



Friday September 5, 2008

Dispose clinical waste in proper manner

THE Consumers Association of Penang (CAP) is disturbed at the findings in the Auditor General's Report 2007 on the appalling methods used to dispose of clinical waste at hospitals and clinics.

Clinical waste can be described as any waste which consists wholly or partly of human or animal tissue, blood or other bodily fluids and excretions. It can also include drugs or other pharmaceutical products, swabs or dressings, and syringes, needles or other sharp instruments.

Clinical waste is regarded as potentially hazardous to any person coming into contact with it, unless it is suitably treated.

Among the findings revealed in the AG's report were of clinical waste contained and dumped in drums labelled 'domestic waste' –taken for disposal from hospital grounds using ambulances, passenger vans and commercial vehicles –and such waste being handled by ordinary hospital personnel rather than trained staff.

In addition, needles and other sharp objects were not separated from the main waste pile nor disposed of using "sharp" containers, as is the requirement.

At one public hospital, it was found that the designated yellow drums used for collecting clinical waste were badly maintained and almost never washed. On the rare occasion that they were cleaned, wrong methods were employed.

To make matters worse, the waste water was allowed to flow into common public drains without first being treated.

Irregularities were also detected in the awarding of concession contracts for the disposal of clinical waste. Among the culprits identified were the state-of-the-art hospitals in Putrajaya and Selayang, as well as the National Blood Bank.

CAP calls on the Health Ministry and the Natural Resources and Environment Ministry to shed some light on why clinical waste is still being handled and disposed of in a manner contrary to regulations, when the problem has already been recognised for several years now.

In addition, CAP calls on the Government to inform the public on the legal action that will be taken against offenders in the affected hospitals and health establishments throughout the country who have flouted the law with respect to the handling of potentially hazardous clinical waste.

S.M. MOHAMED IDRIS, President, Consumers Association of Penang.



Saturday September 6, 2008

More delays in opening of SMART Tunnel

By FAZLEENA AZIZ

UNFINISHED upgrading work at Sungei Kerayong is causing the SMART Tunnel to be closed longer to traffic during and after a storm.

Currently, the upgrading work at Sungei Kerayong covers 1.8km and the progress level is only at 34%. When completed, the river is able to siphon stormwater from the city. The tunnel was closed since Thursday for stormwater diversion.

According to SMART Tunnel general manager Mohd Fuad Kamal Ariffin, the stormwater in the tunnel could not be discharged into the river.



Long wait: The unfinished upgrading work at Sungai Kerayong is the main reason for the delay in the opening of the tunnel.

"The river is at a maximum level because of the heavy rain. "The water could not be pumped out to the storage pond in Taman Desa, which releases the water to the river," said Fuad.

"So, the tunnel cannot be opened early and if there is another storm, we can only take in a limited volume of water. "Based on the Auditor-General's report, the upgrading work should have been completed the same time as the tunnel.

"The contractor was supposed to have finished the project in January this year. "But due to the late commencement of the work, the Drainage and Irrigation Department (JPS) has to use a temporary pump at the outfall of the river to overcome problems.

"In the mean time, motorists have to find alternative routes until we reopen," he said. Fuad said so far the SMART Tunnel had diverted water 44 times to avoid floods in Kuala Lumpur.

The SMART Tunnel deals with flash floods caused by river overflowing. And it caters for the upper Sungei Klang and Sungei Ampang catchments, diverting 90% of the volume of floodwaters from Sungei Klang.

The tunnel operates at Kampung Berembang in Ampang to ensure that the Sungei Klang water level is maintained below the danger level so that the river does not overflow in the city centre, especially Jalan Tun Perak and Masjid India areas.

The SMART Tunnel has an average of 30,000 cars using the motorway daily.



Wednesday September 10, 2008

Guan Eng: AG's Report Also Uncovered Land Scams

By BERNARD SEE and ABIGAIL TAN

GEORGE TOWN: Ten land scam cases involving more than RM35mil were highlighted in the Auditor-General's 2007 report for Penang, said Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng.

"I have been harping on the land scam issue since I took office and now even the Auditor-General has supported my findings.

"I now have a Herculean task to clean up the land scams, I hope that my predecessor Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon and former state executive councillor in charge of land, Datuk Seri Abdul Rashid Abdullah, will come forward to help me," he said at a press conference on Wednesday.

Lim said he received the Auditor-General's report on Aug 29 which highlighted 10 land scam cases using forged documents.

"One case involved a plot of land worth RM32.8mil after the ownership of a church land was changed to that an individual through a forged court order. I want to know how such a thing could have occurred," he added.

Most of the cases are presently being investigated by the police.



Sunday September 14, 2008

Perdana Saga: Workshop Operators Claim Trial

By M. AZHAR ARIF

KUALA TERENGGANU: Two workshop operators were charged with submitting false claims to the Terengganu government on supplies of gear boxes for Proton Perdana V6 Executives used by state executive councillors.

Tor Kok Siong, 52, and Choong Yuen Sang, 48, claimed trial in two separate Sessions Courts here to five charges involving RM91,350.64. They are alleged to have committed the offences between November 2006 and June 2008.

Tor, an operator from Jalan Bukit Kechil here, faces four charges of making false claims amounting to RM72,230.73. Choong, from Chendering here, faces one charge of submitting a false claim for RM19,119.91.

They allegedly submitted the claims on five occasions to officers from the State Secretary's office.

The two face a jail term up of to 20 years and a fine of not less than five times the amount of gratification or RM100,000, whichever is higher, if they are convicted under Section 11(c) of the Anti-Corruption Act 1997.

The prosecution was carried out by ACA's Mohd Sophian Zakaria while Tor and Choong were represented by Osman Bakar and Siti Saleha Mohd Tahir, respectively.

Sessions judge M. Bakri Abd Majid granted bail of RM5,000 for each charge faced by Tor while judge Mohammad Khalid Ab. Karim set bail at RM7,000 with one surety for Choong. The courts fixed Dec 23 and Dec 24 for hearing of Tor's case and Dec 14 for Chong's.



Monday September 15, 2008

December date for RM23.3m money laundering case

By CHRISTINA KOH

IPOH: The Sessions Court has fixed Dec 15 to re-mention two money laundering cases involving two directors of G-Gold Gallery Sdn Bhd.

Judge Hashim Hamzah fixed the date in the case of Benny Khoo Ban Sean, 62, who had claimed trial to 94 charges involving RM23.3mil between March 2005 and April 2006 here.

In another Sessions court, judge Rasidah Chik fixed Dec 15 to mention the case of director Daniel Choong Yew Chee, 40, who also pleaded not guilty to 94 counts of money laundering involving RM23.3mil.

In both courts, lawyer P. Kumaran asked for the cases to be postponed after noting the absence of DPP Budiman Lufti Mohamed and that fellow counsel Gurbachan Singh was making representations to review the charges.

On June 19, Khoo had claimed trial to the charges here while on June 23, Choong also denied committing the offences.

Both men were separately charged with transferring the proceeds of unlawful activities from the company's bank account to their own.

Each was similarly charged with transferring such money from the company's bank account to Genius Talent Sdn Bhd, Lin Shoon Jewellers Sdn Bhd, P.S. Bullion Sdn Bhd and Top Gold Resources Sdn Bhd during that time.

Khoo was also said to have transferred part of the RM23.3mil to the hire purchase accounts of two cars and Choong's account while cash was apparently given to one J. Subramaniam.

Choong was alleged to have transferred part of the RM23.3mil to the hire purchase accounts of two cars and handed cash to Subramaniam.

The two directors face a maximum RM5mil fine or five years' jail, or both, for each charge under Section 4(1) of the Anti-Money Laundering and Anti-Terrorism Financing Act 2001.

Both men are out on RM1mil bail each with one surety.