

No mercy for water polluters

Negri to revoke licences of traders caught contaminating raw water

By **SARBAN SINGH**
sarbans@thestar.com.my

SEREMBAN: The state government has threatened to revoke immediately the operating licences of businesses caught polluting raw water resources, says Menti Besar Datuk Seri Aminuddin Harun.

Drawing upon the lessons from several recent episodes of river contamination in the Klang Valley which disrupted supply of treated water to tens of thousands of consumers, he said the Negri Sembilan government had decided to issue a warning to would-be-polluters that the state was no longer in a mood to compromise.

"There will be no more talking or discussing things because we have

been getting many complaints of rivers being polluted here.

"If you are found to have contaminated a drinking water source we will take drastic measures as you are not only inconveniencing the state government and the public but the very act can be a potential health hazard," said Aminuddin here yesterday.

As recent as last month, some 1.2 million households in Kuala Lumpur, Petaling, Klang, Shah Alam, Kuala Selangor, Hulu Selangor, Gombak and Kuala Langat were without water after traces of diesel were found in Sungai Selangor.

Aminuddin urged the public to notify authorities if they come across any party releasing untreated

effluent into the environment.

"I have seen rivers clogged with garbage and other waste, but thankfully, these did not cause the river to be polluted.

"I have told all enforcement agencies, including local councils, the Environment Department and the state water regulatory body (BKSANS) to be strict in their enforcement," he said after closing a seminar on licensing needs for companies drawing raw water from the state, be it from the sea, rivers or ground water.

Aminuddin said all industries, including those involved in sand mining, should take heed of his warning.

"We have received many new applications for sand mining but

have not approved them as we are worried these may lead to river pollution," he said.

Separately, Aminuddin said the state expected to receive RM36mil from companies drawing raw water here this year.

"Last year, we got some RM34mil and this was about 8% of the state's revenue.

"We also hope to increase the number of staff in BKSANS, which currently stands at 23, so we can carry out more enforcement and ensure all those drawing raw water pay their dues," he said.

He added that the biggest consumers of raw water, including sea water, here were Syarikat Air Negri Sembilan, Jimah Power Plant, NS Cement and Cypark Resources.