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#### Patrols to keep check on Wetlands Sanctuary

Sa'odah Elias

KUALA LANGAT, Fri. - The Selangor State Government has set up a joint enforcement unit with the Federal Government to guard the Malaysian Wetlands Sanctuary near here.

Menteri Besar Datuk Abu Hassan Omar said enforcement officers from the special unit would carry out round-the-clock patrolling to prevent unauthorised people from encroaching.

He said the 24-hour enforcement would also prevent illegal sand mining operators from taking sand out of the area, a problem which had contributed to environmental degradation at the site.

Abu Hassan said the establishment of the joint enforcement unit was directed by the Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad who was concerned that illegal sand mining activity would degrade the environment in the area.

"The local authority has already cancelled all sand mining permits for the area since June and strict action will be taken against anyone caught carrying out the activity," he told reporters after presenting prizes to the winners of a clean village competition at Kampung Kundang near here.

Abu Hassan, however, said although all sand mining permits had been cancelled, the lease for three sand mining sites in the area were still active.

As such, he said, the State Government would have to negotiate with the lease holders, one of whom held the lease for a sand mining area which was valid until the year 2014.

He said the State Government hoped the lease holders would cooperate with the authority to preserve the natural environment at the permanent peat forest reserve.

The State Government, he said, was committed in protecting the peat forest, lake, sand and other natural environment in the area.

Kampung Kundang emerged as the winner of the Clean Village annual competition which started in 1983 while the second and third places went to Kampung Bukit Kapar in Klang and Kampung Bukit Bangkong in Sepang respectively.

Kampung Kundang won a project worth RM60,000 and RM2,000 cash while Kampung Bukit Kapar won a project worth RM30,000 and RM1,500 cash. Third place winner won a project worth RM20,000 and RM1,000 cash.

The competition, organised by the State Rural Development Unit is opened to all Malay traditional villages which are not under the administration of local councils.

All the villages were judged on the effectiveness of their community programmes, overall health and cleanliness of the people, environment, basic economy and industrial or business projects involving the community.

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