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Adnan-Cameron

ADNAN WANTS LAND REHABILITATION ACT 1960 AMENDED

KUANTAN, Feb 4 (Bernama) -- Pahang Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Adnan Yaakob said any imposition of fines are meaningless if the Land Rehabilitation Act 1960 is not amended to provide for stiffer penalties to developers giving scant regard to the environment.

He said that under the provision of the Act, such developers would only face a fine of RM500, a paltry sum for them compared to their substantial working capital.

"I suggest that the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment proposes amendments to the Land Rehabilitation Act 1960 in the next sitting of the Dewan Rakyat to provide stiffer penalties to offenders," he told reporters at his residence, here today.

He was commenting on the today's statement by Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad who deplored the indiscriminate development in Cameron Highlands, where scant regard to the environment had adversely affected its natural beauty.

The Prime Minister, who was speaking at the simultaneous launching of the second anniversary of the Putrajaya Federal Territory and the Botanical Gardens in Putrajaya, said he regretted that some areas had been flattened to the extent that the highlands now appear to be just like in the lowlands.

A newspaper reported on Friday that a group of companies was illegally using heavy machinery to clear land in an area, which is formerly part of the Blue Valley Tea Plantation in Cameron Highlands.

This is despite being issued two stop-work orders by the Cameron Highlands District Council. A police report was lodged against the parties by the State Land and Mines Department on Sunday.

Adnan said the company concerned, Deng Seng Sdn Bhd was issued an order to stop clearing the land for a tomato plantation on Jan 30, three days after the renewal of its permit for land clearing works.

"So far, the decision of the district land administrator is stop-work and is supported by the state government. If the company carries on and continues to violate the law, it will not be allowed to continue its operations," he said.

Adnan said the company had been fined RM2,000 and ordered to stop work previously for violating several conditions imposed but was allowed to resume operations after it observed the conditions.

He said the first permit was issued on Oct 21, 2002 and when it expired on Jan 21, 2003 it was renewed on Jan 27 with the expiry date on Feb 28, 2003.

"In Cameron Highlands, growing vegetables are normal activities. There were no problems prior to this because light machinery was used in addition to human labour. It becomes a problem when heavy machinery is used," he said.

Adnan said the land, covering 24 hectares, was bought by the company from Boh Plantation at Lot 30, Blue Valley for a tomato plantation covering 10 hectares.

He said the permit, among others, stipulated that heavy machinery should not be used for land clearing works.

"I feel ashamed that this is happening in Cameron Highlands," he said.

-- BERNAMA

MS ABG

