



**UNIT KOMUNIKASI KORPORAT
JABATAN PERIKANAN MALAYSIA
BERITA PERIKANAN HARI INI**

**12 Julai 2023
23 Zulhijjah 1444H**

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KPKM siasat dakwaan lambakan udang import

SEBERANG PERAI – Kementerian Pertanian dan Keterjaminan Makanan (KPKM) belum menerima sebarang aduan rasmi berhubung lambakan udang putih import khususnya daripada kalangan penternak atau pengusaha yang terlibat.

Timbalan Menterinya, Chan Foong Hin berkata, sebaliknya, isu lambakan udang itu hanya diketahui melalui laporan media atau sidang akhbar yang dikendalikan persatuan penternak.

Bagaimanapun, beliau berkata, KPKM tetap menjalankan pemeriksaan lanjut dengan kerjasama beberapa agensi lain terutamanya Jabatan Perkhidmatan Kuarantin dan Pemeriksaan Malaysia (Maqis) Pulau Pinang bagi mengesahkan perkara tersebut.

"Kalau isu ini (lambakan udang import) memang berlaku, kemungkinan ia (masuk ke negara ini) bukan melalui cara yang sah dan boleh mengundang kepada isu biosekuriti dan sebagainya," katanya di sini semalam.

Foong Hin berkata, kemasukan udang putih yang tidak terkawal dikhuatiri akan mengakibatkan sebaran penyakit bawaan.

Sehubungan itu, katanya, Bahagian Keselamatan

dan Kualiti Makanan di Kementerian Kesihatan (KKM) akan bekerjasama membantu dari pengambilan sampel-sampel di pasar awam dalam usaha untuk mengenal pasti sekiranya terdapat bahan-bahan terlarang seperti antibiotik dan sebagainya dalam udang berkenaan.

Namun katanya, sehingga kini, tiada sebaran penyakit dapat dikenal pasti kerana tiada rekod bagi kemasukan udang tersebut secara seludup.

Dalam perkembangan berkaitan, Pengarah Perikanan Pulau Pinang, Zarina Zainuddin berkata, beberapa langkah kawalan kemasukan udang putih import telah dikenal pasti oleh Jabatan Perikanan.

"Antaranya termasuk melaksanakan operasi bersepadu melibatkan pelbagai agensi atau jabatan yang diketuai oleh Maqis bagi mengesan kemasukan udang yang diseludup," katanya.



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'PENANG RECOGNISES IMPACT OF PSI PROJECT'

Ecology offset masterplan aims to address concerns, says Penang Infrastructure Corp

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It is crucial to acknowledge that development projects of Penang South Island's (PSI) magnitude will inevitably have an impact on the environment, the Penang Infrastructure Corporation (PIC) said.

PIC said as the state government's special purpose vehicle to implement the PSI project, the state government fully recognises this, and that was precisely why the PSI ecology offset masterplan (PEOM) initiatives had been developed, in collaboration with professionals and experts, to mitigate the impacts.

Although physical works have yet to commence on site, PIC said the PEOM initiatives had been carefully implemented in phases, demonstrating the state government's commitment to its responsibility towards the fishing community and the environment.

"The PSI project has expanded the mangrove ecosystem in the state through the planting of more than 1,600 mangrove trees, and increased fishery stock by releasing two million fish fries.

Recently, PIC and the project delivery partner, SRS Consortium Sdn Bhd, have joined forces with the state Forestry Department to plant 200,000 trees at suitable locations in Penang by 2030.

"We are also collaborating with the Centre for Marine and Coastal Studies from Universiti Sains Malaysia to conduct research on artificial reefs and the release of fish and shrimp fries to bolster future fish stocks.

"It is essential to approach the PSI project with an informed perspective that considers its comprehensive benefits, including sustainable economic growth, improved socio-economic status for fishermen, enhanced educational opportunities for their children, and well-designed en-



An artist's impression of the Penang South Island project. PIC COURTESY OF PSI

vironmental conservation efforts.

"We remain committed to engaging with all stakeholders, addressing concerns constructively, and ensuring that the PSI project contributes positively to the long-term welfare of the fishing community and the prosperity of Penang," it said in addressing concerns and allegations raised about the project by Gerakan Ekonomi Malaysia and Institut Masa Depan Malaysia.

Gerakan Ekonomi Malaysia had recently urged the government to halt the PSI reclamation project and formulate a comprehensive policy to guarantee a sustainable livelihood for fishermen.

Its president, Armin Baniaz Pahamin, said Penang's development plan, especially PSI, would critically impact the income and future of fishermen and affect the local fish supply. Armin said the state government, unfortunately, had taken no action to provide an alternative source of income.

PIC said the PSI project was a sustainable initiative, with the goal of benefiting various stakeholders, including fishermen and their families, local communities, the state and the country's economy as a whole.

"The local community is benefiting from the PSI project, even before the commencement of the reclamation work.

"The social impact management plan under PSI is empowering the fishermen community by providing them with free well-equipped, larger and safer boats with powerful engines, free professional seafarer training, free

tuition and scholarship to the fishermen's children, new job opportunities with stable income and employment benefits, financial aid in the form of ex-gratia payments, new jetties and upgraded on-shore facilities, aquaculture opportunities and the establishment of a cooperative to protect fishermen's commercial welfare and create business opportunities for the local community.

"Furthermore, 200 days of satellite images have shown that local fishermen have been more active fishing outside of the PSI area. This is independently corroborated with satellite images from the Malaysia Space Agency."

PIC said the social impact assessment conducted for PSI found that 79 per cent of the state's residents, including fishermen, supported the development. About 74.8 per cent of the interviewed fishermen expressed agreement with the PSI project.

The Department of Environment received 93 per cent positive feedback regarding the PSI project from the 3,464 recorded responses during the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) public display period from May 20 to June 18, 2022.

PIC also gave its assurance that the PSI project was designed with a climate adaptation strategy according to the guidelines and studies from the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), National Hydraulic Research Institute of Malaysia, the Low Carbon Cities Framework, the Royal HaskoningDHV of Netherlands and the Danish Hydraulic Institute.

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The beach near the traditional Malay fishing village in Permatang Tepak Laut faces the proposed Silicon Island project. — ZHAFFAR HASS/ The Star

Trawling for new opportunities

Fisherfolk say it's time to embrace development, adapt and modernise industry with technology

By LO TERN CHERN
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For generations, veteran fisherman Fikri Ismail and his family have relied on traditional methods and small boats to earn a living near Pulau Kandi, a rocky, 4km island southwest of Penang Island.

The 56-year-old hopes the Penang South Island (PSI) reclamation project will improve the living standards of fishermen in the vicinity.

Three of his seven children are also fishermen. Fikri, of Pulau Kumbang, said the next generation of fishermen should embrace development if they intend to remain in the fishing industry.

"With the growing population, there is a need to develop the industry."

"It needs to be modernised with improved technology and advanced methods."

"Although I am too old for it, my children are ready to adopt new approaches."

He said they were already using technology such as global positioning systems (GPS) and motors to assist in returning seas.

"We believe with the PSI project, the industry will flourish through better fishing amenities and supporting industries."

"We must be open with methods that are labourious and less productive. Only then will the younger generation be attracted to the job," he added.

After the PSI project was announced in 2013, it went through a long process before securing environmental impact assessment (EIA) approval last year.

It was originally designed to build part of the Penang Transport Master Plan, which includes the Pan Island Link and light rail transit (LRT) projects.

But with the Federal Government fully funding the LRT pro-



The project has been scaled down to one island, from the initial three.

ject from Bayan Lepas to Tanjung Bungah, the PSI project was scaled down by 40%, with Island B (566ha) and Island C (132ha) shelved indefinitely.

Only Island A (930ha) will be reclaimed in two phases. Island A, who recently had his 18-year-old boat replaced with a new one under the project's Social Impact Management Plan (SIMP), said not all fishermen were in favour of the project.

He, however, remains optimistic about its long-term benefits. "It may take many years to mature, and I might probably not be here to witness it. But the future generations will."

The project has promised to provide a solid better place to work and better and our fishing areas near Pulau Kandi will be unaffected," he said.

Permatang Tepak Laut Village Community Management Council (MPKK) chairman, Vito-

lus Mohd. Ali, said some of the 500 residents in the area were ill-informed about the reclamation project.

"Many residents still have doubts about the project, and only a few in the fishing sector are well-informed about it."

"Some of them object to the project because they are concerned about the need to venture into the industry to work fish and practice on the new island as well."

"Many of them did not see the real picture as they were influenced by certain quarters and concerned the project briefing and discussions."

"Over the past four years, I have attended numerous meetings, and based on my understanding, the island will feature housing, industrial and commercial zones."

"This is good news as the development will enable us to

move away from being solely fishermen's resort."

"Once the developments are ready, there will be new job opportunities and attendant local changes, including transportation to ease traffic congestion," Fikri added.

Multiplier effect

Cherise Simons Dhaqal, 45, said the PSI project would offer a better future for her six children aged between seven and 20.

"Upon its completion, my children will benefit from having access to career opportunities without needing to leave the area."

"I am confident that once the reclamation begins, I will get more customers," she added.

Every woman, Amin Hasmah, 32, said, "Modernisation will bring forth more job opportunities and we should always welcome such progress."

"Some who are accustomed to traditional life might feel threatened by the project, particularly those who are worried about losing their fishing grounds at sea."

"However, as long as there is proper planning for economic sustainability, I am confident that everyone's livelihoods will improve if we adapt to change."

"Commercial areas will be developed and I will relocate my business to a more suitable location."

Economic catalyst, new tourism attraction

Cherise said the proposed Silicon Island is expected to take between 10 and 15 years to complete.

The first phase, constructing S150a, will take seven to 10 years to be completed, while the sec-

ond phase will add another 200ha to the island.

Silicon Island will also be home to a Green Tech Park (GTP) and "Heart of the Island" (HoI), which will be the economic catalysts and new tourism attraction for Penang.

Penang's Chief Minister Chow Kon Yeow had earlier said the GTP would feature research and design facilities, digital technology infrastructure, science and business process outsourcing.

He said Silicon Island would be strategically located since it would be near Bayan Lepas Free Industrial Zone and Penang International Airport.

He also said HoI would be a waterfront commercial hub, which would serve as the pulse of the island.

"Several residential developments including affordable housing would be another feature of the island," he said.

There would also be a waterway network for transportation and that could be another new tourism attraction in the state, added Chua.

"Silicon Island Development Sdn Bhd, which is 70% owned by Gamuda Bhd, has awarded the design, management and construction of the Phase 1 reclamation works of Island A to a wholly owned subsidiary of Gamuda."

"Phase 1 reclamation works commenced on July 1 while physical works will only start once the company secures Environmental Management Plan approval from the Environmental Department."

The project is expected for completion in next year.

Objections by civil societies

Despite the state government's explanations and assurances, several civil society organisations have raised their objections to

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Upskilling fishermen and helping locals reel in alternative job offers

By TAN SIN CHOW
editor, thestar.com.my

Job opportunities and benefits from the Social Impact Management Plan (SIMP) will be seen once the Penang South Island (PSI) reclamation work begins.

There will be some 500 marine and land-based jobs when reclamation is carried out over 18 months, with priority given to fishermen and local residents.

The positions range from technical and professional roles to skilled and technical categories.

Fishermen will also be given assistance in the form of bigger boats and engines, complete with a compass.

Once the reclamation begins, there will be a 250m-wide navigation channel that enables boats to go to sea regardless of the tide.

Recently, 11 fishermen took a seaforce course to learn about chartwork, rules and regulations, meteorology, boat training, general ship knowledge and general engineering.

Permatang Pasir fisherman Zeeah Sirani, 55, said he appreciated the new knowledge.

"I have been a fisherman for over 20 years without knowing anything about maritime law."

Thanks to the opportunity from the Penang government through PSI, I have learned about navigating nautical maps to plan my journey at sea, how to travel more safely, and the regulations to abide by when at sea," he said.

Eng Phaik Khoo, 49, from Gelat, Sanggul, also said the seaforce course was useful to fishermen.

"We learnt about maritime regulations and different types of buoys at sea," he said.

Eng said although he had been a fisherman since he was 12, he didn't know many things about navigating safely at sea before he attended the course.

"Previously, I did not know what the buoys or their blinking lights meant."

"Now, I know that different buoys warn us of different dangers like shallow waters or objects underwater."

"We were also taught how to read a compass and plan our journey," he added.

Eng and Zeeah were part of the second batch of fishermen from the PSI area to attend the "Maritime Law (Mar 300 GT Open)" course.

Last year, the first batch of nine fishermen received their seaforce certificates.

The fishermen can go on to take an oral exam at the Marine Department to obtain their Certificate of Competence (COC), which will enable them to work in national waters as seafarers.

With the COC, they can work on portlines and ships of less than 300 gross tonnes.

They can offer boat transport services for construction workers and tourists to earn additional or alternative income.



Fishermen practice chartwork before the final exam of the seaforce course.



Some of the newly upskilled women being taught how to sew a nautical map.



Abdul Hadi, who is a certified seafarer, is seeking stable employment.



Yacob says most of the about 5,900 residents are informed about the project.



Locals believe the fishing industry will flourish with better amenities through the PSI project.



Suzana says with the project, her children will have better access to career opportunities.

the project.

They said the reclamation would cut a permanent and residual impact on mudflat ecosystems, fishing grounds, turtle nesting areas and some coral reefs in Pulau Pinang.

They also claimed that the reclamation would lead to a significant negative impact on marine resources, fisheries and local food security.

The groups also said the state government had failed to justify the reclamation, adding that huge sums were needed for development, there was 12,000ha available on Pulau Pinang.

They noted that the EIA was flawed as it did not take into account the fact that the project would result in the destruction of an important fishery, which provides income for over 3,000 people and their families, and 6000 fish, prawns, crabs and other marine life - for consumers.

The concerns have since been addressed by the Penang government and project delivery partner SRS Consortium.

Seafarers training is part of the SIMP initiative where fishermen who are looking at upskilling will be selected in batches yearly to attend the course towards obtaining the COC.

New Jobs

The PSI project has created new job opportunities with general workers, boat pilots, maintenance technicians, drivers and other personnel to be hired.

Bullu Pulau resident Abdul Hadi, 47, went to interview for a boat pilot position at Pusat Perkhidmatan Sesiapan Nelayan (PPSN) in Permatang Pasir.

The 47-year-old pilot, who is also a certified seafarer, became self-employed not long after the Covid-19 pandemic hit.

He used to pilot tourist boats to Pulau Pinang until the service was terminated following the pandemic.

"I have always worked at sea. I started as a fisherman and I went on to be a boat pilot after I earned my seafarer certificate

in 2007.

"Although I can earn a living by taking people out sightseeing and for fishing excursions, the income is not stable."

"We cannot go out to sea when the weather is bad."

"My wife has also encouraged me to get a more stable job. So, I thought of trying my luck here," said the father of three young children.

Homebased business operator Koli Chai Leng, 44, also came to interview for a driver's position.

He was laid without income for two years during the Covid-19 outbreak.

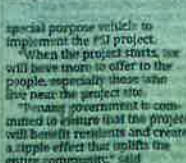
"I would rather take on a salaried job with EPF (Employee Provident Fund) Socra and other benefits," said the father of one, whose wife operates a hawker stall.

Penang Infrastructure Corporation (PIC) chief executive officer Daniel Sri Hartono Davis said the project would create growth for small businesses and amplify the multiplier effect within the entire southern community.

PIC is Penang government's



Eng says he learned a lot from the seafarer course about navigating safely at sea.



special purpose vehicle to implement the PSI project.

"When the project starts, we will have many to offer to the people, especially those who live near the project site."

"I want government to continue to ensure that the project will benefit residents and create a ripple effect that uplifts the entire community," said Fuzlan.

To date, 1,100 locals including fishermen have registered their interest for the available roles.

Those interested can call PPSN at 1800-85-8383, email ppsn@psconson.com.my or visit its offices at Permatang Pasir, Sungai Batu and Gelat, Sanggul for details.