

KERATAN AKHBAR

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Act now to stop illegal dumping, says Santiago

GEORGE TOWN: The National Water Services Commission (SPAN) has called on the Kedah government to take action against those who indiscriminately dump waste near rivers as it is a serious matter.

Its chairman Charles Santiago said he was shocked to see the ground in Kampung Belida filled with electronic parts, plastic and industrial wastes.

"There is a danger that the area may be contaminated with heavy metals.

"It is a disaster waiting to happen," he said during a site inspection with officers from the Kedah Department of Environment (DOE) and Solid Waste and Public Cleansing Management Corporation (SWCorp) on Tuesday.

Santiago said there should be no compromise from the authorities in seizing and sealing off the land.

"No more such activities should go on. The authorities must come down hard on the culprits," he said.

Santiago said the Kedah government and Federal Government should declare Sungai Muda as a "strategic river" following the discovery of the illegal dump site next to the river.

"This problem has become a security issue. We have to make sure that the water is protected and that no one should dump illegal waste near or into the river," he said.

Environmental NGO Sahabat Alam Malaysia (SAM) said the water quality in Kampung Belida must be checked immediately.

Its honorary secretary S.

Mageswari said it was vital to ensure good water quality for domestic use and also for irrigation purposes.

"We are extremely concerned over the recent spate of waste dumping," she said, adding that e-waste has an adverse impact on the environment and public health.

In Malaysia, e-wastes are categorised as scheduled wastes under the code SW 110, First Schedule, Environmental Quality (Scheduled Wastes) Regulations 2005.

The e-wastes are also listed as code A1180 and code A2010 under Annex VIII, List A of the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal 1989.

"As Malaysia is one of the Parties to the Basel Convention, the import and export of such wastes must follow the procedures of the Convention.

"There has been an increase in illegal recycling and dumping of both plastic and e-wastes in Malaysia, which are causing harm to the environment and public health.

"This raises concern of the law enforcement and surveillance from the relevant authorities. Communities are now more vigilant in highlighting illegal dumping," she said.

Mageswari said the dumping in Kampung Belida, just a few metres away from Sungai Muda, a major water source for Kedah and Penang, was an irresponsible act and the perpetrators must be heavily penalised.