

04 FEB 1999

Khalil-Zone

BUFFER ZONE FOR NATIONAL PARK TO BE STUDIED

KUANTAN, Feb 4 (Bernama) -- A study will be carried out on the setting up of a buffer zone at Merapoh, Lipis bordering the National Park to prevent any intrusion or land clearing that can threaten the ecological system at the park.

Menteri Besar Tan Sri Khalil Yaakob said today the proposed buffer zone would be located next to the Merapoh/National Park border and any logging activity would only be allowed outside the zone.

He told reporters here that the State Forestry Department would be asked to provide a comprehensive report on logging and land clearing activities around the National Park for submission to the state government.

The cabinet, at its meeting chaired by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad yesterday directed that an investigation be carried out on the ecological effects from land clearing activities believed to be going on near the National Park.

Satellite photographs taken in March last year had shown that land clearing activities were being carried out along the National Park boundaries in Kelantan and Pahang.

Khalil said the state government would give its full cooperation to ensure that the cabinet directive was implemented in the best possible manner.

He said a proposal that aerial photographs showing the situation along the National Park boundaries would also be made to complement the satellite photographs.

"In terms of monitoring, the State Forestry Department had already carried out air patrols using a helicopter to check illegal logging," he added.

-- BERNAMA

ROS AO