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# TWO DEAD, 3 FEARED BURIED ALIVE IN CAMERONS LANDSLIDE

Search operation underway after 5 Myanmar nationals struck by collapse of hillslope terrain

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**T**WO people were confirmed dead and another three feared buried alive following a landslide at Kampung Batu 59, Kampung Raja, Blue Valley, early yesterday.

The five, all Myanmar nationals, have been identified as Shing Lan Har, 56; Shing Aung, 39; Om Myue, 38; Haphey, 36, and Thang Moung, 25. However, the identities of the two who were killed have yet to be released.

The first body was retrieved at 3am, and the second was discovered at 12.05pm, with search and rescue operations still ongoing as of press time.

A statement from the Cameron Highlands District Disaster Management Agency Committee said that Cameron Highlands police were alerted to the incident at 2.10am.

It said five victims, including a woman, were initially buried under the debris of the landslide. The bodies retrieved so far were both men.

"Following the report, a rescue team was rushed to the scene to conduct inspections to coordinate search and rescue operations."

"The result of the inspection found that the scene of the incident had been cut off and a four-wheel vehicle was needed to get to the site."

"The rescue team immediately started a search and rescue operation and the body of a male victim was found at 3am," the statement said.

District police chief Deputy Superintendent Azri Ramli said the body of the second man was found about 10m from the original site near a housing site for workers in a vegetable farm there.

He said the SAR team faced



A search and rescue team at the landslide scene at Kampung Batu 59, Kampung Raja, Blue Valley, to conduct inspections to coordinate search and rescue operations, yesterday; (Inset) A sniffer dog from the police's K9 Detection Unit at the location to assist in the search and rescue mission, yesterday. PIX COURTESY OF PAHANG CIVIL DEFENCE FORCE AND BY L. MANIMARAN



challenges as the area experienced several more landslides along the narrow road that connects the Fire Control Centre with the scene of the incident.

"Based on the inspection, we found that (the road) to the scene has been cut off and requires a four-wheel drive vehicle to access it."

"But (now) even deploying a four-wheel drive is not possible because there have been several further landslides that occurred on our way to the scene," he said.

A Cameron Highlands Fire and Rescue Department spokesman said the search operation was divided into four sectors namely Sector A, Sector B, Sector C and Sector D.

"The search radius measures 40mx80m which includes the first two sectors which are sectors B and C."

"The estimated slope at the location of the incident is between 35 and 45 degrees," he said in a statement.

He said 53 firemen were involved in the operation, including 19 from the department's Special Tactical Operation Res-

cue Malaysia (Storm) and four firemen with two dogs from the K9 Unit.

He added that the operation was also joined by two Minerals and Geoscience Department officers, six Rela members, two Cameron Highlands District and Land Office officers, three Tenaga Nasional Bhd staff and 13 Civil Defence Force members.

Meanwhile, Works Minister Datuk Seri Alexander Nanta Linggi said the area where the landslide occurred was not under the supervision of the Public Works Department (PWD).

"I am deeply saddened by the landslide incident reported earlier today (yesterday) in Cameron Highlands."

"Checks found that the route and location of the incident were not under the supervision of PWD," he said in his statement.

However, Nanta said the PWD was assisting in the operation, especially clearing works at the entrance to the incident area, to facilitate search and rescue operations.

The incident has sparked renewed calls from an environ-

mental group which said it was gravely concerned about hill clearing in the highlands.

Sahabat Alam Malaysia (SAM) president Meenakshi Raman said hill clearing, including for agriculture and construction work, could make the highlands prone to more landslides, especially during periods of heavy rain.

She said in January last year, Yang di-Pertuan Agong Al-Sultan Abdullah Ri'ayatuddin Al-Mustafa Billah Shah had directed for a review of all projects in Cameron Highlands.

"His Majesty had voiced his concern about the widespread clearing of hillslope land for agriculture and other projects and had called for a review of all approvals while adding that this was enough!"

"Clearly, it appears that this directive from the country's highest authority does not seem to have been heeded."

"The (Pahang) state and local authorities must be hauled up again for allowing so much overdevelopment on what is a highly environmentally sensitive area, especially when climate change

impacts are more apparent now, with unprecedented rainfall intensities." **Additional reports by Amir Hamzah Nordin and Audrey Dermawan**

Page one pic: The remains of the second victim of the Kampung Raja, Blue Valley, Cameron Highlands landslide was retrieved from the debris at 12.05pm, yesterday.