

Forest reserve to make way

Kelau Dam project takes precedence

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PUTRAJAYA: The Lakum Forest Reserve – home to many protected animals and plants with medicinal value – will be fully flooded by the Kelau Dam which is part of the project to supply Selangor with water from Pahang.

Natural Resources and Environment Minister Datuk Seri Azmi Khalid said the 1,000ha forest reserve – slightly bigger than Pangkor Island – would be under water as the project had been given the go-ahead.

“There is no doubt that the flora and fauna in the forest reserve will be affected but there is no other way and besides it is for a good cause,” he said after witnessing the MoU signing between the Forest Research Institute of Malaysia and six other agencies here yesterday.

Azmi said the project was necessary to meet the demand for water and for the continued development of the Klang Valley and Selangor.

Work on the RM3.8bil project is expected to

begin early next year and will take five years to complete.

The raw water transfer project which will be funded by the Japan Bank for International Cooperation would involve the building of two dams – across Sungai Kelau east of Bentong and across Sungai Telemong near Karak – and a 45km tunnel through the Main Range.

Raw water stored by the dams will be channelled through the tunnel to a water treatment plant to be built near Hulu Langat in Selangor.

Azmi said research, including the environmental impact assessment, had been done.

The Kelau Dam will inundate 4,090ha of land, comprising mostly Felda land schemes, while the Telemong Dam will flood 1,532ha of the Telemong Valley. A total of 1,300 people will be relocated. They include Felda settlers, inhabitants of two villages and 325 orang asli from Kampung Sungai Temir.

Azmi denied a report alleging the dam project would destroy the Lata Berembun recreational site near Raub. He said the site was not within the affected forest reserve.