

Cameron Highlands Floods: A Case for the Environment?



Image: Cheam May Choo

Wednesday, 12 September 2018 | 6.00PM – 7.30 PM
Moot Court, Next to the Summit Cafeteria
National University of Singapore Faculty of Law
(Bukit Timah Campus)

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Cameron Highlands, in the Malaysian state of Pahang, has been under stress in recent years as a consequence of changes in land use. While development has created a comfortable lifestyle for many farmers, it has also led to the illegal clearing of large swathes of forests. As a result, flash floods and landslides have become a common occurrence.

In October 2013 and November 2014, heavy downpours brought large volumes of water to Ringlet Reservoir, along with rubbish, debris and siltation, raising the water level within a short period. The mud floods which resulted from the release of substantial amounts of water from the Sultan Abu Bakar Dam caused massive destruction to properties and several lives were lost. On 25 May 2018, the High Court in Kuala Lumpur decided to allow a suit filed by 100 Cameron Highlands residents against Tenaga Nasional Bhd (TNB), which owned and operated the Sultan Abu Bakar Dam, for negligence leading to the flood disaster in 2013. Costs were awarded against TNB and damages are to be assessed by the High Court's Deputy Registrar.

The deadly floods have brought to light a complexity of issues beyond the environmental threat to a hill resort which was once better known for its cool air and verdant tea plantations. These issues will be explored in this seminar, which includes a film screening and discussion about the court case and issues related to dams.

PROGRAMME:

- 6:00 PM - 6:05 PM** Welcome by Assoc Prof Jolene Lin
Director, Asia-Pacific Centre for Environmental Law (APCEL), NUS Law
- 6:05 PM - 6:25 PM** Dialogue with film-maker Yeo Kai Wen
Moderated by Pak-Juan Koe, Alumnus, MSc (Env Mgt) [MEM] Programme, NUS
- 6:25 PM - 7:00 PM** Screening of "The Disappearing Hills"
- 7:00 PM - 7:30 PM** Comments by Assoc Prof Lye Lin-Heng,
Hon Advisor & former Director, APCEL; Chair, MSc (Env Mgt) [MEM] Programme, NUS, and
Panel Discussion with A/P Lye Lin-Heng, Pak-Juan Koe and Yeo Kai Wen

TO REGISTER:

Registration link - <https://nus.edu/2KTu8sj>
click [Here](#) or scan the QR code



There is no registration fee for this seminar but seats are limited.
Closing Date: Monday, 10 September 2018 (by 5pm Singapore Time)

The Disappearing Hills

(Singapore/Malaysia/2016/30 minutes/PG.
Director: Yeo Kai Wen).

Filmed between December 2014 and February 2015, this documentary presents the human stories behind the environmental issues at Cameron Highlands. It documents the aftermath of the floods in the Highlands and features personal accounts delivered in Bahasa Malaysia, English, Mandarin and Bengali. This film won the Special Jury Award at the 2016 Kuala Lumpur Eco Film Festival. The 30-minute documentary is subtitled in English, Malay and Chinese.

Film-maker: Yeo Kai Wen

Kai Wen has bathed in arsenic-contaminated water, travelled to the Arctic's edge, and slept in Asia's largest slum, all in the name of telling stories. Through his photographs and videos, he hopes to better understand the human condition, and find himself in the process. A graduate of the Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information at Nanyang Technological University, Kai Wen currently runs his own photography and videography business. He works closely with clients such as Facebook, the National Council of Social Services, Mediacorp, Singapore Press Holdings and Lien Aid.

Discussant: Assoc Prof Lye Lin-Heng

Prof Lye is the former Director of the Asia-Pacific Centre for Environmental Law (APCEL), Faculty of Law, National University of Singapore (NUS). She teaches environmental law in NUS and at the Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies. She chairs the NUS multi-disciplinary graduate programme on the environment, the MSc (Environmental Management) [MEM], hosted by the School of Design & Environment. She was former Vice-Chair of the IUCN Academy of Environmental Law and co-chair of its Teaching and Research Committee. She was Honorary Legal Advisor to the Nature Society Singapore, for many years. She is a member of the Board of Governors, WWF Singapore and a member of the Panel of Advisors on Wildlife Issues, Agri-Veterinary Authority (AVA), Singapore. She also teaches Property Law and is a member of the Strata Titles Board, and former member of the Tenants Compensation Board and Housing & Development Board (HDB), Singapore.

Moderator: Pak-Juan Koe

Pak-Juan (P-J) is a docent at museums, galleries and cultural institutions, and has guided heritage trails, art walks, and a round-Singapore sculpture tour. He has also volunteered at major art exhibitions, heritage festivals, film festivals and performances, including producing and promoting theatre plays in Singapore. He was an advisor to a project that provided a platform for the creation and showcasing of art works by youths living with chronic illnesses. He currently serves on the Alumni committee of the Master of Science (Environmental Management) Programme at NUS, and has also read engineering and business administration at UNSW Sydney. He hopes to travel to the remaining half of the world's countries which he has not visited. P-J works at an energy MNC - when he is not volunteering or saturating his brain with topics concerning culture, the arts, heritage and the Earth.