site next week before deciding whether it should lift the order.

(Projek Ikatan Rapi is owned by Capital Advance Consolidated Sdn Bhd, a subsidiary of Larut Consolidated).

The developer had been directed to take remedial steps, including building more silt traps and slope turfing, at the site before it could be allowed to begin construction works.

"All slopes with completed platform have already been turfed. We have also constructed all the silt traps as requested by our engineers and added two more as directed by the local authority.

"We have also planted more than 400 trees at the site, to date," said Ting.

On April 3, Projek Ikatan Rapi pledged to plant some 12,000 trees in the area in six months.

It was part of the remedial measures Projek Ikatan Rapi had proposed to the State Government and the council.

Projek Ikatan Rapi had also proposed to give the Selangor Government a bank guarantee of RM5 million which would be forfeited if they failed to meet the target.

Ting said today the State Government had agreed to the bank guarantee proposal.

The planting of trees was part of the developer's original plan but it was supposed to be carried out only after each phase of the construction had been completed.

Due to the public outcry about the tree felling and hill cutting at the site and the stop-work order issued by the council, the developer had decided to begin planting the trees immediately.

(END)