



Datuk Amar Abang Johari Tun Openg (centre) being briefed on the Kuching Centralised Sewerage System project at the construction site in Satok yesterday. — NST picture by Nadim Bokhari

Sungai Sarawak to be region's cleanest

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KUCHING: The water quality of Sungai Sarawak will improve by 60 per cent when the first phase of the city's RM530 million centralised sewerage system comes into operation next year.

The project, undertaken by Kumpulan-Nishimatsu-Hock Seng Lee Consortium, is now 49 per cent complete. It is targeted for completion in June next year.

Urban Planning Minister Datuk Amar Abang Johari Tun Openg said yesterday the water quality of the river, the city's main source of drinking water, would be further improved when the second phase, covering all the traditional Malay villages on its banks, was completed in a few years.

The waterways and rivers of Kuching would soon be the cleanest in this part of the world,

he said after inspecting shaft digging works in Satok.

He said three of the river's tributaries — Sungai Padungan, Bintangor and Maong — were "highly polluted" by "black water" and "grey water" discharge.

Abang Johari said the "black water" — wastewater from toilets that were partially treated by the conventional septic tank — and "grey water" — wastewater from kitchens, bathrooms, and wash areas — from both residential and commercial areas was discharged directly into the city's drains untreated.

The wastewater subsequently flows to the tributaries and the Sungai Sarawak.

Under the centralised sewerage system, a 64.5km network of sewers would collect all the wastewater and channel to a plant for treatment before being discharged into the river as standard "A" effluent.

The treatment plant, located on a 10.9ha site adjacent to the Tun Datuk Patinggi Abang Haji Muhammad Salahuddin toll bridge in Tanah Puteh, has the capacity to treat wastewater discharged by a city of 100,000 people.

The plant would eventually be expanded to have the final capacity of 400,000 PE (population equivalent).

Phase 1 of the project covers the most densely populated areas of the city.

As at July 8, the wastewater treatment plant was 62 per cent complete, the sewer network, 65 per cent and the property connections, only 0.3 per cent.

Abang Johari appealed to city folks for patience as work to dig some of the shafts had caused traffic disruption.

Some of the shafts were positioned on the roads due to the alignment of the road and the trunk sewer.