

43,338ha to be gazetted as catchment zones

SHAH ALAM, Wed. — A total of 43,338 hectares out of 230,447ha of permanent forest reserve near six dams and 17 water intake plants in Selangor will be gazetted as water catchment zones to prevent them from being developed in future.

All areas now identified as water catchment areas in Selangor are not gazetted as such but were only gazetted as permanent forest reserves.

Menteri Besar Datuk Abu Hassan Omar said the areas involved were in the forest reserves of Hulu Selangor (14,825ha), Semangkok (1,430ha), Bukit Tarik (1,291ha) and Bukit Belata (260ha).

Other areas to be gazetted as such are at the forest reserves of Bukit Tunggal

(1,774ha), Rantau Panjang (393ha), Bukit Cerakah (891ha), Bukit Lagong (799ha), Hulu Gombak (9,764ha), Ampang (2,066ha), Hulu Langat (4,285ha), Sungai Lalang (5,014ha) and 556ha at Bukit Sungai Puteh.

Most of the permanent forest reserves involved are those in the surrounding areas of Sungai Buloh Dam, Tasik Subang Dam, Sungai Batu Dam, Klang Gate Dam, Pansoon Dam and the Semenyih Dam.

Others are permanent forest reserves surrounding 17 water intake plants — five along Sungai Selangor, one each along Sungai Buaya, Sungai Buloh, Sungai Batu, Sungai Rumput, Sungai Semenyih, Sungai Serai and in Gombak, Bukit

Nanas, Rantau Panjang, Hulu Langat, Ampang and North Hammock.

He said the areas would be gazetted once the detailed plans for the affected areas were drawn up by the departments of Land and Mines and Forestry within one month.

"Once all these areas have been gazetted as water catchment zones, they will not be allowed to be converted for any purpose, including logging, development or agricultural activities.

"By gazetting the areas as water catchment zones we hope to protect all water sources to ensure there will always be adequate water supply in the State," he told reporters after launching the Selangor De-

velopment Expo 1998 today.

Abu Hassan said some of the forest reserves to be gazetted as water catchment zones were situated quite far from any dam or water intake plants.

He said in deciding how large a permanent forest reserve area was to be gazetted, factors such as topography of the area with regard to the existing dams and water intake plants would be taken into account.

"Some parts of a forest reserve, although it is situated quite close to a dam or water intake plant will not be gazetted as such because it is separated by high ridges, thus water run-off from this area will not contribute to the water level of the dam or the water intake plant."