

FORESTRY

Vichet vows to demolish illegal resorts

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Illegal resorts and properties in national parks and forest reserves will start being demolished from next month, under an order by Natural Resources and Environment Minister Vichet Kasemthongsri.

The minister has set up a committee to verify the legality of demolition steps and to speed up the process, ministry spokesman Surapol Patani said.

The 12-member committee, headed by deputy permanent secretary Wijarn Simachaya, consists of representatives from various agencies including the Department of Special Investigation, National Police Office, the Internal Security Operations Command, public prosecutors and the Sueb Nakhasathien Foundation. "The minister has made a clear remark that those illegal resorts and properties must be demolished, starting next month," Mr Surapol said.

"We have a list of the illegal resorts for which the court cases have been finalised and the committee will look into the details of when their demolition will start," he said.

Committee member and Sueb Nakhasathien Foundation secretary-general Sasin Chalermklarp said all orders made by committee decision must be lawful and must not exploit any loopholes to help the illegal resort operators.

"I don't care whether the ministry will demolish those illegal buildings," he said.

"But the culprits must be punished by the law. The demolitions should be considered on a case-by-case basis."

Court cases have been finalised against 27 illegal resorts in Tab Lan National Park in Prachin Buri and three in Khao Laem Ya-Mu Koh Samet National Park.