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Agency on lookout for 'black river' seen by Dr M

KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. - The sight of a river which looked black from the sky has renewed concern about the deteriorating quality of river water.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad spotted the unidentified river somewhere near Sepang today as he was flown back from the South African International Dialogue held in Zimbabwe.

Science, Technology and Environment Minister Datuk Law Hieng Ding who revealed this to the press today said there is a strong likelihood that the river is heavily polluted.

"I have directed the Department Of Environment to investigate," he said.

Law earlier said State governments will be asked to clean up one river every year as part of a national scheme to reduce pollution in rivers.

He said the matter will be brought up at the next meeting of State environment ministers which will be held in Langkawi on Oct 21 in conjunction with the National Environment Week.

Law said the river rescue plan will probably become reality under the next five-year plan, the Eighth Malaysia Plan which is to begin in 2001.

He also said the DOE will give inputs and assist the State Governments in the matter.

Asked who will bear the clean-up cost, he said this would be looked into.

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