KEMENTERIAN TENAGA DAN SUMBER ASLI

KERATAN SURAT KHABAR

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Tigers pushed over the edge

Logging at their habitat causing them to enter Orang Asli settlement

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KOTA BARU: Drone images of logging at a tiger habitat near an Orang Asli village in Gua Musang have emerged following reports that a man had been mauled to death there.

Persatuan Aktivis Sahabat Alam (Kuasa) adviser Meor Razak Meor Abdul Rahman said the images were recorded between Jan 10 and 14 after a drone was flown over the Perias Forest Reserve in Gua Musang, about 1km from Pos Bihai.

"Last week, the Kelantan Mentri Besar said tiger attacks at the Pos Bihai Orang Asli settlement, which killed one person, were not caused by logging.

"We went to the scene of the incident and sent in a drone.

"We believe there are massive logging activities taking place near the village," Meor Razak was quoted as saying by Malay daily *Sinar Harian* yesterday.

Images captured by the drone were uploaded on Kuasa's official Twitter account on Sunday.

Meor Razak, who is also a field researcher for Sahabat Alam Malaysia, said: "The Perias Forest Reserve is the biggest tiger habitat in Kelantan.

"Tigers used to be afraid of humans, but not anymore. Maybe they have been pushed to desperation by habitat loss.

"It is believed that logging is taking place not far from the village for the purpose of opening a 400ha rubber plantation in the Perias reserve," he said.

On Jan 7, a 59-year-old Orang Asli man was mauled to death by a tiger in Kampung Sau near Pos Bihai.

On Jan 12, the Kelantan government denied claims that logging in the state had forced tigers out of their natural habitat and into Orang Asli settlements in Gua Musang.

Meanwhile, classes at the Orang Asli school, SK Bihai, were suspended after a tiger was sighted nearby.

Deputy Mentri Besar Datuk Mohd Amar Nik Abdullah said a study should be conducted to determine the factors that caused tigers to leave their natural habitat.

In an immediate reaction, Kelantan Forestry Department director Abdul Khalim Abu Samah said the drone images made it seem as if the logging site was near the location of the tiger attacks or habitat.

"The actual distance is between 5km to 6km from the scene of the attacks.

"Checks showed that the location of the tiger attack, that is Pos Bihai, is an Orang Asli settlement outside of the Perias Permanent Forest Reserve," he said.



Beasts under threat: Drone images of massive logging at a tiger habitat near an Orang Asli village in Gua Musang, Kota Baru, have emerged following reports that a man had been mauled to death there. — Photo courtesy of Persatuan Aktivis Sahabat Alam's Facebook page