

Four Kuantan rivers at 'very unhealthy' levels

KUALA LUMPUR: The quality of rivers in Kuantan should be looked into as four have reached a Class 5 rating.

Kuantan member of parliament Fuziah Salleh said the water quality in Sungai Riau, Sungai Mabok, Sungai Pinang and Sungai Pengorak was Class 5, which is "very unhealthy".

"Class 5 water quality in rivers is unsafe. The rivers contain alumini-

um, arsenic, mercury and manganese," she said at the parliament lobby yesterday.

Class 1 rivers are used for conservation of natural environments and water supply that is not in need of treatment.

Class 2A rivers are water suppliers that need conventional treatment. Class 2B rivers are safe for recreational use.

Class 3 rivers are water supplies, in which extensive treatment is required, while Class 4 rivers are used for irrigation.

"The Pahang Environment Department had reported that the water quality was very bad in the rivers mentioned but it was never acknowledged nor taken seriously.

"I need to stress that mercury is

highly dangerous, for example, the toxic waste that hit Japan's Minamita Bay in 1956 caused the Minamita disease that affected many, resulting in a number of deaths."

She said as the state was known as a fishing state, the rivers were an important resource for locals.

"I hope the Federal and state governments will act on this act on this issue."