

16 OPEN LANDFILLS DUMPED

4
Kedah



1
Perak

2
Pahang

2
Selangor

1
Negri Sembilan

2
Malacca

4
Johor

All these 16 are located near water sources and can create health problems. An action plan will be formulated to be carried out effectively and without delay.

Najib

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PUTRAJAYA: Sixteen open landfills located near water intake points that pose a threat to the safety and health of the people will be closed immediately.

The Cabinet Committee on Solid Waste and Environment Management, which met for the first time yesterday, decided that the closure of these dumpsites be carried out using safe and acceptable methods.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak, who is the Cabinet committee chairman, said after the meeting that four of the landfills were in Kedah, another four in Johor, two each in Selangor, Malacca and Pahang, and one each in Negri Sembilan and Perak.

Expressing his concern over pollution caused by leachate from open landfills and its effects on the health of the people, Najib said the Government would set aside whatever financial allocations needed to overcome the problem.

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Najib: No compromise on health

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"All the 16 (landfills) are located near water sources and can create health problems. An action plan will be formulated to be carried out effectively and without delay."

Najib added that the committee also decided that immediate action be taken against another 33 open dump sites which had been closed, but still posed a health threat.

Similar action would be taken in stages against remaining dumping grounds in the country which did not reach the level of sanitary landfills, he said.

"The Government is serious about the pollution problem. We are not denying the problem, that is why we are taking immediate action and will set aside whatever financial allocations required until we can find a rubbish disposal system which is effective.

"This is in line with our vision to be a developed nation. The system must be working and have adequate quality. Whatever is required, we will give. There will be no compromise as far as the safety and health of Malaysians are concerned."

Najib also said the committee decided that the Bukit Tagar landfill continue its operation due to the suitability of its location.

The landfill management, KUB-Berjaya Environ Sdn Bhd, has denied that it was the cause of the high ammonia content in the Sungai Selangor, which resulted in smelly tap water in various parts of the Klang Valley on Feb 26.

Natural Resources and Environment Minister Datuk Seri Azmi Khalid had said the management informed him about a leak due to a valve malfunction which caused 10 cubic metres of waste water to flow into a tributary of Sungai



Overflowing landfills like this one in Kuala Perlis threaten and pollute adjacent rivers.

Selangor.

Asked whether legal action would be taken against the management for allegedly violating the Environmental Impact Report conditions, Najib said it was up to the Attorney-General.

"The investigation papers have been submitted and is being processed by the A-G's Chambers. It will decide

whether the problem occurred due to criminal liability or negligence."

Najib also said the committee had received proposals from Johor, Selangor and Negri Sembilan State Governments that the number of sanitary landfills be increased.

"The technical committee formed under the Housing and Local Government Min-

istry will look into the proposals and make recommendations."

The technical committee would also provide a detailed report on its assessment into the Refuse-Derived Fuel (RDF) plant in Semenyih, which is in its initial stage of operation.

"The assessment will be carried out two months from now, and we will decide later

whether it can be expanded to other States or areas."

The technical committee had also received proposals on new technologies that are able to eliminate solid waste effectively.

"The committee will look into these technologies and proposals before making its recommendations to the Cabinet committee. We will table the

papers at the Cabinet meeting."

Another committee under the Economic Planning Unit of the Prime Minister's Department and the Ministry of Finance had been formed to carry out assessment on business and financial models to be considered by the Cabinet.

Najib said the Cabinet committee would meet again in July.