

# 'Clearing has been going on non-stop'

**CAMERON HIGHLANDS:** Land clearing activity on the highland has been continuing non-stop despite *Ops Gading*, said Regional Environmental Awareness Cameron Highlands (Reach) president R. Ramakrishnan.

"I know it won't stop overnight but the Government needs to be serious about this," he said when interviewed.

"The only positive change is that the Federal Government is continuing with *Ops Gading*."

Ramakrishnan said Reach had been highlighting the illegal land clearing issue for the past 16 years.

Corruption, he said, was one reason land clearing activities were still happening.

"After the matter was highlighted, the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission set up an office here but no serious action has been taken.

"They said no reports (on land clearing) have been lodged with them, which is an excuse. If they charge someone, the public can trust them," he added.

Ramakrishnan said the temperature at the highlands had been gradually rising since the 1980s, caused by land clearing activities.

"The greenhouse farming method used by farmers is also having

**We can see changes in the climate especially on the flora and fauna.**

R. Ramakrishnan

an effect," he said.

He said one good indicator that the temperature was rising was the effect on nature.

"We can see changes in the climate especially on the flora and fauna.

"Some mountain birds can't be found anymore. The *dendrobium brinchang ensis* orchid, which only grows here, is rarely found now," he added.

In April, National Security Council secretary Datuk Seri Alias Ahmad said phase one of *Ops Gading*, from December 2014 to 2015, had seen 98 illegal farming cases probed by the police.

The second phase that is on now will continue until July.

The plan is to rid Cameron Highlands of illegal farming and development, re-greening the area and legalising undocumented workers by 2030.



**Irresponsible activities:** Rampant illegal land clearing activities and the greenhouse farming method used by farmers have badly affected Cameron Highlands.