

Illegal sand-mining: MB seeks DPM's 'mojo'
Malaysiakini.com
July 14, 2010

UPDATED 7.00pm The federal government needs to do its part and help Selangor rid itself of its long-standing illegal sand mining problem, said Menteri Besar Khalid Ibrahim in response to Deputy Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin's recent assault on the issue.

save tian chua dinner 200610 khalid ibrahim 02Khalid (left) said he has written to Muhyiddin to explain the current situation faced by the state government, and invited him and federal agencies to cooperate with the state in fighting the menace.

Khalid said cooperation will bring the greatest benefit to Selangor residents.

"Our revenue would increase, the people of Selangor will benefit... the problem is the illegal sand mining, not a difference in view between federal and state," he said at a press conference at the state assembly building in Shah Alam today.

He said his administration is ready to do the job, but quipped, "Since he (Muhyiddin) said it's easy to do it (tackle the problem) I thought he has a magic formula... I might as well use it."

30-year-old problem

Khalid's letter to the ministry included the "many" police reports filed by state sand mining arm Kuala Semesta Sdn Bhd (KSSB) and the list of operators in areas where they have identified illegal mining operations.

muhyiddin yassin pc 170310Apart from Muhyiddin (right), the letter was also forwarded to inspector-general of police Musa Hassan, Selangor police chief Khalid Abu Bakar and attorney-general Abdul Gani Patail.

Khalid pointed out that the illegal sand mining problem was not new, but a legacy of the former BN state government under Khir Toyo, during which he said it was a "free for all" for illegal operators.

He stressed that his administration had made continued progress in reducing the number of illegal operations statewide, aided by the improving performance of state arm Kuala Semesta Sdn Bhd (KSSB), set up to manage sand mining in the state.

He said the state government also holds fortnightly meetings with all district officers to get updates on the fight against illegal sand miners.

"When we started one and a half years ago we had a big number (of illegal operators). Now there are less, but we cannot expect to solve, in two years, a problem that has been around for 30 years," he said.

The menteri besar also said it was challenging to push for concerted enforcement and monitoring while at the same time maintaining a stable supply.

Among the problems include the logistics in monitoring the large tracts of land where sand mining can be done, and the indifference of end users such as developers, who he said are not bothered whether they got their supplies from legal or illegal operators.

State will go public

Putting the ball in the ministry's court, Khalid said that the state government will on Friday announce the list of sand mining contractors who had received permits from the previous BN government from 2006 up to early 2008, prior to the PR's takeover.

NONE "We (will) give the list of people who have got the licenses, so you have to study whether these people are real sand miners or not," he said.

On the alleged degradation of the Paya Indah Wetlands due to sand mining activities in Kg Olak Lempit, Kuala Langat, Khalid said the claims are baseless as they carry out monthly checks on the mine to make sure it does not impact the surrounding environment.

He said the claim that the mine has left a 60m-deep crater is ridiculous, as it was already there in the first place.

"Most of these sand areas are formerly tin mining areas. (The crater was) already there, and I think this is where people are trying to make something out of nothing.

"But from our perspective, even if it's already there, we must be able to take care of it."

Copyright © 1999-2007 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd.

Source : <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/137328>