

Checks on legal status of Batu Dam settlers

KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. — The Gombak Land Office has been instructed to look into whether the settlements, land clearing and farming in the Batu Dam catchment area are legal.

Selangor's Local Government and Squatters Committee chairman Datuk Fuad Hassan today said the Land Office would also have to ascertain whether the land within the catchment area was private or State land.

He was speaking to reporters after visiting the Batu Dam near Batu Caves.

Fuad visited a settlement of 17 huts near Sungai Tua which drains into the Batu Dam. Department of Irrigation and Drainage Federal Territory director C.L. Liew said the huts were built by squatters.

Several areas in the catchment area showed evidence of land clearing and farming.

Fuad said the Land Office had to check the claim that the huts and land clearing had been approved. If so, the settlers would have to be relocated and compensated.

He said land clearing and farming within the catchment area posed a problem as fertilisers and pesticides could get washed into the dam, which acts as both a flood retention reservoir and also for water supply.

The Sungai Batu water treatment plant, which treats 113.7 million litres daily, draws water from the dam.