



A tourist looking at the murky waters of the polluted Sungai Mas, which flows to the Batu Ferringhi beach in Penang, yesterday. Pic by Ramdzan Masiam

Sungai Mas still polluted

CRACKDOWN: 12 premises said to be causing pollution to be closed

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RIVER pollution at Sungai Mas continues to mar the popular Batu Ferringhi beachfront with black discharge and a foul odour.

The blackish murky water, flowing from Sungai Mas here, which is located between the Lone Pine Hotel and a hawker centre, has yet to be cleared up.

The *New Straits Times* revisited the river mouth yesterday, a week after NST reported about the river pollution. But, the situation has not improved despite widespread complaints.

The sewage-laced water, which emits an odour, can be seen along a hundred-metre stretch of seaside.

State Local Government Committee chairman Chow Kon Yeow told NST that the problem would be solved through dredging work by early next week.

"The Drainage and Irrigation Department has engaged a contractor to dredge the riverbed.

"The sediments deposited had caused

blockage at the river mouth," he said.

Lone Pine Hotel manager Khoo Boo Lim had said the pollution was an old issue and it worsened during the dry season.

The Department of Environment had identified illegal structures along the river as the source of pollution.

Last week, Chow said the local administration would crack down on some 12 illegal premises that had been identified as the source of pollution. He said it had decided that the 12 illegal premises would be closed within the next two months.

In February 2014, NST front-paged a report exposing the dismal condition of Sungai Batu Ferringhi, which was polluted with murky and foul-smelling water from a sewage plant 300m from the river mouth.

NST had subsequently revealed that Sungai Mas was in no better condition due to discharge from restaurants and houses along the river.

The public outcry that followed forced the state government to set up a river and marine pollution task force, headed by Chow.

The task force, comprising several local agencies, was aimed at tackling pollution in water bodies of Penang.