



Oily mess

Workers from Shell and the Petroleum Industry Malaysia Mutual Aid Group helping to clear oil sludge from a monsoon drain in Port Dickson, Negri Sembilan yesterday. The unprocessed fuel from the Shell refinery leaked into nearby waterways while the plant was closed for maintenance work over the weekend. See Page 2. — UU BAN LEONG / The Star

Oil leaks from refinery

Fuel in drains causes scare in PD

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PORT DICKSON: Residents at the resort town here had a fright when unprocessed fuel from the Shell refinery leaked into nearby waterways while the plant was closed for maintenance work over the weekend.

It could not be immediately ascertained how much fuel had leaked from the refinery.

The residents saw scores of men in white overalls working round the clock to clean up the mess after the incident occurred at about 3pm on Saturday.

Heavy machinery, including excavators, were also used in the exercise.

Residents living in Kampung Paya and Kampung Air Meleleh, which are located near the refinery, were believed to have notified the plant operators of the leak when they saw monsoon drains in their neighbourhoods covered in black waxy liquid.

Unusually high levels of foul fumes also permeated the air at the drains for several minutes.

Shell Refining Company communications and corporate affairs manager Amri Mohd Sham confirmed that the leak took place

on Saturday.

He said prompt action by Shell employees and the Petroleum Industry Malaysia Mutual Aid Group team prevented the fuel from flowing into the Straits of Malacca.

"We took immediate measures to contain it and ensure minimal damage to the environment. We have installed five booms to trap the sludge and clear the waterways," he added.

Amri said the sludge would be scooped from the drains and stored in bags before being returned to the refinery.

The company had also notified the Department of Environment (DOE) and the Drainage and Irrigation Department about the incident.

"We have been working round the clock to clear the sludge and the situation is under control," Amri said, adding that the cause of the incident was being investigated.

He said the company would only know how much fuel had leaked after weighing the sludge collected from the drains.

Amri said the plant had been shut down for scheduled maintenance work as required by the Department of Occupational Safety and Health.

State DOE director Charanpal Singh said his department was investigating the matter.



Clean-up: An excavator clearing the oil sludge from a monsoon drain in Port Dickson yesterday.