



GOOD EARTH: Sand being extracted along Sungai Perak near Teluk Intan. Perak has indicated that it may sell sand to Selangor.

Firm blamed for sand woes

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KUALA LUMPUR: Monopoly has been suggested as one of the reasons for the sand shortage here and in Selangor.

Seri Baiduri Enterprise, the biggest sand exporter in Perak, said if Selangor allowed more import permits to be issued to individuals and companies to buy sand directly from suppliers, the shortage could be overcome.

Its owner Mohamad Hanafiah Said Amad said in Perak alone, there were four sand exporters.

Direct imports by buyers in Selangor and the Klang Valley could also help bring down the price. Due to the shortage in the two areas, the price of sand had shot up to between RM30 and RM40 a tonne.

He said, normally, the district office issued permits to import, stockpile and transport sand from a stockyard to a construction or factory site.

"Currently, this is not the case in Selangor. As a result, the buying and selling price of sand is determined by an

importer," he said.

The Star had reported on Tuesday that Selangor and Federal Territory were facing a serious sand shortage that could disrupt the construction and manufacturing sectors.

It is learnt in Selangor, only one company - Kuala Langat-based Ciptra Trend Sdn Bhd - has the permit to import and distribute sand. The company imports sand from Negri Sembilan and Perak.

"We are negotiating with some manufacturers and developers to supply sand on a contract basis," said its managing director Abdullah Mansor, who added that he would set up more stockyards in Selangor for sand distribution.

He said his company had capacity to supply five million tonnes of sand monthly. Its two yards - one in Carey Island and another in Rawang - have a current stockpile of 700,000 tonnes for commercial usage.

Abdullah dismissed claims that his company monopolised the trade.

"I provide opportunities for others such as transport com-

panies and other operators to assist me in distributing the sand. If I wanted to monopolise the trade, I would not hire the transport companies or subcontract my operations to other parties," he said.

Abdullah said the sand price had gone up in recent months due to the increase in the price of diesel.

"The diesel price rise had caused transport fares to escalate, thus the sand price went up, too," he added.

Meanwhile, the Perak government has indicated it may sell sand to Selangor and Kuala Lumpur if there is a real shortage.

Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Mohamad Tajol Rosli Ghazali said the sand could come from areas bordering Selangor and Perak such as Bidor.

"But we will not sell sand from Ipoh because we don't want the cost of houses in the city here to go up," he said after chairing the weekly state exco meeting in Ipoh yesterday.

He said the state government would also not allow sand extracted from former mining ponds to be sold.