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Project not carried out in proper phases

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KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. - Projek Ikatan Rapi Sdn Bhd, the company developing the 138-ha Ukay Perdana housing project in Bukit Antarabangsa, Hulu Kelang, had defied a ruling by the Ampang Jaya Municipal Council to carry out the project in phases.

Apart from this, Selangor Menteri Besar Tan Sri Muhammad Muhammad Taib said the developer had also ignored the council's ruling earlier this month "to clean up its act."

Describing the developer as "defiant and irresponsible," he said Ikatan Rapi had failed to undertake the project over six phases, a condition which was placed by the Council when the project was approved.

"Among the phases which were left out were the replanting of trees, turfing and landscaping.

"Despite the assurance given to us by their consultant, they had violated all the environment-related conditions issued by the authorities.

"The stop-work order will stay until the State Government is satisfied with the remedial measures and greenery proposals submitted by the developer.

"This will serve as a warning and reminder that the State Government will not tolerate any indiscriminate clearing of land for development," he said during a Press conference after a one-hour visit to the site today.

Muhammad's harsh stance came after Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had voiced his concern after spotting land clearing work from a helicopter last week on the way back from Taman Negara.

Housing and Local Government Minister Datuk Dr Ting Chew Peh had told reporters last Tuesday that Dr Mahathir had noticed all the trees in that area had been felled and a hill had been levelled.

Ting said the matter had been brought up at the Cabinet meeting and the Ministry was told to conduct an investigation.

This is not the first time the PM and the Cabinet had pointed out the serious violation of environmental rules in Selangor.

In February last year, the Cabinet had ordered an immediate suspension of works at the Mimaland Golf Resort in Gombak, Selangor because of severe soil erosion, siltation and hill-cutting.

The suspension order was lifted five-and-a-half months later. The developer, Mimaland Bhd, was fined RM6,000 and RM8,000 in April and July by the Shah Alam Court last year for breaching environment impact assessment requirements.

Muhammad said to prevent such occurrence in the future, a task force would be established at state-level to monitor housing projects which were being carried out at "critical zones."

"We will request all municipal councils, district offices and state government departments to supervise closely all development works on hilly areas.

"All projects which have already been approved or are presently being undertaken are also included," he said.

Formed in December 1988, Ikatan Rapi started as a consortium of seven companies which were set up to undertake the Ukay Perdana mixed development project in Hulu Klang.

The companies which were each allotted land parcels of between 19-ha and 22-ha for development were the Ex-Servicemen's Association of Malaysia (Selangor Branch), Perumahan Gerak Jaya Sdn Bhd, Usaha Ehsan Sdn Bhd,

Mekar Bina Sdn Bhd, Ammas Sdn Bhd, Cepat Bina Sdn Bhd and Norma Sdn Bhd.

The Department of Environment had approved the project's Environment Impact Assessment in February 1995. Its building site plan was approved by the Ampang Jaya Municipal Council in March last year, while earthworks began last July.

A search at the Registrar of Companies showed 95 per cent of Ikatan Rapi shares were now owned by Capital Advance Consolidated Sdn Bhd, a subsidiary of Larut Consolidated.

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