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Stricter environment laws next year

KUALA LUMPUR: Enforcement and prosecution mechanisms in the management of the environment and Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) will be made more stringent when the Environment Quality Act (Amendment) 2012 comes into force, beginning Jan 2.

Natural Resources and Environment Minister Datuk Seri Douglas Unggah Embas said the amendment, gazetted on Aug 16, provided a more relevant law to tackle such issues.

He said the amendment also empowers the Department of Environment (DOE) director-general to halt any project contravening EIA, which prior to this, was the minister's prerogative.

"The main element in the amended act is that consultants wanting to carry out an EIA study must be registered with the DOE.

"With this requirement, we hope the time taken to process the study will be faster and it will facilitate quality reports," he said after launching the 2012 National level Malaysian Environment Week yesterday.

The amendment of the act would further strengthen enforcement against pollution in the country, with the penalty for Section 2 of the act raised to RM500,000 from RM100,000, added the minister. - Bernama



AGAINST THE ODDS ... Universiti Teknologi Petronas chancellor Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad congratulates chemical engineering graduate Mohd Abdul Hafiz Abdul Tahir after presenting him his scroll at the convocation ceremony yesterday. Mohd Abdul Hafiz was paralysed from neck down in an accident just before the start of his last semester. Despite facing difficulties in moving his fingers towards the end of his studies he was determined to complete his degree and received a special award. A total of 1,267 graduates received their degrees, masters and PhDs during the convocation.