

Logging polluting Sungai Rual, say villagers

LONG-STANDING ISSUE: Silt muddies river which Orang Asli depend on for water

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VILLAGERS at the Orang Asli settlement in Kampung Sungai Rual claim that logging in the vicinity has polluted Sungai Rual, which passes through the area.

The river is the community's sole source of water supply.

Sungai Rual village head Abdul Rashid Bernas said logging in the area had been a long-standing problem which had worsened recently.

He said there was a lull in activity in late 2010 until last year, but in January, it picked up momentum.

"The rainy season is making it worse. The silt from logging has muddied the river. It is disrupting our daily activities."

Ramli Pisang, 40, said many villagers were unhappy with the situation but were unable to do anything.

"We depend on the river to bathe

and do washing. Water supply to our homes is a problem because of the low pressure."

The Orang Asli, mostly from the Jahai tribe, also have to bear with wild elephants rampaging through the village and destroying their crops.

Salleh Busu, 48, claimed the logging had forced the elephants to leave their natural habitat to forage for food in the village.

He said although wildlife officers had captured some of the animals and returned them to the wild, it was not enough.

"More should be done, such as digging up drains and putting up fences to prevent the elephants from entering our village."

Kelantan Wildlife and National Parks Department director Rahmat Topani acknowledged that logging had forced the elephants to look for food elsewhere.

"We have put up electric fences around the village. We will also send more rangers to monitor the situation."

"The rainy season is making it worse."
Abdul Rashid Bernas
Sungai Rual village head



Villager **Ramli Pisang** showing the **muddy Sungai Rual** that runs through Kampung Sungai Rual, near Jeli, yesterday. Pic by Adnan Mohamad