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An illegally cleared plot of farmland near Jalan Simpang Pulai-Blue Valley in Cameron Highlands. The Natural Resources and Environment Ministry says saving the highlands is the responsibility of the state authorities. Pic by L. Manimaran

'State-level enforcers ignored info on violations'

DAMNING: Satellite images of illegal land clearing in Camerons given to Pahang govt

ALIZA SHAH
AND THARANYA ARUMUGAM
KUALA LUMPUR
news@nst.com.my

THE Natural Resources and Environment Ministry disclosed damning revelations yesterday when it said it had shared intelligence on illegal land clearing in Cameron Highlands with enforcement agencies, but was ignored.

Alerts issued to enforcement agencies included real-time images of rogue farmers blatantly clearing forest reserve land.

The ministry said it had, since last year, tried to help the Pahang government by sharing intelligence, as it could only do so much when it came to land matters under the state's jurisdiction.

"We were told by enforcers at the state level that they wanted to carry out their own enforcement, using what they termed the 'friendly approach'," its deputy minister, Datuk Seri Dr James Dawos Mamit, told the *New Sunday Times* yesterday.

He did not mince words when he said: "It is perplexing, considering the carnage that's happening up there. Why would they want to use the soft approach?"

"Using kid gloves is another reason why the laws were not enforced," James said.

He concurred with NST's findings that some 6,000ha of jungle had been ravaged by greedy businessmen. The damage done to the highlands covered an area larger than Putrajaya.

This, he said, was evident in the images provided by the Science, Technology and Innovation Ministry's Malaysian Remote Sensing Agency (MRSA), which it had been collating.

The ministry, James said, had been using the remote sensing method to obtain data on land-clearing activities in Cameron Highlands.

"We have satellite images on the current situation in Cameron Highlands and before it was ravaged by greedy farmers.

The remote sensing technology also helps the ministry identify sensitive and 'hot' areas susceptible to encroachment.

"Among other things, the satellite imagery also gives us vital information, including which areas are prone to landslides. With this information, we would be able to warn villagers much earlier," he said.

However, the remote sensing system has one drawback. Sometimes, data captured by the satellite



Datuk Seri Dr James Dawos Mamit says his ministry has satellite images of the extent of the damage wrought on the highlands

would only be available several days later.

Still, James said saving the highlands was the responsibility of the authorities there and that there was no point having state-of-the-art technology if state enforcement agencies chose not to discharge their duties.

"Enforcement officers should shoulder their responsibilities without fear or favour. In this case, we had noticed the rapid changes over several years from the data that was collected by MRSA."

Noting the importance of taking immediate action against illegal operators, James said the ministry would use helicopters with "go teams" on board to conduct aerial surveillance.

"It would be more efficient for us to carry out enforcement using he-

licopters, because we can send teams in once they spot illegal activities taking place.

"If we were to take action solely based on satellite data, we will lose precious time."

James said they would be monitoring all areas, including areas given Temporary Occupation Licences (TOLs) to ensure farmers did not go beyond their allocated areas.

The MRSM monitors development activities on environmentally-sensitive areas in the country. Accordingly, reports would be submitted on a regular basis for activities affecting areas such as water catchments, highlands, forest reserves and wetlands.

Yesterday, NST had front-paged a report saying that authorities believed there were no less than 6,000ha of illegally cleared land in the highlands, three times more than stated under a comprehensive development plan for the highlands issued in 2003.

The plan had promised sustainable use of land, allowing agricultural activities to be carried out under TOLs.

The huge extent of illegal clearing was blamed on licence holders blatantly expanding their farms beyond the permitted acreage.

The extent of the damage was said to be equivalent to about 8.4 million football fields.

Authorities have also warned of a major disaster on an "unimaginable scale" in Cameron Highlands in the next five to 10 years if nothing was done to save it.

EXCLUSIVE

BIOCAREER & BIOEDUCATION DI BIOMALAYSIA 2014

BioMalaysia adalah persidangan dan pameran bioteknologi yang terunggul di Malaysia bertujuan mengukuhkan rangkaian dan peluang perniagaan bagi syarikat antarabangsa dan tempatan yang terlibat dalam industri bioteknologi.

Oleh **KHAIRUNNISA SULAIMAN**
nisa.sulaiman@utusan.com.my

TAHUN ini Biotechcorp menganjurkan BioMalaysia 2014 selama dua hari, bermula 19 dan 20 November ini bertempat di Kompleks Pengurusan Penyelidikan Inovasi, Universiti Malaya (UM), Kuala Lumpur.

Acara tahunan ke 12 bertemakan *Partnering for Innovation, Investment and Growth for the Bio-Based Industry*, menampilkan beberapa kelainan dari segi penganjurannya.

Ketua Pegawai Eksekutif Biotechcorp, Datuk Dr. Mohd Nazlee Kamal berkata, acara dua hari ini merangkumi sesi pameran, persidangan dan pepadanan perniagaan dan bio-karier bagi pelajar untuk mengisi ruang modal insan dalam bidang bioteknologi.

"Kami amat berbesar hati kerana tahun ini BioMalaysia akan dirasmikan oleh Perdana Menteri Datuk Seri Mohd Najib Razak," katanya semasa ditemui di Kuala Lumpur baru-baru ini.



DR. MOHD NAZLEE KAMAL



KEDAI konsep BioShoppe.

Dr. Mohd Nazlee berkata, melalui BioMalaysia pihaknya ingin mewujudkan lebih banyak rangkaian dan peluang kerjasama di antara institusi penyelidikan dan industri dalam bioteknologi sekali gus meningkatkan kesedaran

dalam kalangan orang awam, pelajar dan pengamal bioteknologi.

BioMalaysia adalah persidangan dan pameran bioteknologi terunggul di Malaysia bertujuan mengukuhkan rangkaian dan peluang perniagaan bagi syarikat antarabangsa dan tempatan yang terlibat dalam industri bioteknologi.

"Di BioMalaysia terdapat banyak aktiviti antaranya BioCareer & BioEducation 2014 yang merupakan platform sesuai untuk graduan dan pencari kerja dan peserta industri yang berkelayakan dan mahir untuk mencari pekerjaan dari pelbagai disiplin.

Terdapat pelbagai program termasuk klinik resume, ceramah kerjaya, demonstrasi sains dan sesi temuduga oleh lebih daripada 50 syarikat BioNexus.

"Semasa BioMalaysia kali ini, kami akan mempunyai kedai konsep iaitu BioShoppe yang diperkenalkan semasa program BioMalaysia 2013 di Johor Bahru. Kedai ini akan mempamerkan dan menjual produk bioteknologi berkualiti tinggi daripada AgBio, BioPerubatan dan BioIndustri oleh syarikat berstatus

BioNexus," katanya.

Dr. Mohd Nazlee menambah, pertama kali diperkenalkan semasa BioMalaysia 2013, BioShoppe terbukti berjaya dari segi syarikat mengambil bahagian, produk yang dipamerkan dan juga jumlah jualan.

Buat masa ini terdapat dua lokasi BioShoppe di Lembah Kelang iaitu di Puchong dan Damansara selain merancang untuk meluaskan lagi rangkaian BioShoppe pada masa akan datang.

"Lebih menarik terdapat sesi bersama selebriti terkenal tanah air seperti sesi interaktif dengan Angkasawan Malaysia Mejar (Dr.) Faiz Khaleed, sesi bersama Ustaz Don dan sesi bersama Rosyam Nor," katanya.

Dr. Mohd Nazlee berkata, oleh kerana ruang pameran yang terhad, pihaknya tidak mempunyai kekosongan dan bagi pengunjung tapak pameran pihak penganjur tidak mengenakan sebarang pembayaran atau caj.

Maklumat lanjut mengenai program dan pendaftaran boleh didapati di laman web www.biomalaysia.com.my



PROSEDUR kecil syarikat bertaraf BioNexus boleh didapati di BioShoppe.

Start wooing voters now for GE14, Johor MB tells state BN

By ZAZALI MUSA
zaza@thestar.com.my

JOHOR BARU: Johor Barisan Nasional needs to start wooing voters and understand their inspirations to better prepare the coalition for the 14th general election, said state chief Datuk Seri Mohamed Khaled Nordin.

Mohamed Khaled said the coalition needed to re-invent itself and admitted that it no longer enjoyed strong support like before.

"We have several strategies to win back the voters," he said, adding that Umno needed MCA to work closely with it to woo back the Chinese voters.

Mohamed Khaled, who is also state Umno chairman, said this at a press conference at the closing of the two-day Johor Umno convention here yesterday.

The Mentri Besar added that several changes were needed and must be implemented in order to attract voters, especially first-time voters, stating that there was a "huge dip" from the Chinese vote in Johor in last year's general election.

On the other hand, Mohamed Khaled said, Umno continued to receive strong support from the Malays while the votes from Indians remained steady.

"We have to come up with programmes and activities to attract voters as they will determine our survival in the coming elections," he added.

Khaled also announced the appointment of Johor Baru Umno chairman Tan Sri

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Shahrir Samad as chairman of the newly-formed Johor Institute for Strategy, Economic Advancement and Democracy (Jisead) think-tank.

Mohamed Khaled said the institute would help Umno and the state government on issues and problems related to the party in its bid to gain voter support.

Among others, Jisead would provide ways to increase Malay participation in the economic and wealth creation sectors.

Separately, Mohamed Khaled said Johor was ready to face the occurrence of floods during the monsoon season, adding that all relevant agencies have been directed to be on stand-by.

"Flood is something unpredictable.

"Nevertheless we are closely monitoring the situation, including the weather reports from the Meteorological Department," he said.