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Rubbish build-up a potential threat to environment

BY ELAN PERUMAL and STUART MICHAEL

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Illegal dumping at landfill near Sg Semenyih a potential threat to envi...



A NEW landfill for bulk waste, run by the Kajang Municipal Council (MPKj) near Sungai Semenyih, is fast turning into an illegal dumpsite for domestic and industrial wastes.

Despite the "Tapak Pelupusan Sampah Pukal" sign in the area declaring it a disposal site for bulk waste, *StarMetro's* investigation revealed that the site had become a convenient spot for waste contractors to dump all types of garbage.

Located on a hill about 400m from Sungai Semenyih, the landfill was opened by MPKj several months ago to replace a former landfill that was located near Sungai Kundor.

Sungai Kundor is a tributary of Sungai Semenyih.

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StarMetro noticed numerous lorries, loaded with rubbish, making their way to the dumpsite but no MPKj enforcement officers were there to inspect or stop waste contractors from dumping their load.

Waste water was seen dripping from the lorries and flowing down the road leading to the dumpsite.



The landfill takes 16.19ha and household waste is seen here. — Photos: RI CKY LAI and IZZRAFIQ ALI AS/The Star.

An average of 20 trucks were seen moving in and out of the site every half an hour. The site is also opened during the weekends.

Further checks revealed that the area was filled with both domestic and industrial wastes including construction materials.

A pond filled with water, believed to be leachate released from the rubbish, was also spotted at the dumpsite.

Residents are pointing fingers at MPKj for failing to ensure that only bulk waste is dumped at the location.

They also question the council's decision to operate a landfill close to Sungai Semenyih, which has become the subject of controversy in repeated incidents of water contamination caused by illegal dumping of industrial waste there.

Sixty-year-old villager Zulkifli Abdullah from Kampung Sungai Lalang said the residents there were unhappy over the council's move to operate a new landfill in the area.



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The former MPKj bulk waste site in Semenyih still has rubbish scattered everywhere despite it being closed down. There is also foul smell at the site where this dumpsite operated since 2012 and was closed down early this year.

MPKj, he said, had failed to take into consideration the need to preserve the greenery around the river.

“MPKj should do everything possible to stop any form of activities that can lead to pollution of the river, but it is sad that the council itself is operating a dumpsite in the area,” he said.

Halimah Tarmizi, 56, from Kampung Pasir, said it was clear the council was only interested in making money out of the landfill.

She said the residents had earlier expressed dissatisfaction over the operations of the former dumpsite which had been closed after the new one was opened.

“It used to produce strong stench and attract flies because the council allowed contractors to dump all types of garbage in the area,” she said.



The entrance to the MPKj landfill site in Semenyih.

StarMetro’s visit to the former dumpsite revealed that the area, although had been excavated, released a foul smell believed to be caused by gas released from the waste buried there.

Global Environment Centre (GCE) river care coordinator Dr Kalithasan Kailasam, who visited the current site following a public tip-off, said it was shocking to find domestic and industrial wastes at the dumpsite.

waste but it seemed that the council had violated its own rules and regulation.

“I do not understand how this is happening at a site operated by the local authority, and it seems that there is no control over what should be allowed for disposal at the site,” said the river expert.

Dr Kalithasan feared that the landfill might cause contamination of Sungai Semenyih due to presence of domestic and industrial wastes.

“Furthermore, the landfill is situated on a hill and the river is on the slope,” he said.

Dr Kalithasan said leachate could enter the river or flow into it following a downpour.



An average of 20 lorries going in and out of the site every half an hour.

“This is definitely not a healthy situation and I wonder if an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) report had been obtained by the operator.

“It is important for the operator to comply with the various environmental regulations as stipulated by the Department of Environment (DOE),” he said.

MPKj president Mohd Sayuthi Bakar said the council had not done anything wrong by operating the landfill as it was strictly for disposal of construction waste.

“We do not allow the disposal of domestic or industrial waste here,” he said, adding that the council had adhered to various environmental regulations.

A Selangor DOE officer, who wished to remain anonymous, said the council had not obtained any EIA report for the landfill.

“The landfill is not on our list and I believe it is under the purview of the local authority,” he said.

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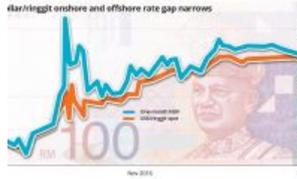
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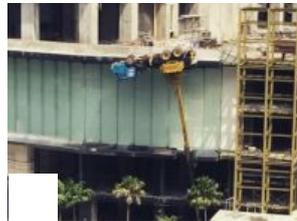


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