



KEMENTERIAN TENAGA DAN SUMBER ASLI

KERATAN SURAT KHABAR

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DEMOLISHED ILLEGAL FARM SITE

CAMERONS FOLK FEAR LANDSLIDE THREAT

Hill debris may sweep down to residential area during downpour, says resident

NURADZIMMAH DAIM AND LUQMAN HAKIM
CAMERON HIGHLANDS
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STARING at the barren hill before him, Koh Wah lets out a heavy sigh as he continues hiking on the trail near his home.

The 72-year-old man from Kampung Raja said the site was

where an illegal farm was operating for years before being shut down in Op Gading in 2015 to curb land encroachment by farm owners and rehabilitate the affected areas.

"The hillslope was previously covered with trees, so it has never experienced a landslide.

"We were, however, shocked to find it now empty of greenery.

"Before our discovery, we noticed muddy water running from the hilltop about 1km from our village in early September," he told the *New Straits Times*.

The chairman of an ad-hoc committee to monitor landslides there said the group feared that fallen trees and debris from the former illegal farm would wash down to the residential area at the foothill during a downpour.



Soil erosion at the demolished illegal farm site in Cameron Highlands, Pahang, on Sept 29. PIC BY NURADZIMMAH DAIM (Inset) Koh Wah.

The concern, he said, was based on his recent observation as debris had moved further from the hillside and closer to the houses, from 400m last month to 500m, halfway down the trail.

A recent site visit showed remnants of the demolished structures on the old farm were left uncleared, with no sight of new

trees planted on the 6ha site.

A resident, who wanted to be known only as Shum, said if the farm was reopened, there should be a buffer zone to protect the hill and prevent landslides.

"We can't see what is going on from Kampung Raja unless we climb up the hill or enter through Blue Valley, a few minutes' drive

from our village.

"While the district office has assured us that the area is safe, we fear for our lives as the site is close by. We don't want the (landslide) in Baling, Kedah, to happen here."

Shum said there were about 80 houses, a school and several shops at the foothill.



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