

Illegals set up colony

Presence of over 6,000 Indonesians living in lean-tos, tents causes concern

By Rosihan Zain
and Adrian David

KAJANG, Fri. — Thousands of Indonesians, many of them construction workers at nearby projects, have set up an illegal settlement made up of lean-to shelters and tents at Sungai Merap near here.

The presence of the 6,000-odd Acehnese, Madurese and Javanese on private and government land is worrying residents of nearby Kampung Limau Manis who fear for their safety and health.

Raids and the demolition of temporary dwellings last year by the authorities have proven futile as the illegals have rebuilt the structures.

Villagers want the authorities to do something fast about the problem as the settlement is attracting more illegal immigrants every day.

The colony is well-established to the extent that it has its own *pasar malam* and a gambling den with gaming machines frequented by illegals from elsewhere.

The Indonesians have also taken to calling their settlements Kampung Aceh and Kampung Madura.

There are about 1,000 locals in the village which covers about 8.8ha near the Federal administrative capital of Putrajaya.

Village head Mat Naim Awi, 48, said the village welfare and security committee had raised the matter with the Hulu Langat district council, the police and Rela.

It had also brought the matter up with Sepang MP Seripah Noli Syed Hussin and the Dengkil State Assemblyman Datuk Sharif Jajang, who is also Selangor State Infrastructure Development chairman.

"The authorities have on many occasions visited the colony on fact-finding missions and have even demolished the illegal homes. However, the problem persists as the Indonesians keep coming back," Mat Naim told the *New Straits Times*. Also present during the interview was village Rela head Ahmad Ismail, 40.

Mat Naim said the village was easily accessible by road and this made it difficult for villagers and the authorities to monitor the Indonesians.

"They (the Indonesians) will arrive all of a sudden late at night and can erect a home within hours. Their presence has gained momentum that they have even named their settlements Kampung Aceh and Kampung Madura," he said.

"This has also led to a *pasar malam* being established for the immigrants," Mat Naim said.

The *NST* learned that the problem began last year when landowners decided to rent their land to Indonesians working at projects in Putrajaya.

The workers, who had work permits, soon became the minority



CAUSE FOR WORRY ... These make-shift shelters, erected by Indonesian illegal immigrants at Kampung Limau Manis in Sungai Merap, are giving villagers sleepless nights. Residents see the 'invasion' by the immigrants as a threat to their safety and hygiene. — NST picture by Owee Ah Chun.

3,000 Malaysians overstaying in Mecca on umrah visas

By Jumaatun Azmi

PUTRA JAYA, Fri. — Nearly 3,000 Malaysians risk being detained by the Saudi authorities for overstaying in Mecca on their *umrah* visas.

On Sunday, 172 Malaysians were detained along with thousands others for the same offence. Forty-nine were deported on Wednesday.

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Senator Datuk Dr Abdul Hamid Othman said Malaysians on *umrah* visas had until March 10 to return, past which they will only be able to return after April when the haj season ends.

He said there were no commercial or charter flights leaving Jeddah after March 10 when the haj season starts.

"I am worried they may not get the flights back and will run the risk of being detained by the authorities for overstaying," he told a press conference.

"The Saudi Arabian Government looks at this matter seriously. There are about 700,000 illegal pilgrims in Mecca," he said.

For this year's haj season, Saudi Arabia has allowed 1.5 million Mus-

lims to perform the haj.

Abdul Hamid advised Malaysians in Mecca to keep their travel and other documents safe.

"They should refrain even from shopping because they may get caught in raids."

Malaysian Consul-General in Jeddah Syed Hussin Abdul Kadir was quoted by the *Berita Harian* yesterday as saying that this was the first time a large group of Malaysians had been detained for overstaying in Mecca.

"What happened was embarrassing to us because normally it in-

volves others."

The Malaysians were believed to have been detained in Mecca and transported by bus to Jeddah where they were placed in cells at the Saudi Arabia Immigration building.

Syed Hussin said the Malaysians who tried to perform their haj using *umrah* visas were mostly from Kelantan and Kedah. Over 60 had performed the haj before.

Abdul Hamid said he would propose amendments to the Tabung Haji Act 1995 soon to allow it to also handle *umrah* procedures.

Army chief says General Wiranto must quit the Cabinet

JAKARTA, Fri. — Indonesia's army chief today urged former military commander General Wiranto to quit the Cabinet as pressure built to avoid a risky showdown with President Abdurrahman Wahid.

Army chief General Tyasno Sudarto told reporters in Bandung that Wiranto had to follow orders, the first senior military officer to say so publicly.

The President is now counting on his senior generals to force the defiant Wiranto out before he returns from an official tour of Europe and Asia on Sunday.

The Antara News Agency said today a group of unnamed generals had pledged their loyalty to Abdurrahman, popularly known as Gus Dur, and would press Wiranto to resign as Co-ordinating Minister

for Political and Security Affairs before the President returned.

"A number of generals have pledged their support for me. If he refuses to step down, this will hamper his future career ... so it's better that Wiranto resigns," Gus Dur said in Seoul without naming the generals.

"The President has the right under the constitution ... to instal

and cancel the appointments of his aides.

"And this applies to ministers, including Wiranto," Tyasno said.

Wiranto has refused to quit after UN and Indonesian inquiries implicated him in the bloodshed surrounding East Timor's independence vote last year. — Reuters

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