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## Selangor River pollution blamed on peat soil

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SHAH ALAM, Mon. - The Selangor Government has blamed pollution of the Sepang River on peat soil conditions.

Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Abu Hassan Omar said the Sepang River which runs into Negri Sembilan flows through peat soils.

"We want to know which particular stretch that the Prime Minister (Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad) spotted is highly polluted so that necessary steps can be taken to rectify the problem," he told reporters when asked to comment on yesterday's New Sunday Times front page story headlined "The black river of Sepang identified".

Abu Hassan said the matter was brought to his attention yesterday while he was at the Sepang F1 Circuit.

"I have directed the Department of Environment and State Unity and Community Development and Science, Technology and Environment Committee chairman Datuk Ch'ng Toh Eng to look into the problem and submit a report," he added.

He said the State Government was aware that some areas along the river were highly polluted due to soil conditions.

Science, Technology and Environment Minister Datuk Law Hieng Ding is expected to submit a report to the Cabinet on the DOE finding.

The report is to be submitted following Dr Mahathir's comment at last week's Cabinet meeting that he had seen a "blackish" river during his return flight from Zimbabwe.

In Seremban, Menteri Besar Tan Sri Mohamad Isa Abdul Samad said he was confident that the Negri Sembilan side of the river was much cleaner now with the absence of pig farming in the State.

He said the Rumbai River, which is the main tributary of the Sepang River from Negri Sembilan, had also been cleared of pig waste by the State Department of Irrigation and Drainage.

He said the department had spent about RM1 million to clean up the Rumbai, together with the Chua, Nipah and other rivers at Bukit Pelandok following the pig culling operation in the area after the viral encephalitis outbreak killed a number of people there, mainly pig farmers and their workers.

Health experts discovered a new virus known as the Nipah virus named after the area where the outbreak took place as the likely cause of the disease.

Mohamad Isa said this when asked to comment on Dr Mahathir's comment.

Department Of Environment director-general Rosnani Ibarahim had later identified the Sepang and other rivers running through the two States as being badly polluted.

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