



Residents living around Taman Tasik Intan Baiduri in Kepong worry losing this natural oasis. — Photos: FAIHAN GHANI, AZLINA ABDULLAH and YAP CHEE HONG/The Star

Intan Baiduri lake facing new degazettement threat

Community fears losing essential recreation space to development

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HISTORY is repeating itself as yet another vital water body in Kuala Lumpur is in danger of development.

A move to degazette Taman Tasik Intan Baiduri recreation area in Kepong has raised alarm bells for the community living close to the site.

While the land office has said the exercise is merely to create a bigger land reserve, stakeholders are questioning the motives behind the move.

They are especially concerned as there was a previous attempt to degazette this area for a housing project.

Adding to their worry is the alienation of land near Kampung Bohol flood retention pond for development.

On July 23, the Attorney General's Chambers published a notice in the Federal Government Gazette announcing the proposed revocation of the Kepong land reservation for public purposes under Section 64(2) of the National Land Code for Lot 80810, measuring 16.65ha.

It was signed by former chief secretary to the government Tan Sri Mohd Zuki Ali, whose service ended this month.

Gazetted in 2016, Lot 80810 comprises Taman Tasik Intan Baiduri which is reserved for use as a recreation area.

It is under the jurisdiction of Director General of the Federal Territories Department (JWP).

When contacted, Federal Territories of Kuala Lumpur Lands and Mines Office (PTGWP) stated that the degazettement was to allow for a bigger area

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to be gazetted as new land reserves.

PTGWP deputy director (Land Registration sector) Mohd Firdaus Ibaruslan said the exercise was not related to any development project.

"The degazettement needs to be done in order for us to regazette the plot according to the usage, from a recreational area of 16.65ha to new reserves.

"Altogether, we would degazette 16.65ha in order to regazette three reserves totalling 25.145ha," he said.

He added that this would mean a retention pond reserve of 17.297ha, an open space reserve of 3.696ha and a nursery reserve of 4.152ha (see graphic).

To put 16.65ha into perspective, it is equivalent to 28 football fields.

Not the first time

Those living in and around the recreation area, including Intan Baiduri People's Housing Project (PPR) residents, worry that this could open up the area for development.

This is the second time the government is attempting to initiate a degazettement process in the area.

In 2021, PTGWP initiated similar degazettement of land adjacent to the lake (Lot 80835), which was reserved for public space.

The land is sandwiched between the lake and Sungai Jinjang.



The plan was for a mixed development project that would include an affordable housing scheme.

The plan was halted by then Federal Territories minister Tan Sri Annuar Musa who emphasised that the land must not be touched.

Intan Baiduri PPR Residents Association chairman Rashid Samad said it was disheartening to learn about the latest proposed degazettement.

"We thought the matter had been settled when the revocation was cancelled in 2021.

"What is the purpose of degazetting just to regazette if there are no future plans to develop the area?"

Rashid said the community was deeply concerned about the potential environmental and social impact if any development were to go through.

"We have seen how rapidly Kuala Lumpur is losing green spaces and water bodies."

Intan Baiduri PPR Block A chairman Khairul Annuar Yusoff said there should be transparency about current and future plans for the entire area.

"We did not even know that this proposal (to degazette) was happening as there was no notice.

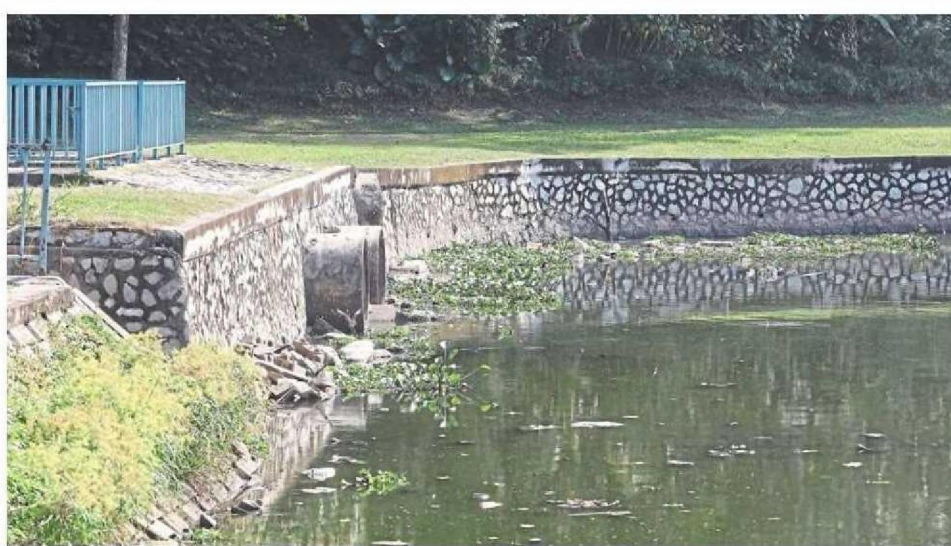
"There should be clear communication from the authorities to understand what is planned for our community," he said, adding that there were about 10,000 residents at the PPR.

Precedent set

Save Kuala Lumpur chairman Datuk M. Ali questioned the motives behind the plan as there was precedent of reserved land being developed.

"This is the same old story that we keep hearing again and again from the government," he said.

"They say that they are degazetting land to regazette it for bigger areas, but actually it's



Taman Tasik Intan Baiduri serves as a water retention system to channels surface runoff from the surrounding area, as shown with this inlet (left), and a cherished recreational spot (right) for residents to enjoy fishing and connecting with nature.



Rashid says Kuala Lumpur has been rapidly losing green spaces and water bodies.



Khairul Annuar says there should be transparency about current and future plans for the entire area.

just a way for them to identify plots of land for development.

"A perfect example is Kampung Bohol pond.

"They degazetted it saying that it was to make it bigger, but now they are building houses on it.

"We want transparency. We want to know what the real purpose is for them to do this."

Preserve Kg Bohol Flood

Retention Pond Coalition coordinator Datuk Ng See Eng said the exercise could open the door to other development in the area.

"I disagree with the government's decision to degazette Taman Tasik Intan Baiduri.

"Any government land meant for recreation and parks should remain so.

"Do not touch it. The city

Do not touch land, says FT Minister

Turn plot near Taman Intan Baiduri lake earmarked for development into public parks, DBKL told



StarMetro article on Jan 27, 2021.

needs more green lungs and not skyscrapers."

In 2023, StarMetro reported that six plots of land surrounding Kampung Bohol pond had been alienated to a private developer for residential projects, including a Federal Territories Affordable Housing Project (Rumawip), Madani Housing and a condominium

on three plots.

The developer would be free to decide on the types of projects to construct on the remaining land plots.

While the government later retracted the deal, it was revealed in April this year that new development plans had emerged for Kuala Lumpur's second-largest flood retention pond.

On May 16, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Federal Territories) Dr Zaliha Mustafa stated that the developer was required to upgrade the retention pond before receiving a development order for the alienated plots of land.

In the meantime, Kepong MP Lim Lip Eng said he had inquired about the purpose for the degazettement of the Intan Baiduri recreation area.

"This is a matter of significant public concern and I am currently awaiting a response from the authorities.

"Following the revocation notice for Taman Tasik Intan Baiduri, PTGWP is calling on the public to attend a hearing on the proposed cancellation on Aug 22, from 10am to 4pm, at the PTGWP office, second floor, Federal House in Jalan Sultan Hishamuddin.

"Anyone who wishes to object to the proposed cancellation can attend the inquiry and present their objections," he said.