

# Azizan stands firm on logging plan

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**ALOR STAR:** Menteri Besar Azizan Abdul Razak is defiant about cutting trees in the Ulu Muda forest reserve.

"Now, even if the Federal Government gives us the RM100 million compensation, we will still cut down the trees," he said.

Azizan told his critics that they should not be too obsessed with caring for the environment "like parents who are extremely obsessed with their offspring".

"The child is so pampered that he does not need to go to school. The child does not want to leave home.

"This is like our forest. We are too obsessed with preserving the trees that we don't cut them.

"We leave the trees till they get old and rot. The trees die and fall and affect the growth of others."

As for Kelantan counterpart Datuk Nik Aziz Nik Mat's advice on the matter, Azizan said that the Pas spiritual leader might have misunderstood his plans to chop down the valuable timber trees in

the water catchment area, which is about twice the size of Singapore.

It was reported yesterday that Nik Aziz was concerned there would be shortage and pollution of water if the forest reserve was logged.

Azizan's other critic was Penang chief minister Lim Guan Eng who was concerned that logging in the forest reserve would deplete the water supply to Penang.

Some 63,000 padi farmers also protested against Azizan's plan. Others included the Penang-based Sahabat Alam Malaysia, and the Kedah branch of the Malaysian Nature Society.

Azizan, when reminded that he had strongly opposed a logging plan for the forest reserve when the former Barisan Nasional state government had proposed using helicopters to fell timber trees in 1992, said the circumstances were different then.

He said when he was the state opposition leader, he was not well informed on the matter. "Just like many now, I had thought then that the entire water catchment area would be logged.

"Then, Kedah did not have many financial problems and the proposed logging was just to add more funds to our coffers.

"Today, the situation is different and we need funds to run development programmes for the people."

He said his plan would depend on the outcome of an environmental impact assessment study. For every hectare of the forest reserve, only three trees would be chopped.

Azizan was not considering other ways, including raising quit rent or assessment rates, to replenish the state coffers.

"We promise we won't sacrifice the environment. We will find the best way to log the forest reserve."

He thanked his critics for their concern.

Meanwhile, Penang has expressed its strongest objection against the Kedah government's logging plans.

In a press conference in George Town last week, Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng said he was against Kedah doing so as the move would lead to catastrophic effects, particularly at the Muda Dam.



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Azizan Abdul Razak  
Kedah Menteri Besar