



Bare hills: An aerial view of the hill clearing taking place near Majestic Heights (bottom right of pic) in Paya Terubong area. — ZAINUDIN AHAD/The Star

Group on edge over hill clearing

The Star
2/11/2017
B. 24

Massive works near Paya Terubong Paired Road raise fears

GEORGE TOWN: Non-governmental organisation, Persatuan Anak Jati Pulau Pinang, has raised concern over hill clearing near the Paya Terubong Paired Road.

The organisation's chairman Datuk Huan Cheng Guan said he was shocked to see how much of the area had been cleared during a recent visit.

"It looks like they're building a township," he alleged during an interview with *The Star*.

Huan urged the state government to reveal what it intends to do in the area.

"We don't want another mishap to happen. We understand you are building a paired road, but why such a big space?"

"I hope that the Federal Government, especially the Department of Environment (DOE) and Federal Land and Mines Department will audit all hill clearings in Penang," he added.

Huan also uploaded pictures and a video on his Facebook to show patches of the hill that have been cleared.

It was reported in September last year that the land clearing near Bukit Jambul and Paya Terubong is for the Paya Terubong Paired Road, which links Lebuhraya Thean Tek with Bukit Jambul.

State Local Government, Traffic Management and Flood Mitigation Committee chairman Chow Kon Yeow said Penang Island City Council is undertaking the paired road project.

In January this year, Chow had said the 6km-long paired road via Jalan Bukit Kukus is 27.5% complete.

Chow yesterday said one part of the hill is being cleared for the

Majestic Heights revival project, while the other end is for the paired road project.

"As the road is passing the Majestic Heights project, it is the developer's responsibility to build this section of the paired road."

Meanwhile, the proposed chairman of the State Commission of Inquiry (SCI) on the Tanjung Bungah landslide has asked for changes to the terms of reference to give the commission specific power to investigate government authorities.

The amendments Datuk Yeo Yang Poh requires will empower the SCI to enquire if the landslide and deaths of 11 workers "were due to any negligence, recklessness, breach of professional or legal duty, misconduct or deliberate act or omission, on the part of any person, company or authority."

The new terms also let the SCI recommend action against any person, company or authority found responsible.

The earlier terms of reference proposed by the state are silent on whether the SCI could specifically look into the acts or omissions of relevant government agencies.

Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng, who released the new terms in a press conference yesterday, said the state exco approved them.

"The SCI has powers to call any party. Of course, we expect it to call Penang Island City Council because the council gave the approval for this project," he said.

Lim said the SCI's hearings will be held publicly.

The state is now waiting for the Yang di-Pertua Negri Tun Abdul Rahman Abbas to officially appoint Yeo and the other commissioners of the SCI.