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JULY 4 FLOODS

DURIAN FARM RESERVOIRS TO BE CLOSED

3 reservoirs at farm in Gunung Inas to be drained as soon as possible, says minister

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THE three large reservoirs at a Musang King farm in Gunung Inas will be closed, two months after floods ravaged 43 villages in Kupang subdistrict, killing three people in Kampung Iboi on July 4.

Environment and Water Minister Datuk Seri Tuan Ibrahim Tuan Man said the Department of Irrigation and Drainage (DID) had been ordered to drain the three reservoirs as soon as possible.

"The department will decide how to carry out the work because we need to protect the villages at the foothill of Gunung Inas," he told the *New Straits Times*.

Tuan Ibrahim, who is Pas deputy president, said this at the 68th Pas Muktamar at the Kedah Pas Complex, which ended on Sunday.

On July 17, he told the Dewan Rakyat that one of the many small reservoirs at the Musang King farm had burst during rainfall, and probably triggered the floods that washed down uprooted logs, debris and thick mud.

Strong waves had ravaged 40 villages in Kupang subdistrict and three other villages in Baling district.

More than 1,000 homes and business premises were damaged, with at least 17 homes swept away.

Three people in a family, including a pregnant woman, were killed when their home in Kampung Iboi, which was ground zero of the tragedy, was swept away.



Datuk Seri Tuan Ibrahim Tuan Man

The victims in Kampung Iboi and adjacent villages have been calling for the state government to shut down the farm, and drain and demolish the three large reservoirs.

They claimed that the Musang King farm project had been polluting the community's water sourced from Gunung Inas streams and causing flash floods since it began operations in 2017.

However, Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Muhammad Sanusi Md Nor rebuffed the pleas, saying agencies under the Energy and Natural Resources Ministry had concluded that the floods were a geological disaster and the farm had not contributed to them.

He said the reservoirs could not be demolished as "they were owned" by a company.

On Thursday, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob urged the state government to take action on the reservoirs for the villagers' safety.

Tuan Man said the authorities were scrutinising the impact of July 4's floods on Gunung Inas and its surrounding areas, in reviewing an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) report submitted by the farm operator two weeks prior to the disaster.

He said the review would take into account the impact of debris, floods and landslides on Gunung Inas' landscape.

"The company initially used an EIA report prepared for a TLC (timber latex clone) forest farming project approved for the site to carry out the Musang King farm project."

He said the company had submitted an EIA on the Musang King farm two weeks before the disaster struck despite being in operation since 2017.

Page 1 pic: One of the reservoirs in the Musang King farm on Gunung Inas, Kedah.