

S'gor MB unaware of small-time sand contractors' woes
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Selangor Menteri Besar Abdul Khalid Ibrahim said today that he was not aware of the existence of small-time sand contractors in the state.

He said he had just come to know there were middlemen for sand-mining permits.

The MB told this to reporters when asked to comment on complaints by the Selangor Malay Sand Contractors Action Committee that royalty imposed by state mining arm Kumpulan Semesta Sdn Bhd (KSSB) at RM6 per tonne of sand was eating into their margins.

He had earlier launched an astronomy convention organised by the state mufti department in Shah Alam today.

Abdul Khalid said the grouses aired by the committee which comprised 50 members, gave the state a good idea on the actual cost of sand mining.

There were reports that sand mining in the state was rampant because the RM6 royalty imposed per tonne of sand was way too high as the cost of extracting sand amounted to around RM11 a tonne while the selling price was at between RM11 and RM14.

Abdul Khalid stressed that KSSB was incorporated not to make money but to ensure a stable situation where sand mining was concerned.

He added that the state government would make efforts to assist small-time sand contractors to become more efficient so that they could remain competitive.

However, he said this would take some time as the state government's priority was to tackle the problem of sand thieves.

Plan to expose company directors

On the requirement for sand mining on private land that the size of the land must be a minimum of eight hectares, Abdul Khalid said it was to ensure that there was enough earth to fill the holes dug out during the mining of sand.

The menteri besar said he was not aware that this requirement affected small-scale sand mining companies and that the state government would take steps to help them.

Meanwhile, Abdul Khalid also urged the federal government to help the Selangor government in enforcement pertaining to sand mining and prosecution of sand thieves, which came under the jurisdiction of the attorney-general.

Asked about the state government's plan to reveal the names of directors of companies awarded sand mining permits before 2008, the menteri besar said this had to be done carefully as there might have been changes in directorships and share ownership.

Yesterday, the Selangor government had issued a statement stating that 158 sand mining permits were issued in the state between 2005 and 2007.

- Bernama

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