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Bikam forest clearing prompts calls to save trees

IPOH: In the wake of the destruction of the Bikam Permanent Forest Reserve near Bidor and the threat faced by other forest reserves, environmental group Sahabat Alam Malaysia has proposed measures to safeguard endangered tree species.

Expressing the organisation's worry about permanent forest reserves in Perak, SAM president S.M. Mohamed Idris said the state authorities and the Forestry Department should take full responsibility over the extinction of the critically endangered *keruing paya* (*Dipterocarpus coriaceus*) at the Bikam Forest Reserve.

Among the measures to protect

forest reserves and preserve tree species categorised as critically endangered include improving the enforcement of the National Forestry Act 1984 (Amendment 1993).

"There should be public consultation and participation in the event a forest reserve is proposed to be excised," Mohamed said.

He said the state government should not endorse or approve applications to exploit forest resources and harvesting of timber in selected areas. These include reserves covering fewer than 1,000ha.

He said another measure that merited action was categorising forest reserves that had critically en-

dangered species as "high conservation value forest".

"Areas outside of reserves that have been identified as having endangered species should be gazetted as protected areas."

He said the excise of the 495ha Bikam Forest Reserve was inconsistent with the statements and implementation of the National Forestry Policy.

Mohamed said a study by the **Forest Research Institute of Malaysia** found that there were three endangered tree species in the Bikam Forest Reserve and one of them, the *keruing paya*, is categorised as critically endangered.



Part of the **Bikam Reserve Forest near Bidor** was cleared by a timber contractor for an oil palm plantation.
Pic by L. Manimaran