

Selcat's sand theft probe a sham, says Selangor MCA man
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KUALA LUMPUR, March 7 — A Selangor MCA lawmaker accused today the Pakatan Rakyat (PR) government of putting on a show by having its own watchdog probe claims of sand mining irregularities in the state instead of investigating it directly.

Kuala Kubu Baru assemblyman Wong Koon Mun claimed that the Selangor Select Committee of Competency, Accountability and Transparency (Selcat) does not have the power to initiate any action against illegal sand miners despite its on-going public hearing into the case.

"I challenge the Selangor state government to prove that its Freedom of Information Act is valid by opening up the financial and audit reports of the state government's subsidiaries, including those of Kuala Semesta Sdn Bhd (KSSB) and the Selangor State Development Corporation (PKNS).

"As the state government is unable to solve the sand theft issue, they are only putting on a show by asking Selcat, which has no authority, to investigate so that people will think that they are taking this issue seriously," Wong said in a statement today.

He pointed to the Auditor-General's Report 2009 that noted sand theft had become a serious issue in the state, highlighting that one million tonnes of sand was allegedly stolen after KSSB took over as the sole sand concessionaire.

"This is equivalent to RM1.82 million in taxes," Wong said.

He highlighted the audit report saying the state's sand mining activities were not satisfactory, adding that among the shortfalls were the destruction of the eco-system, the river bank and the stability of the soil, as well as air and sound pollution and infrastructure damage in the vicinity of the sand quarries.

Selcat, chaired by Selangor legislative assembly speaker Datuk Teng Chang Khim, is continuing its public inquiry today on KSSB, Yayasan Selangor for graft, and two independent companies that had been awarded a RM180 million loan by the Selangor Agricultural Development Corporation (PKPS).

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