



## KERATAN AKHBAR

AKHBAR	:	STAR METRO			
TARIKH	:	30/12/2019	MUKA SURAT	:	1
JABATAN	:	UMUM			
KLASIFIKASI	:	PERHATIAN			







AKHBAR	:	STAR METRO			
TARIKH	:	30/12/2019	MUKA SURAT	:	2
JABATAN	:	UMUM			
KLASIFIKASI	:	PERHATIAN			

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ENVIRONMENT and land matters took the limelight in Perak this year.

While some accusations of illegal clearing of the forests were found to be true, others, although true, have been explained as a necessity for the sake of progress.

Worried and upset for the environment, Sultan of Perak Sultan Nazrin Muizzuddin Shah recently lamented about how much nature had suffered at the hands of mankind.

During a recent event, in sharing his son's experience of counting the number of plastic bottles found in Sungai Perak, he said human interference in nature's ecosystems coupled with human activities that used natural resources for business profits, caused the world to face an increase in natural disasters.

"Forests and trees that play a vital role in containing climate change and global warming, apart from providing protection to water sources, reducing soil erosion and preventing floods, are no longer prioritised," he said, adding that forests were viewed as sources of timber that can be sold for profit,

# Silver state's mixed bag in 2019

## Negative events in the news balanced out by incentives for the people in need

leading to rampant illegal logging spurred by greed.

"Without trees and forests, all the benefits of nature are lost, plant and animal species decrease, natural habitats are destroyed, the food chain is broken and human life is threatened," he was quoted as saying.

### Incidents of encroachment

Clearing of forest land and hills were highlighted by the press, with the most disturbing case being the

clearing of 9.95ha of hills in Kledang Saiong in February.

Despite having been assured by Mentri Besar Inc (MB Inc) that action would be taken against those responsible, there has yet to be updates on the matter.

In the midst of this issue, a letter of approval from the Perak government to allow some 400ha to be used for forest plantation projects went viral.

The development project is said to be conducted at Kledang Saiong Forest Reserve and Bukit Kinta

Forest Reserve in the Manjung district.

Another environmental controversy arose last month when environmental groups found about 20ha of hills near the Bukit Kledang range being cleared.

The land owned by the Perak State Development Corporation (PKNP) falls under Kinta Valley Geopark.

It was later revealed that the clearing was for an orchard project.

One environmental issue, however, was good for the villagers of Kampung Kuala Rui in Gerik.

Their claims that Sungai Rui was heavily polluted brought about a project to build water pipes to supply clean treated water to them.

### Goodies for the rakyat

At least 50,000 affordable homes have been planned to be built by the state government over the next five years to enable the B40 income group to own houses.

These are said to take place in several districts including Kinta, Manjung, Kerian and Muallim.

January saw the launch of Perak's Park@Perak mobile app that allowed motorists to pay for parking through electronic transaction.

About six months after its launch, the mobile app has registered over 72,000 users and more than RM1mil in credit purchases.

In March, the state announced a pilot project in Gerik to allow stateless children a chance to enrol in school.

It was also a good year for the state's tourism industry after the launch of its own Hop-On, Hop-Off bus in Ipoh in April.

The administration also launched



A muddy Sungai Rui in Gerik. (Right) A Kampung Kerunai villager looking at the polluted river. — Filepics





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The Hop-On,Hop-Off shuttle bus by Tourism Perak began its tour in April.

### Yearender



several notable schemes and initiatives to help Perak folk.

Among these were the introduction of a welfare card *Kad Prihatin Perak* that benefitted some 17,000 people.

The card, launched in April, allowed recipients to get RM80 worth of essential goods every month and RM300 worth of medical treatment plus medication annually.

The people can also rejoice as the Federal Government, under Budget 2020, has allocated RM1.6bil for new hospitals as well as upgrading and expanding existing hospitals.

This includes a new hospital in Kampar on a 11.3ha land in Kampung Changkat Baru.

### Unpleasant events

Perak recorded the first and only case in Malaysia of an individual infected with Zika virus.

The 30-year-old man, warded in Manjung Hospital, died from the infection in October.

In November, the biggest drug bust in Perak was recorded with some RM603,000 worth of heroin and caffeine seized.

On Nov 27, the inaugural chartered flight service from Ipoh to



A motorist trying out the Park@Perak app to pay for the parking fee in Ipoh.

Guangzhou in China took off from the Sultan Azlan Shah Airport in Ipoh.

Its services was, however, stopped indefinitely barely a month later, after the service provider Scanda Sky PLT cancelled its agreement with Malaysian Airlines Bhd over a disagreement.

Scanda Sky is said to be looking for a new partner to resume the services.

In December, the state Immigration Department and police arrested more than 100 Chinese nationals believed to be involved in scam and online



Drone images of the conditions of the hills in Kledang Saiong in February.

gambling syndicates, in three different locations in Perak.

The state administration also faced several controversial issues over this past year. State executive council member Paul Yong has been charged with raping his Indonesian maid at his house in Ipoh in July.

The state DAP treasurer has since claimed trial, with the Ipoh Sessions Court having set February dates for the hearing.

Despite saying that he would be taking leave to concentrate on his case, Yong resumed his official duty following a discussion with Perak Menteri Besar Ahmad Faizal Azumu.

Yong's house was also broken into some time between November and early December, with important documents and two safe boxes stolen. The police believed it to be a genuine burglary and unrelated to his rape case.

Another exco member Datuk Abdul Yunus Jamahri was accused of leaking minutes of state meetings and alleged to have solicited kickbacks from two companies that were applying to develop land in Kerian.

He has denied all allegations.



Police raided a few premises in Ipoh where Chinese nationals were allegedly involved in online gambling.



Faizal (front, third from left) and exco members give the thumbs up for the Perak Prihatin programme. — Filepic