

# Housing project **takes** **off** in Bkt Cerakah

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**TWO** years ago, a housing company was penalised for developing a project that failed the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) in an area near Bukit Cahaya Sri Alam Agricultural Park in Shah Alam.

The unscheduled development near the Bukit Cerakah Forest Reserve in Section U10 caught the attention of the public as well as Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, following protests from nature lovers.

Now, another property development project, some 500m from the controversial site, has emerged.

The only difference is that the 210-unit housing project is being developed by Permodalan Negeri Selangor Berhad (PNSB) with the approval of six government agencies – the Department of

Environment (DOE), Shah Alam City Council, Selangor Irrigation and Drainage Department, the Selangor Minerals and Geoscience Department, Kumpulan Ikram, and Public Works Department.

To date, some 30ha of the total construction area of 117.2ha have been flattened to accommodate the project.

PNSB general manager of supervision and project coordination Mohd Azlan Kachong said the corporation had learnt from the mistakes of other developers who had their projects in the sensitive area.

He said the approval for the project site, formerly part of the Bukit Cerakah Forest Reserve, was given by the Selangor executive council at a meeting in 2002, even before the Bukit Cahaya Sri Alam development issue hit the headlines.

“Our project will not bring adverse environmental impact to the Bukit Cahaya Agricultural Park as it is some 15km away,” he said.

Mohd Azlan also dismissed an allegation by residents of Kampung Budiman, near the project site, that the project was a contributory factor to the recent flood in the area.

He said even before the project was developed, the area was frequently hit by floods as it was located in a low area, trapped between two highlands.

The project raises the question of whether more development will be heading to the agricultural park area.

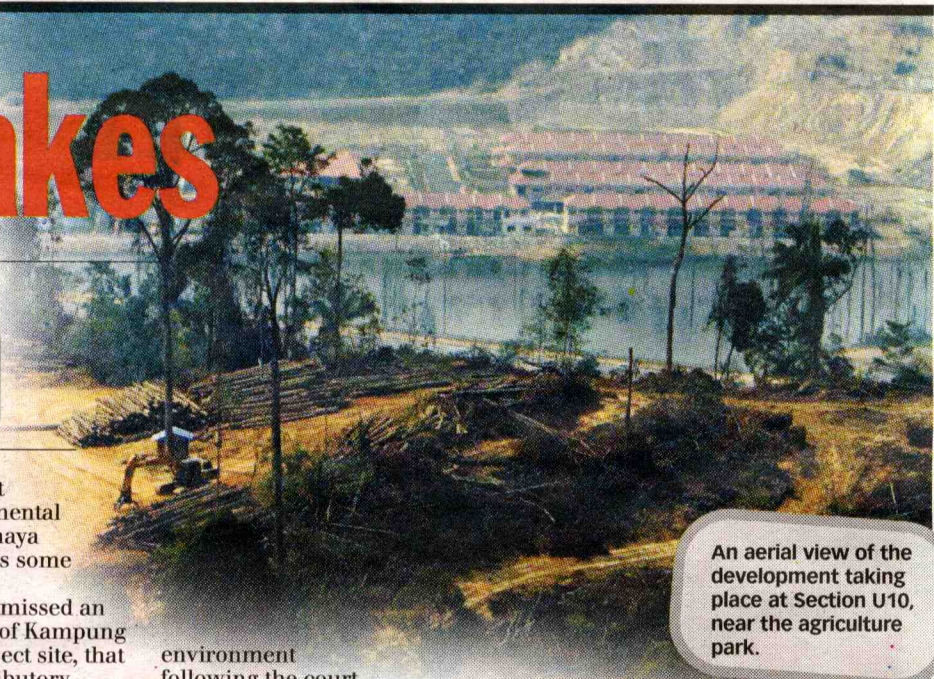
Selangor Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Dr Mohamad Khir Toyo had announced in 2005 that all development projects in the area had been frozen to protect the

environment following the court case against the developer, and the media brouhaha.

Sahabat Alam Malaysia (SAM) official Mohd Nizam Mahshar criticised the state government for allowing another project in the area.

He said the state government failed to appreciate the bio-diversities available at Bukit Cahaya Sri Alam Agricultural Park and the nearby forest reserve which should be preserved.

“The comprehensive development at Section U10 will transform the agricultural park into



An aerial view of the development taking place at Section U10, near the agriculture park.

a forest island surrounded by a concrete jungle as it has been isolated from the Bukit Cerakah Forest Reserve,” he said.

“By right, forest reserve that borders the agricultural park should not be given to developers but must be preserved as a buffer zone,” Mohd Nizam said.

A Selangor Forestry Department spokesman said developers with project sites that border the forest reserve are required to spare between 20 and 50 sq metres of the forest as a buffer zone. – Bernama