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MB: No indiscriminate opening of land in State

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PETALING JAYA, Thurs. - Selangor Menteri Besar Tan Sri Muhammad Muhammad Taib denied any indiscriminate opening of land for development in the State, adding that projects were being carried out according to guidelines.

He said the State Government was constantly monitoring development projects through agencies such as the district and land offices and district councils.

"We do not approve of developers who fell trees and level hills indiscriminately and will take action including stopping work at project sites. We have done this before," he said.

He said this after opening a seminar entitled High Technology: A Reality of Life, organised by Institut Perkembangan Minda and Yayasan Basmi Kemiskinan Selangor today.

Muhammad was asked to comment on Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's directive to the Housing and Local Government Ministry to investigate massive land clearing in Selangor.

Dr Mahathir had spotted the activities while flying from Taman Negara to Kuala Lumpur last week.

Muhammad said based on investigations, he believed the Prime Minister was referring to earthworks being carried out on a 138ha site in Hulu Klang.

He said the State Government, through the Ampang Jaya Municipal Council had ordered developer, Projek Ikatan Rapi Sdn Bhd, to stop work at the site.

He added that Ikatan Rapi, which had planned a mixed development project at the site, had been given several projects in the area which he believed had been combined, resulting in massive land clearing.

"The MPAJ reminded the developer on March 12, to abide by the regulations, but the developer does not seem to have understood the council's instructions.

"Either that or they failed to advise their contractor which resulted in the mass land clearing, which left us with no other alternative but ask them to stop work," he said.

He added that based on investigations, no other areas appeared to have suffered the indiscriminate levelling of hills and tree felling.

"The issue is not over flat land clearing but indiscriminate tree felling and hill levelling. We don't have this problem in other parts of Selangor," he said.

Muhammad added that several development projects which involved land clearing were being conducted in Selangor including the new Kuala Lumpur International Airport project in Sepang, Putra Jaya Government administration centre and housing development projects.

"Land clearing is not new but what we are opposed to is hill levelling and indiscriminate tree felling," he said adding that in certain instances land had to be cleared to make way for development.

However, he added strict guidelines had to be adhered to and advice from various agencies, including the Forestry Department had been sought to identify suitable areas which could be used for development and those which should be preserved.

"We certainly cannot clear water catchment areas, for instance," he said, adding that he supported the clearing of land for development but

only when approval had been given.  
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