

DOE: Charge management

NST 4/4/06

■ **By Hamidah Atan
and Deborah Loh**
news@nst.com.my

PUTRAJAYA: The Selangor Department of Environment has recommended that the Bukit Tagar landfill management be charged in court for allegedly flouting Environmental Impact Assessment conditions.

According to its director Che Hasmah Ibrahim, the DOE has completed investigating the pollution in Sungai Selangor that caused smelly water to flow to homes in the Klang Valley late February.

"The investigation papers were sent to the Attorney-Gen-

eral's chambers two weeks ago," she said yesterday.

"We have asked for permission to prosecute the person responsible in the Bukit Tagar landfill management.

"We are waiting for the green light."

Such charges would be framed under Section 34A of the Environmental Quality Act 1974, she said.

The landfill, located near Batang Berjuntai, is owned and managed by KUB-Berjaya Enviro Sdn Bhd, a joint-venture between Berjaya Group Bhd and KUB Malaysia Bhd.

It began operations last year amid objections from the Selangor Government and other

environmental groups over its location near rivers.

Natural Resources and Environment Deputy Minister Datuk S. Sothinathan told Parliament last Wednesday the absence of a leachate treatment plant at the Bukit Tagar landfill had caused the Sungai Selangor to be contaminated with ammonia, which led to the stench in tap water.

However, he added, the landfill management had since built a leachate treatment plant.

Meanwhile, the director-general of the Department of Local Government, Datuk Anwar Abdul Rahman, yesterday explained why approval

was given for the landfill to commence operations even though the leachate plant was not built at that time.

He said despite being a level-four landfill, which meant that it should have been equipped with a leachate treatment plant, the management of the Bukit Tagar landfill was allowed to start operations.

"The Taman Beringin landfill was being closed, so a new place was needed to dump garbage and Bukit Tagar was identified.

"Because it was built quickly, we stored leachate temporarily in the oxidation ponds.

"It was a temporary measure until the leachate treatment plant was completed," he said.

Anwar said the ponds had adequate capacity to store the leachate until the completion of the plant.

"There are many ponds there. If it became full, then leachate could be transferred.

"We could transfer from one pond to the other. It was done with the permission of the DOE," he said.

However, he said, it was during one of these transfers that a mechanical failure occurred and caused the leachate to leak into the surrounding area.