

Focus on issues in our own backyard first, BN state rep tells Penang govt
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GEORGE TOWN, The Penang government should be more concerned about how to resolve problems in its own backyard instead of focusing on national issues, says an opposition representative.

Citing an example, Shah Headan Ayoob Hussain Shah (Barisan Nasional-Teluk Bahang) said that rampant hill and land clearing in Penang may bring about serious problems to the state, if it is not addressed.

The most recent one, he said, was the illegal clearing of Kampung Bukit Kecil Sungai Pinang or better known as Bukit Laksamana in Kampung Teluk Bahang.

Shah Headan said that the Penang government's focus on national issues, like the Goods and Tax services might just cause local ones to go unnoticed and never resolved.

"This is a very serious issue in Penang as there are now 28 sites known to have been illegally cleared including Bukit Laksamana which also acts as a water trap to supply water to the dam.

"Earthworks are visible from the foot of the hills as the clearing is massive, leaving an unsightly bald patch atop the hill," Shah Headan told a press conference at the State Legislative Assembly which is in session this week.

He added that he had turned to the media to highlight the issue in hopes that it would put a stop to the illegal clearing

"We have also brought up the issue to the state land and mines office three months ago and until now the clearing works are still ongoing.

"Up until yesterday, clearing works were still carried out as photographed."

Shah Headan also questioned the silence by non-governmental organisations when it comes to issues regarding illegal land clearing.

NGOs, he said, play a big role in getting the community's engagement in issues like these such as getting people to sign petition to protest.

"Where are they now? They were once very vocal during Barisan Nasional's time."

The state government, he suggested, should also make clear the standard operating procedures when it comes to certain issues especially land clearing instead of just debating on the GST.

“How can we be talking about national issues when we can’t even manage our own state resources properly?”

State Opposition Leader Datuk Jahara Hamid who was also at the press conference expressed shock that the state government had not taken any action on the Kampung Laksamana issue even though a report had been made three months ago.

Describing the matter as a blatant disregard for the law, the Teluk Air Tawar assemblyman also asked if there was possibility that certain quarters were being “protected” in carrying out such an act.

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