

Dirty rain

Experts hired to check source of Sungai Selangor pollution

SHAH ALAM: The flood-muddied waters of Sungai Selangor, which serves 60% of the Klang Valley, have cleared.

But the rainy weather predicted by the Meteorological Department in the coming days could complicate or even reverse the situation.

Selangor water concessionaire Syabas said the water which was turbid after the unrelenting rain that submerged Kajang has returned to normal.

Syabas CEO Datuk Ruslan Hassnan said the four affected treatment plants resumed operating at the full capacity of 2.68 billion litres of water a day from 1am yesterday.

The Selangor Government, which appointed a regulator and an operations auditor to investigate the source of the river's pollution, said: "The state Water Management Board and the Department of Environment will also be called to find ways to resolve the problem and prevent a recurrence."

Given the stormy days predicated, Klang Valley residents fear that the water will be murky again rather soon.



Message in the bottle: Ijok Phase One treatment plant operator Zahid Sahak, 41, comparing a bottle of mineral water with the murky water collected from Sungai Selangor that is not safe for consumption. — SIA HONG KIAU / The Star

Heavy rainfall, high turbidity

SHAH ALAM: The high-level of turbidity in Sungai Selangor is due to the heavy rainfall experienced over the weekend, state Irrigation and Drainage (DID) department director Mohd Abdul Nassir Bidin said.

He said this phenomenon was normal and the river would clear up once the weather improved.

"There was no sign of a point source which contributed to the murkiness, such as illegal logging, factories discharging waste to the river or a dumping site.

DID: Sg Selangor will clear up once weather improves

"The high turbidity is normal when there is heavy rainfall in a tropical region like ours.

"The rainwater will flow into the river and the sediment load is quite high," he told *The Star*.

He said the oil palm estates and vegetable plantations lining the middle and lower section of Sungai Selangor had also contributed to the murkiness.

However, he said there was no need to be alarmed as this was a natural phenomenon.

On Monday, Syabas warned that some three million people in the Klang Valley may expect water cuts due to the sudden turbidity of Sungai Selangor water plants in Ijok.

The murky waters had caused production to drop by 60% at the

four plants, said Syabas.

As a result, extraordinary turbidity of over 6,000 NTU (Nephelometric Turbidity Units) in the morning was recorded compared to 300 NTU on normal days.

Meanwhile, the turbidity at Kuala Badong on Sungai Selangor was at 399 NTU as of 5pm yesterday.

DID deputy director Norhisham Mohd Ghazali said the figure was

slightly elevated but it could not be considered high unless the mean figure had been derived over a period of time.

The greater the amount of total suspended solids in the water, the murkier the water would appear and the higher the measured turbidity.

The World Health Organisation recommended that the turbidity of drinking water be not more than 5 NTU, and should ideally be below 1 NTU.