

PASIR PUTEH: The Kelantan government has been urged to stop logging activities in water catchment areas in Bukit Ulu Sat and Bukit Tapong here to ensure the safety of more than 300 people living on the fringes of the highlands. Pasir Puteh parliamentary constituency's agriculture development council chairman Zawawi Othman said several logging companies had been given approval to log a 200ha area. He said their activities had disrupted water supply to villagers, especially smallholders under the Felcra scheme. They use the water for drinking, bathing, cleaning and irrigation, he said here yesterday. Residents, he said, had complained of frequent water disruptions and muddy water supply when heavy rain occurred. Zawawi said the two locations had served as water catchment areas for the past three decades, with all forms of land-related activities having been previously forbidden. Wild elephants had also been sighted near the villages as the animals were pushed out of their natural habitats due to logging activities, said Zawawi. The villagers are now living in fear as it's risky to carry out farming activities and tap rubber, he said. He claimed that Pasir Puteh residents and businesses also suffered frequent water shortages as the Rasau River, which is fed by water from the Bukit Tapong catchment area, was drying up. ◆ Bernama