

'Take action against illegal factories'

SELANGOR WATER

CRISIS: Only state govt has jurisdiction, not ministry or DoE, says Wan Junaidi

HASHINI KAVISHTRI KANNAN

PUTRAJAYA

hashini@nst.com.my

THE Selangor government should conduct stronger enforcement and frequent monitoring on the setting up of illegal factories.

Natural Resources and Environment Minister Datuk Seri Dr Wan Junaidi Tuanku Jaafar said local councils should monitor and take action against illegal factories, which were said to mushroom in industrial areas.

He was referring to an illegal factory along Mile 22 1/4, Jalan Sungai Lalang in Semenyih, which was identified as the culprit behind water disruptions in the Klang Valley over the past few weeks.

The factory was said to have been masquerading as a building materials factory. However, an investigation revealed that it was actually recycling engine oil and repackag-

ing it for sale.

"They (the Selangor government) should have checked and not allowed such factories to be operational."

Wan Junaidi said the Department of Environment (DoE) had conducted checks on all 261 licensed premises in Sungai Semenyih since the outbreak of the problem.

"Our checks revealed that the licensed factories complied with the law. The problematic ones are the illegal factories.

"The ministry can't take action against them, but the state government has the power to shut down the factories."

Wan Junaidi said the ministry had started an investigation under the Environmental Quality Act 1974 on waste disposal, which carries a minimum fine of RM500,000 and a jail sentence.

"DoE is finalising the investigation papers, which will be submitted to the Attorney-General to determine the charges to be levelled against the perpetrators."

Wan Junaidi said there should be no finger-pointing between government agencies as they should focus on finding a solution to the state's water crisis.

He was responding to state Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Azmin Ali's claim that the DoE was slow in taking action against the illegal factory.

Azmin claimed that the department took the water samples 10 hours late.

Wan Junaidi said the DoE still carried out thorough checks despite the delay and had already determined the culprit behind the contamination.

"The contamination was caused by an illegal factory operating on a river reserve in Selangor. This matter is not under the ministry or DoE's jurisdiction.

"I hope all parties would stop pointing fingers for the sake of the Selangor people."

The ministry was willing to work with the state government to find an amicable solution to the water pollution crisis, he added.

On a separate issue, Wan Junaidi said RM3 million was allocated for short-term mitigation plans for five west coast states to brace the high tide phenomenon, which was expected to occur next month.

He said an additional RM466 million was needed for long-term measures to manage the phenomenon.



**Datuk Seri Dr
Wan Junaidi
Tuanku
Jaafar**