

'Kelantan Worst State In Terms Of Forest Preservation'

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KUALA LUMPUR, March 3 (Bernama) -- An environment watchdog's field researcher on Tuesday claimed that Kelantan is the worst state in terms of forest preservation.

Sahabat Alam Sekitar Malaysia (SAM) researcher, Meor Razak Meor Abdul Rahman, claimed that a large tract of Kelantan's permanent reserve forests had been felled to be converted into plantation forests.

He said based on state Forestry Department records, a total of 41 licences were approved for logging concessions in the permanent forest reserves in south Kelantan including Gua Musang and Lojing.

"So how can Kelantan Menteri Besar (Datuk Ahmad Yaakob) say the granting of licences was frozen in 2006, when licences were still being granted last year?" he told reporters after the 'Media Khazanah Alam Pertubuhan Pelindung Khazanah Alam (PEKA) Forum' -- Malaysian Press Institute (MPI) 2015 here, today.

He said logging and deforestation were some of the contributing factors to the massive flooding which occurred in the state recently.

Meor Razak said Kelantan practises the forest plantation concept where all trees are felled and the land cleared and planted with rubber and oil palm. Such plantations are disastrous for water catchment and the ecosystem and results in flooding when it rains.

"But the states of Sabah and Selangor are the best in taking care of their forests with Sabah practising sustainable logging while Selangor does not allow any development in permanent forest reserves," he added.

Meanwhile, PEKA suggested the use of the National Blue Ocean Strategy (NBOS) in monitoring logging activities and excessive land clearing.

Its deputy president, Dr Abdul Razak Abdul Rahman, said through this approach various agencies can join forces with the Forestry Department to curb such activities.

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