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For Environmental Justice

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Press Statement

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Doesn't Malaysia's Environment Matter? Stop the Export of Sand

Sahabat Alam Malaysia (SAM) expresses its shock on the latest news by Free Malaysia Today (FMT) dated 29 of October which reported on the arrival of the first batch of Malaysian sand to Thoothukudi Port in the state of Tamil Nadu, India.

The export of sand went ahead despite protest and criticism from various NGOs in Malaysia, when the issue was made public a few months back. SAM had written to several Ministries to get clarification regarding the export of sand from Malaysia, but have yet to receive a response on this matter.

This is a sad episode for the country given how Malaysia's own natural resources has been sacrificed by a few greedy local businesses. Followers of this issue will be aware that the reason behind India's decision to import Malaysia's sand is largely due to the former's decision to protect its own depleting natural sand reserves.

River sand mining activities in Malaysia have given rise to various problems such as river bank erosion, river bed degradation, river buffer zone encroachment, and deterioration of water quality. Environmental problems also occur when the rate of extraction of sand, gravel and other materials exceeds the rate at which natural processes generate these materials.

Failure to handle the problem of sand-mining, including its over-exploitation is going to cause devastating effects to Malaysia's natural resources and environment.

Hence we strongly urge the Malaysian Government pertinently the Minister for Natural Resources and Environment (NRE), Datuk Dr. Haji Wan Junaidi Tuanku Jaafar to seriously look and resolve this matter with immediate effect.

On this matter, SAM supports Y.B Minister Wan Junaidi's earlier observation in how dealings between Malaysian businesses and the Indian Government on the sand export has not been transparent. In this context, SAM urges NRE to examine all the dealings and to possibly bring the perpetrators to face justice.

It is worth reiterating that, Malaysia's own natural resources including our unadulterated sand, is currently under threat. Hence the decision to allow Malaysia's sand to be exported to India for the sake of saving the latter's sand reserves does not make an intelligible impression.

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