

PRIME NEWS



Penang Island City Council workers clearing garbage at Air Terjun Bayan Lepas yesterday. Pic by Shahnaz Fazlie Shahrizal

Penang waterfall still in poor state

BAD ATTITUDE:

Foreign workers habitually dump rubbish in the area, say locals

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ANOTHER clean-up operation got under way at the Air Terjun Bayan Lepas, popularly known as "Air Terjun Pak Lah", yesterday following news reports that the waterfall was in a poor state.

Fifteen Penang Island City Council workers were sent to clear up rubbish around the waterfall in the morning.

The workers said they were scheduled to clean the area every week.

A worker, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said despite

their best efforts to clean up the area, the area was always littered with rubbish because the residents of a neighbouring high-rise building were in the habit of dumping their rubbish there.

"Two days ago, we cleaned up the area. Today, we find a huge pile of rubbish," he lamented.

It was reported that the waterfall had become polluted with rubbish and the water turned murky.

State Local Government Traffic Management and Flood Mitigation Committee chairman Chow Kon Yeow blamed the residents for the state of the waterfall.

Laksamana Md Mat Noor, 54, who resides near the waterfall, said its condition started deteriorating after several high-rise buildings were built in recent years.

"First, the water turned murky during the construction of a high-rise building on a hill just beside the waterfall. Soon after its completion, the occupants started throwing their rubbish down the hill. Despite attempts to educate the residents, who were mostly foreign workers, they continue to

throw rubbish down the hill indiscriminately," he said.

"The waterfall cannot be rehabilitated. Its water is murky and contaminated. Moreover, there is now another high-rise building coming up on the other side of the waterfall, which will only worsen its condition further," he said.

Resident Mohd Shariff Sudin, 67, said the bad habits of high-rise building occupants and developers had made the waterfall an eyesore.

"These days, no one comes here anymore because the place stinks because of the rubbish. I don't allow my grandchildren to bathe in the water," he said.

State Environment Committee chairman Phee Boon Poh said water was murky because of the diversion of water resources from illegal farming activities nearby.

"Climate change and the Super El Nino have taken a heavy toll on the waterfall," he added.

Phee said the state secretary's special committee would begin rehabilitating the waterfall and upgrading the natural park.