

Sg Selangor water murky

STRESS FACTORS: But Syabas says turbidity level at water processing plants back to normal

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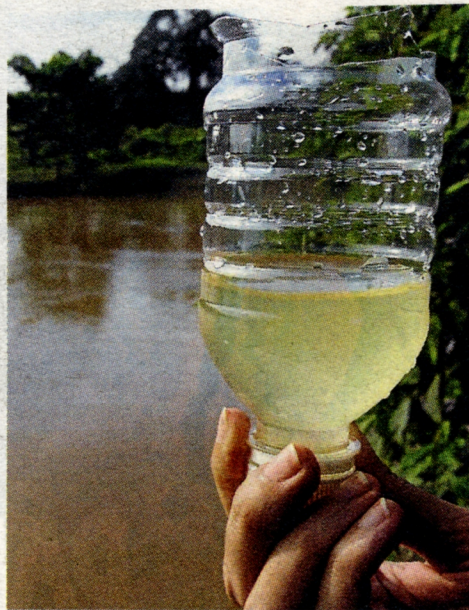
WATER from Sungai Selangor, which flows into four water treatment plants processing drinking water for millions of consumers in the Klang Valley, appeared murky yesterday.

Villagers said this happened every time it rained heavily.

As residents in surrounding areas, such as Kampung Hang Tuah here, speculate about the causes, the Drainage and Irrigation Department (DID) said a number of factors, from embankment failure to logging, could have led to the turbidity, or water that carried suspended particles, mainly soil and dust.

Embankment failure relates to large sections of soil along riverbanks collapsing into rivers, suddenly introducing high amounts of soil.

Selangor DID deputy director Nor Hisham Mohd Ghazali said: "Other factors include logging, clearing of land or the removal of ground clearing, such as trees or grass, which exposes raw soil to rainwater that washes the soil into rivers."



The water in **Sungai Selangor** was murky yesterday after a downpour. Pic by Sairien Nafis

He said it was often a combination of factors occurring simultaneously that caused river waters to experience high levels of turbidity.

Syabas, the water concessionaire, had on

Monday said that some three million people in the Klang Valley risked water cuts because of the sudden turbidity of the Sungai Selangor water used by processing plants in Ijok, which had resulted in a drop of 60 per cent in clean water production.

The four plants are Sungai Selangor phase treatment plants 1, 2 and 3 and the Rantau Panjang treatment plant.

Syabas chief executive officer Datuk Ruslan Hassan said the turbidity level at the four plants had returned to normal. This had allowed the concessionaire to set the emergency response plan from code red to code green.

"The turbidity of more than 6,000 NTUs (nephelometric turbidity units) recorded on Monday morning had returned to 300 NTUs today (yesterday).

"This enabled the water production level to return to 2,680 million litres a day."

However, because of the earlier decrease in production, several places in the Klang Valley, especially structures on elevated terrain, were expected to experience low water pressure levels and water supply disruptions.

Ruslan said: "The water supply is expected to gradually return to normal by tomorrow (Wednesday).

"This is because Syabas does not have an

alternative source to supply water to the affected areas."

He added that his officers were investigating the cause of the turbidity.

He urged consumers to use water wisely and to contact Syabas on toll-free line 1-800-88-5252 in case of an enquiry or emergency.

Rosman Hassan, 54, a lorry driver in Kampung Hang Tuah, said there used to be an abundance of tapah fish and lobsters, but not anymore.

Villagers said they lacked evidence to back their claims about the causes of the pollution, which prevented them from going to the authorities.

A construction worker, Wan Omar Mohd Yusof, 50, was checking his fish trap when the *New Straits Times* team met him.

"The water has been better than yesterday (Monday). Yesterday, it looked every bit like mud. Yet, I have no catches today."

Rosman's son, Mohd Azizi, 23, brought the NST team to a tributary that flows into the Sungai Selangor, where the water is said to be polluted with corroded loam soil.

➔ **Additional reporting by**
Aisyah Sulaiman and Eunice Au



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**Datuk Ruslan
Hassan**
Syabas chief
executive officer



Excessive rubbish in the river near Metro Kajang shopping complex also contributed to the flooding of Kajang town on Friday. Pic by Effendy Rashid

Cause of floods identified

MISSING LINK: Incomplete construction of river embankment one of the reasons

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AN incomplete embankment along Sungai Jelok has been identified as one of the main causes of the floods in Kajang town last Friday.

Senior Department of Irrigation and Drainage (DID) officials, attending an international confer-

ence here, said construction of the remaining 200m embankment had been stalled due to the year-long relocation issue involving 21 traders in Kajang.

Once resolved, the DID would need six more months to complete the embankment.

The stalls are operating on temporary licences issued by the Kajang Municipal Council which will have to resolve the matter quickly.

DID director-general Datuk Ahmad Husaini said the downpour, two low bridges along Sungai Jelok, excessive rubbish, and the low soffit level (the clearance level for water to flow under the bridges) had aggravated the situation.

Ahmad said this at the third international conference on managing rivers in the 21st century organised by Universiti Sains Malaysia.

DID Water Resources Management and Hydrology Division director Hanapi Mohamad Noor, who was also at the conference, said the

completed embankment would mitigate flooding.

"Even if there is flooding there in future, it would not be as severe as the one last Friday," he said.

Fire and Rescue Department personnel rescued nine people, three of them senior citizens, during the floods.

The worst affected areas were Semenyih town, near the road to Bangi Lama, as well as parts of Kajang town, which included Pasar Besar Kajang, Jalan Sg Jelok, Jalan Kg Sg Kantan, Jalan Semenyih-Kajang, Jalan Kelapa, Jalan Bukit and Jalan Reko.