

Najib: Act fast to protect water catchment areas

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PEKAN: State governments have been told to hasten the gazetting of water catchment areas to protect them from being destroyed by indiscriminate logging and development.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said yesterday that no financially profitable activities such as logging should be carried out in water catchment areas.

"The National Land Council requires these areas to be gazetted," he said after distributing financial aid to victims of the recent floods in the district.

"The state governments are now supposed to be in the process of doing that.

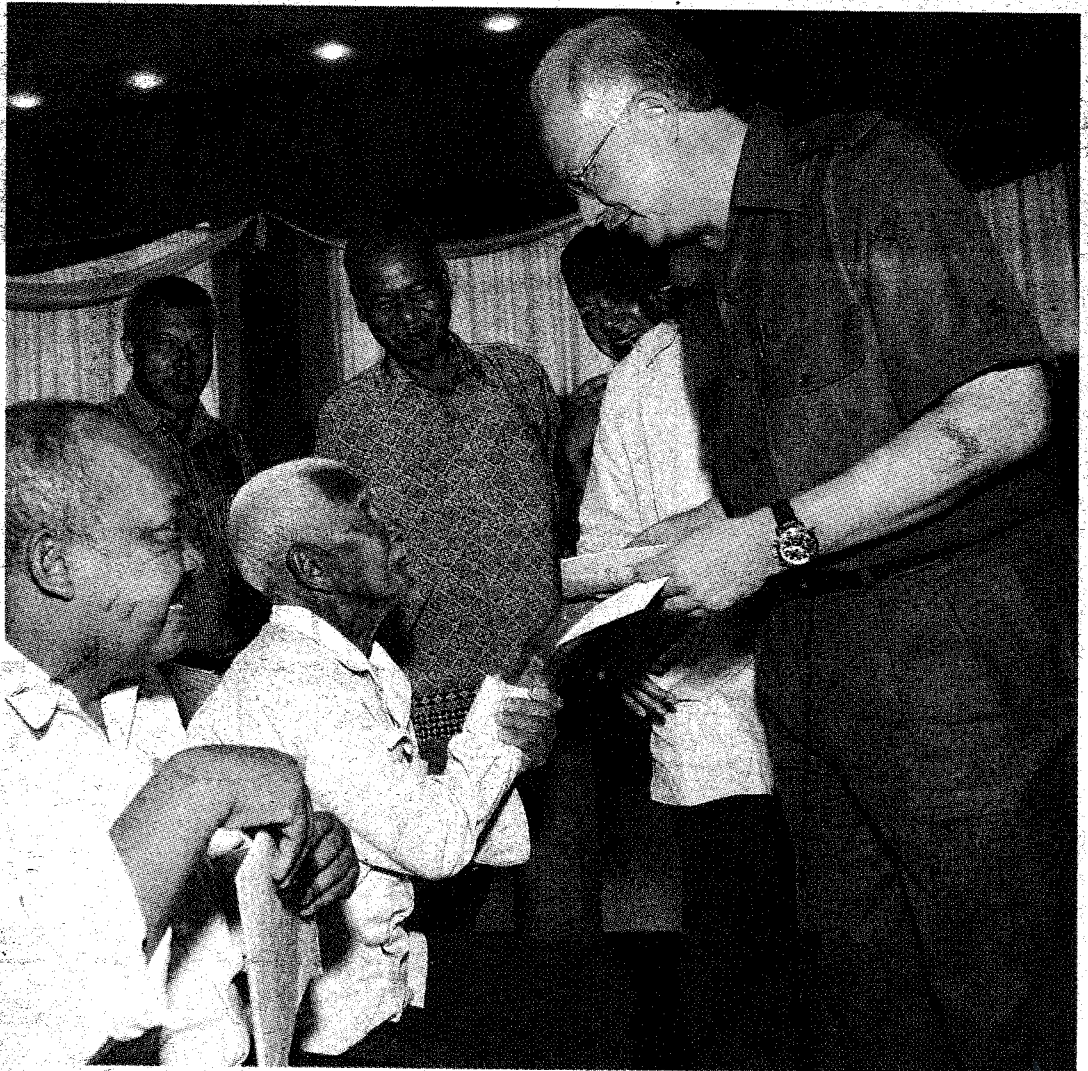
"What I hope is for them to carry out the process diligently and with all care to ensure that any development or logging activities does not touch the catchment areas."

On the destruction of the environment in the Lojing Highlands in Kelantan, Najib, who is the Pekan MP, said the area should have been gazetted as a water catchment area by the Pas-led state government.

"It was under their jurisdiction. We had issued the directive (for them to do so), but since the area was still not gazetted, then it should be considered as a failure by the state government."

Some 25,000ha of pristine forest are reported to have been cleared in Lojing for farming near Gua Musang.

On dubious investment schemes offered on the Internet, Najib advised the public not to fall for them.



Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak handing out aid to victims of the recent floods in Pekan yesterday. — Picture by Nordin Abdullah

"They are get-rich-quick schemes similar to the Pak Man Telo investment scheme (of the 1980s). The only difference is that

this time they are using the Internet."

Najib said the government would look into the legal provi-

sions governing the multimedia, financial and banking sectors to find ways to act against those behind such schemes.