

Racing to find other sources of water

KOTA KINABALU: The Sabah Water Department is racing against time to produce a daily supply of 13 million litres of water to meet the demand of those in Ranau.

Two treatment plants in the district that were badly affected by the June 5 earthquake have forced the department to look for alternative water sources.

Mudslides and the flow of debris following the earthquake stretch up to 500m at one of the intake points at Kampung Bambangan.

As this may take months to clear, the department is looking at linking water pipes at communal water sources, as well as harvesting rain-water and untapped springs.

District water engineer Anthony Jullah said the department was looking at supplying water to consumers using tankers, aside from rerouting pipes to enable the use of the gravity water system from communal sources.

"We have identified a source at Jalan Mamut, but we need to discuss with community leaders in the area

to seek their permission to share the gravity-fed water supply," he said.

The earthquake, which was followed by 70 aftershocks and heavy rain, caused massive mudslides in the interior areas, including those surrounding Mount Kinabalu.

Mud and debris, comprising fallen trees and boulders the size of cars, flowed down the mountain, clearing and eroding earth, trees, roads and bridges in their path at Sungai Liwagu, its tributary, Sungai Mesilau, and Sungai Kadamaian in Kota Belud.

"Clearing work will start soon at the Bambangan intake point, which was the worst hit, and Lipasu.

"It will take a month to clear some of the logs trapped in Sungai Liwagu... but it will take much longer to completely clear the river intake point," said Anthony.

In Kampung Kauluan, mountain guide Andy Majawal said the villagers had initiated a mission to identify spring water sources on higher ground to connect to pipes leading to the village.



*The **murky water of Sungai Kadamaian** near Kampung Kaung Ulu, Kota Belud. Pic by Lano Lan*

"The situation is really bad and we have to find these sources for our community.

"We are grateful for the bottled water sent our way, but that will not last long and we need to find alternative water sources."

Deputy Chief Minister and state Infrastructure Development Minister Tan Sri Joseph Pairin Kitingan said he would seek assistance from the military to remove debris before the situation worsened.

"I consider the situation critical and we need the army's help be-

cause if we do not extract these logs soon, the debris will be pushed further down when heavy rain comes," he said.

Following the mudslides that began on Monday, more than 900 villagers from 189 families have been relocated to three temporary evacuation centres as of yesterday.

State Tourism, Culture and Environment Minister Datuk Masidi Manjun said there was a need to look into expanding the evacuation centres, as the existing ones were getting crowded.