

Tuesday December 5, 2006

Sewage causing bulk of river pollution



Rosnani: 'At the moment, we do not have a good system to treat such sewage'

NILAI: Sewage is the main cause of river pollution in the country and the public will have to live with it for about 30 years before the problem can be resolved, said Department of Environment (DOE) director-general Datuk Rosnani Ibrahim. She said two-thirds of rivers nationwide were polluted by sewage from households and business premises.

"In fact, water discharged from factories is not as serious a problem compared with untreated household sewage dumped directly into the main streams. "This would become very serious in the near future because at the moment, we do not have a good system to treat such sewage," she said after presenting a paper, "Issues and Challenges in Enforcing Environmental Laws and Regulations" at the Environmental Governance Symposium here yesterday.

Deputy Environment and Natural Resources Minister Datuk S. Sothinathan opened the symposium at the National Audit Academy. Rosnani said the sewage treatment system presently used by households such as septic tanks and oxidation ponds employed outdated technology. She said that although the Government was overhauling the country's sewage systems, it would take a long time to produce results.

Of the 146 rivers identified nationwide, less than half were clean, while 15 were severely polluted and nine were categorised as dead, she said. In another development, the National Audit Department will be expanding work to cover environment management programmes and projects carried out by the public sector.

Auditor-General Tan Sri Ambrin Buang said the continual decline of the environment has made environmental auditing necessary.