



Open burning at the illegal dumpsite next to Silk Highway in Balakong. — Filepic



Repair works at Taman Lagenda Mas, Jalan Mas 11, in Cheras due to a landslide. - Filepic

# Heap of issues weighs Kajang down

Illegal dumpsites and infrastructure flaws create havoc for residents and local council

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Yearender



THE second quarter of 2019 saw a change of leadership at the Kajang Municipal Council (MPK).

Former Hulu Langat district officer Datuk Rosli Othman was sworn in as the new MPK president, replacing Mohd Sayuthi Bakar, who was transferred to Petaling Jaya City Council to take up the mayor's post.

Rosli said he would practise an open-door policy in terms of leadership style and promised to listen to all sides before making a decision.

Millions of consumers in the Klang Valley had to suffer water disruptions as a result of pollution or contamination by irresponsible parties in or near water sources.

In June, odour pollution was detected in the raw water source in Sungai Semenyih.

The following month, a similar pollution was detected, this time in Sungai Selangor.

A few days after that, a diesel spill into Sungai Selangor resulted in the shutdown of Sungai Selangor Phases 1, 2 and 3 and the Rantau Panjang water treatment plants that led to unscheduled water cuts.

In February, a toxic chemical spill saw the authorities sealing off an area around the affected zone, resulting in a temporary shutdown of four factories and workers vacating the area.

However, the Selangor Disaster Management Unit assured that containment measures prevented the toxic spill from entering Sungai Semenyih.

The National Water Services Commission (SPAN) said tougher penalties and enforcement efforts must be in place to preserve the quality and cleanliness of the water supply.

It was also reported that the government was drafting new legislation to replace the Environment Quality Act 1974 to mete out harsher punishment on those who commit environmental offences.

Meanwhile, illegal rubbish dumping resulted in a host of problems, with the authorities moving in to crack down on the parties responsible for those acts.

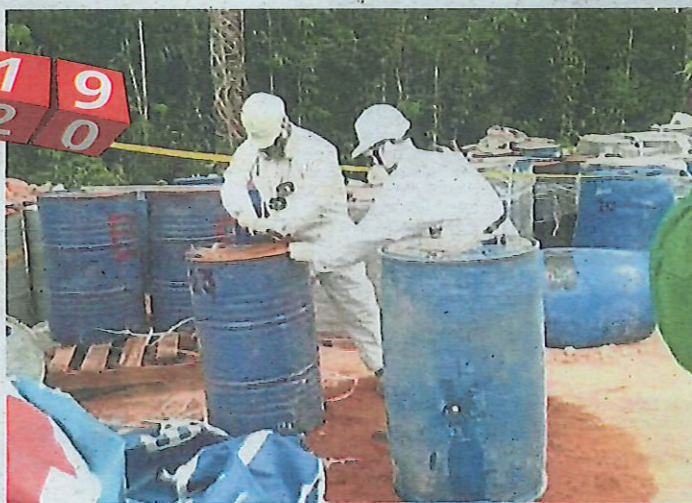
Open burning at one such site off the Silk Highway resulted in areas such as Bandar Sungai Long, Bandar Mahkota Cheras, Taman Rakan and Bandar Kajang being shrouded in haze.

It took firemen about a week to put out the fire, as the site's steep slope location posed a challenge to firefighting efforts.

Selangor environment, green technology and consumer affairs committee chairman Hee Loy Sian, who is also Kajang assemblyman, said the Department of Environment (DOE) would haul to court the landowners of the site where the fire took place.

The Hulu Langat Land Office also said that it would issue a notice to the landowners to clear the site and fine them for misusing the land as an illegal dumpsite.

The land would be confiscated if the own-



Toxic waste cleanup in the Kampung Sungai Lalang industrial area by Kualiti Alam, a waste management company appointed by the National Disaster Management Agency. — Filepic



Rosli (sixth from left) with councillors and assemblymen for the Kajang area. — Filepic

ers failed to clear the land within the stipulated time.

Balakong assemblyman Wong Siew Ki created a buzz on social media with her bold move to return a truckload of rubbish back to the source factory.

She said the company was caught on CCTV illegally dumping the rubbish.

After verifying the information with MPKJ, the waste was returned to the source. The factory was also slapped with a RM1,000 fine for littering.

Wong said she would work together with the council and state executive councillors to propose heavier punishments on litterbugs in local council by-laws.

"We will keep fighting against litterbugs, especially those illegally dumping rubbish in industrial areas.

"I will have some projects next year to handle this issue, such as landscape initia-

tives for dumping hotspots," she said.

MPKJ said the council regularly took enforcement action against landowners and lorry drivers that disposed of waste at illegal dumpsites around the municipality.

In addition, residents of two neighbourhoods had to deal with infrastructure issues that affected the stability of their homes.

Those staying in four blocks of townhouses in Taman Lagenda Mas, Cheras, had to move out due to a landslide.

It was believed that heavy rain caused the slope to give way.

A mandatory evacuation notice was issued after the townhouses were declared unsafe.

The repairs for slope stabilisation are expected to be completed by April next year.

Residents were given compensation and have since moved out.

Over in Bandar Damai Perdana 2, Cheras, residents complained of cracks that

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Wong showing proof of illegal dumping from the CCTV footage in Jalan KPB12 in Balakong, Selangor. — Filepic

appeared in several houses. They blamed rock blasting activities at two project sites, a housing development in Alam Damai and the tunnel construction for the Langat 2 water treatment plant project in Taman Desa Cheras.

The issue even saw Kuala Lumpur mayor Datuk Nor Hisham Ahmad Dahlan visiting the site, as the projects involved were located in Kuala Lumpur although the residents lived at the Selangor border.

The residents are awaiting a report from the Malaysian Public Works Institute (Ikram) to determine who is responsible for the cracks that have appeared in about 25 houses.

"Based on their two-month inspection, Ikram said there were no problems with the rock blasting activities at the two project sites.

"So both projects did not cause the cracks in the homes," said Wong, adding that she asked Ikram for a report on all rock blasting works at that area throughout this year.

Hulu Langat district also recorded the second highest number of dengue cases this year.

The hotspots were identified in Kajang, Sungai Ramal, Balakong, Dusun Tua and Semenyih.