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Ukay Perdana developer finds it difficult to plant trees

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KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. - Work to plant trees and grass on barren slopes at the controversial Ukay Perdana housing project at Hulu Klang is progressing slowly.

Six months after developer, Projek Ikatan Rapi Sdn Bhd, was taken to task for indiscriminate tree felling and ground levelling on the 82.8 hectare site, trees have sprung up while slopes are being covered with turf to prevent further erosion.

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

The company had pledged to plant up to 12,000 trees by the end of the year. However, it has only managed about 1,500 so far, and Larut Consolidated Bhd deputy general manager Ting Jian Guo said this was due to the rocky surface of the area.

"We have to dig out the rocks before we can plant the trees and we have managed to do that in most of the empty plots that have been marked out for housing construction.

"Once we are ready to build the houses, the trees would have grown to a considerable size and we will then replant them accordingly," he said when met at the site today.

Larut Consolidated, through its subsidiary Capital Advance Consolidated Sdn Bhd, owns Projek Ikatan Rapi.

Ting said as for immediate measures, the company had conducted "hydroseeding" to turf the slopes. Hydroseeding allows grass to grow faster and up to 15 centimetres within three months.

"More importantly, the roots will hold the ground to prevent any soil erosion," he said adding that more than 10 different types of ornament and forest trees had been picked for planting in the area.

The company, he said had also set up a temporary nursery to allow the trees to grow before they are then replanted at designated areas.

As for the slopes, he said berm drains had been built to channel water down to the silt traps as an erosion prevention method.

Tree planting, turfing of slopes and enlarging and maintaining silt traps at the project site were three remedial measures proposed by the company to the State Government to improve the condition at the site after a stop work order issued by the Ampang Jaya Municipal Council (MPAJ) in April, which was subsequently lifted in July.

This followed a Cabinet directive to the Housing and Local Government Ministry to investigate the large land clearing works in Selangor.

As for the Selangor State Government's pre-condition that the company include the building of low-cost houses at the area, Ting said the company had submitted its proposed plans to the MPAJ.

The plan covers construction of up to 300 such houses and the company, he said, was awaiting approval from the MPAJ.

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