



A large section of forest and hills, estimated to be the size of 10 football fields, has been cleared in Cameron Highlands.

Rape of Cameron continues

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CAMERON HIGHLANDS: Two days after blatant violation of a land-clearing permit in Kampung Raja here was highlighted, another case has surfaced.

This time, the land-clearing activities covered five hectares. The site in Kampung Raja involved only a quarter of a hectare.

Pictorial evidence showed a number of tractors bringing down the trees and hills in the forested area under the control of the Pahang state government, bordering Perak.

Regional Environmental Awareness of Cameron Highlands (REACH) president R. Ramakrishnan said the land-clearing activity started early last month but was temporarily stopped, only to regain momentum in the last week of December.

For REACH, this pointed to the questionable standards of enforcement in safeguarding the environmental quality of the highlands.

Ramakrishnan said the respective government agencies tasked with enforcing environmental laws, rules, regulations and the 2002 Cabinet Guidelines on Highlands and Islands Develop-

ment clearly failed to discharge their duties.

He took to task the Cameron Highlands district and land office and Pahang Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Adnan Yaakob for poor enforcement of the laws.

Stressing that the highlands' environment had been deteriorating every year, he blamed both parties for doing "very little" to ensure the quality of the greenery, air and water.

"Enough is enough. I urge Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Mohd Sidek Hassan to personally intervene and carry out investigations into the Cameron Highlands district and land office."

Ramakrishnan said the continuing degradation had given rise to speculation among concerned citizens here that elements of corruption existed in the district and land office.

"How else can all these (violations of laws and guidelines) happen? That is why REACH is pleading with Sidek to do something."

Ramakrishnan also took a swipe at Adnan for paying lip service to the protection of the highlands.

Meanwhile, a Cameron Highlands Department of Environment officer said they were investigating the matter.