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States urged to act against indiscriminate land clearing

reports on "Dewan Negara" by Satwant Singh
STATE Governments and local authorities should check indiscriminate land clearing and tree felling themselves and not wait for the Prime Minister to address the issue first before action is taken.

Datuk Ahmad Ismail said it was regretful that State Governments and local authorities took action only after Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had raised the issue.

"The Prime Minister has more important matters to address," he said when debating the motion of thanks for the Royal address.

Ahmad said the Housing and Local Government Ministry should also look into the matter and inform the Cabinet if it was aware of any land clearing.

Citing an example of a recent case in Selangor, he said action was taken only after Dr Mahathir had raised the matter following an inspection of the land from a helicopter.

Touching on crashes involving the Royal Malaysian Air Force's Nuri helicopters, Ahmad said the Defence Ministry should decide once and for all the airworthiness of the helicopters.

"Fourteen crashes have occurred and 70 lives have been lost.... I hope they do not wait until the 15th crash," he said. "It is sad that lives were lost not in action but when carrying out other duties."

He said the crashes had also affected the country's image locally and abroad.

Dr Yeow Seng Huat question the rationale of Tenaga Nasional Bhd' revision of its tariff rates although profits had increased.

The impact, he said, would be mostly felt by rural folks.

Datuk Ting Check Sii urged the Government to build more low-cost houses in Sarawak, especially in rural areas.

"It should also ensure that only those who qualify are given the houses," he said.

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