



Gombak spill

Palm oil goes into river after accident



BY ELIZABETH LOOI

GOMBAK: A palm oil tanker, which overturned at the 31st kilometre of the Kuala Lumpur-Karak Highway on Friday, spilled its load into Sungai Gombak, threatening to disrupt water supply to

thousands of residents for the second time in seven months.

However, Selangor Infrastructure and Public Utilities Committee chairman Datuk Abdul Fatah Iskandar assured residents in the Gombak district

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Workers carrying out mopping-up work after the pristine waters of the Sungai Gombak got contaminated again following yet another accident involving a tanker carrying palm oil. — STARpix by ART CHEN

Fatah: River likely to be cleaned by today

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that they would continue to get their water supply for the time being.

Last September, about 30,000 Gombak residents had their water supply cut off for three days after two private companies' palm oil tankers collided just 6km away on the same highway and contaminated the river.

In Friday's incident, the pollution forced Puncak Niaga (M) Sdn Bhd to close its treatment plant, located 5km downstream, at 9.15pm.

"The treatment plant is able to supply water for more than a day and Syabas (Syarikat Bekalan Air Selangor Sdn Bhd) has also gotten ready 22 water tankers and 60 stationary water tanks," Abdul Fatah told a press conference after visiting the treatment plant yesterday.

Puncak Niaga's workers were at the scene putting up booms to trap some 9,000 litres of palm oil that had flowed into the drinking water source.

Abdul Fatah also said that they were supplying water to residents in Sungai Selangor at the moment.

He said it is believed that the tanker, owned by the Kelantan Development Board (Kesedar), fell on its side after it was hit by another lorry.

Both vehicles are now at the Selayang police station.

Abdul Fatah said he hoped residents would not have to suffer again as Syabas and Puncak Niaga had acted promptly.

Contractor workers have been cleaning the river since Friday night and they hope to complete the cleaning by today so that water supply would not be disrupted.

Abdul Fatah said 13 areas would be affected if the cleaning could not be completed tonight and these areas include the International Islamic University, Hospital Jabatan Orang Asli Batu 12 and British Malaysian Institute.

"However, Puspel (Syabas' customer ser-

vice hotline) did not receive any complaints from the residents so far," he said.

He also said residents at nearby motivational camps and resorts at the Jungle Lodge had been told not to bathe or swim in the river.

Selangor Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Dr Mohd Khir Toyo, who is awaiting a full report on the incident, said appropriate action would be taken against those responsible.

He said the party responsible for causing the oil spill on the highway should have cleared the area and prevented the oil from flowing into the river.

"This is not the first time. I believe that mandatory imprisonment is the only way to discipline the culprits so that they will be careful," he told reporters after accompanying the Sultan of Selangor Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah to a cheque presentation ceremony in Shah Alam yesterday.

Selangor Environment Department director Che Asmah Ibrahim said there was no chemical contamination in the water.

"The workers are cleaning the river manually without using any chemical.

"The palm oil is biodegradable and it floats on the surface of the water so it is easy to see it," she said.

Syabas operations executive director V. Subramaniam said no contaminated water had flowed into the treatment plant.

"Only about one-third of the palm oil from the tank flowed into the river but we immediately closed the treatment plant," he said.

This is the third incident this year threatening the people's river water source.

Two weeks ago, the Sungai Semenyih water treatment plant near Kajang had to be closed due to high ammonia levels in the raw water, affecting thousands of households in Selangor.

Last month, Sungai Selangor was also contaminated with high levels of ammonia and left thousands of residents fuming after foul-smelling water flowed from their taps.

Palm oil spills into Sg Gombak



Areas affected if cleaning is not completed by tomorrow

- ▶ Batu 12 Gombak
- ▶ Hospital Jabatan Orang Asli Batu 12, Gombak
- ▶ International Islamic Universiti Malaysia
- ▶ Areas surrounding Batu 6 till Batu 10, Jln Gombak
- ▶ Kampung Sungai Cincin
- ▶ Kampung Sungai Pusu
- ▶ SM Al Amin
- ▶ SM Sungai Pusu
- ▶ Kampung Sungai Salak, Bukit Lela
- ▶ British Malaysian Institute
- ▶ JPJ Batu 11, Jalan Gombak
- ▶ Karak highway toll
- ▶ SM Teknik Gombak

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