

Samples taken from bauxite mining area

Tests to be done for radioactive contamination

By ONG HAN SEAN

hansean@thestar.com.my

KUANTAN: Samples have been taken from the Sungai Pengorak area here to be tested for radioactive contamination allegedly caused by bauxite residues.

Mentri Besar Datuk Seri Adnan Yaakob said the results would be known in about a month's time.

"The Department of Environment (DoE) and the Atomic Energy Licensing Board have already collected water, earth and bauxite samples from the sites. They have been sent to Dengkil for analysis but the findings can only be established one month from now," Adnan told reporters after the state exco meeting here yesterday.

He said the DoE had reported that water samples collected from Sungai Pengorak and the nearby sea contained pollutants that exceeded acceptable standards.

Adnan also said the state government was not in denial of the issues raised but for the time being, bauxite mining operations would still be allowed to continue.

"There have been some improvements to bauxite mining activities ever since we issued strict orders.

"However, we cannot take the drastic measure of cancelling all of the mining licences outright because these activities contribute to the



Friendly banter: Adnan chatting with lorry drivers who transport bauxite at a coffee shop in Bukit Goh, Kuantan.

economy," he said.

Adnan was responding to a news report alleging that unregulated bauxite mining had released radioactive materials into the environment.

The latest report contradicted state Public Amenities and Environment Committee chairman Datuk Seri Mohd Soffi Abd Razak's earlier statement that samples from the same sites did not contain heavy metals hazardous to life forms.

Mohd Soffi said his previous statement was based on the results of a

test conducted following the "red sea" incident on May 14.

"The Environment Department took samples from Sungai Pengorak and Pantai Pengorak as well as lorry wash troughs in the area. It was sent to the Chemistry Department for analysis, which did not find any traces of heavy metals.

"The Fisheries Department also confirmed that dead fish found on the beach were actually thrown overboard by fishermen who sorted out their catch while still at sea," he said.

Ex-Felda Youth Council leader gets jail

JOHOR BARU: A former Malaysian Felda Youth Council branch chairman told the Sessions Court she was only helping her then husband to get a job after awarding the latter a contract worth RM40,000.

Khatijah Mohamad, 30, pleaded to Sessions Judge Mohamad Haldar Abdul Aziz for a lighter sentence after admitting to the offence.

She said no one had advised her that her action was against the law and she only found out about it after

being detained by the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC).

Khatijah, who was the chairman at the time, had given the contract to her former husband, Ruzaidy Ibrahim, 30, to build a fishing pond and a recreation centre at Felda Maokil.

She committed the offence at a Maybank branch in Labis on Oct 3, 2012, at around 1.20pm.

Khatijah was charged under Section 23 of the MACC Act which carries a jail term of not more than 20

years, fine up to RM10,000 or five times the contract amount or whichever is higher.

Mohamad Haldar said that her action was serious as the contract amount was quite large.

He sentenced Khatijah to seven days in jail and fined her RM200,000 in default 12 months imprisonment.

Deputy Public Prosecutor Noor Fadzlin Hamdan prosecuted while the accused was unrepresented. She did not pay the fine.