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Perak quarry ops to be relocated

Jaspal Singh jaspal@nst.com.my

Ipoh: Thousands of residents living in the vicinity of rock and limestone quarries in Perak can begin heaving sighs of relief. The state government has announced that it will be relocating quarry operations to alternative sites, far away from densely populated areas. Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Dr Zambry Abdul Kadir said the state government would be implementing zoning system to rid residential areas of air and noise pollution emanating from the quarries. He says steps was being taken as the state government wanted to tackle the woes of residents living near quarry sites, who, for years have been complaining about health and environmental problems related to quarry activities.

“I have to make it clear that we are not shutting down the quarries.”

“We cannot afford to close them as they are important to the state's economic growth.”

“Furthermore, they are operating based on long-term concessions which means that the state government cannot stop them just like that.”

“But, to safeguard the interest of the public at large, the state government is now looking at zoning the quarry industry,” he said here yesterday.

Perak is a major producer of rock aggregates, quick-lime, calcium carbonate, marble slabs and floor tiles.

Zambry said the state government had little choice but to relocate the quarries although the residents settled there long after the quarry operations started.

“Although the state government had approved the quarries way before the homes sprouted around them, we now must reconsider the effects of the activities on residential areas.”

He said he had instructed district offices and councils to identify quarry zones to confine the operators in exclusive areas.

Stressing that the state government would have to handle this issue carefully, he said the state government had taken the stand not to grant new licenses or approve expansion plans without properly conducting environmental impact assessments (EIAs).

He said he had also told district offices and councils to be more sensitive whenever they receive proposals to build residential areas near existing quarries.

“Why do you (district offices and councils) need to approve housing areas near the quarries?”

“Exercise some discretion before approving such schemes. Don't simply approve them.”



Quarries around Ipoh