

Riverbank reserve with illegal sunflower plants sealed

The Star, 26 September 2017, Pg. 8

KOTA BARU: The Kota Baru Land and District Office has sealed about 6ha of the riverbank reserve in Kampung Keladang after villagers cried foul over sunflower plants sprouting in the area.

Its spokesman said yesterday that they had sealed the area to check illegal clearing and encroachment.

The spokesman added that following complaints from the villagers, officers found that a 0.4ha of

land in the area had been cleared and planted with sunflower plants.

"To avoid illegal clearing of land and further encroachment, we have sealed about 50% of the 12ha riverbank reserve until further notice," he said.

On Sept 18, a group of villagers staged a protest when part of their vegetable plots were cleared by a company that was allegedly planning to grow sunflower plants for commercial purposes.

The Land Office noted that the villagers had been planting vegetables such as corn and potato in the area for generations.

Recently, some people cleared the area, including where villagers planted their vegetables, to sow sunflower plants.

"The riverbank reserve is also under the purview of the DID (Drainage and Irrigation Department)," he said.

Mukim Keladang village chief

Noor Azwan Che Hasim said more than 20 households in the area had been planting vegetables there to eke out a living since the 1970s.

"We plant corn, chilli, legum, potato and other crops on a small scale.

"We are appealing to the Land Office to give us TOL (Temporary Occupancy Licence), so that we can carry our farming activities without further hassle," said Noor Azwan to reporters yesterday.