



An excavator scooping up sand into 10-tonne tipper lorries that transport the sand out of the area. — Photos: YAP CHEE HONG/ The Star

DBKL: Operations are illegal

OPERATORS washing sand on private land along the riverbank at 5th Mile Jalan Kelang Lama have no permit from Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL) to wash sand at the site.

They also have no permit to transport sand in and out of the area from the FT Land and Mines Department.

DBKL Socio-Economic Development executive director Datuk Mohd Sauffi Muhamad confirmed this after a team from the local authority was sent to investigate sand washing at the site.

"It is illegal and we will be sending an enforcement team to the place soon," said Mohd Sauffi.

Meanwhile in an email statement, the land office also confirmed that the area was a private land and the operators had not applied for a permit to transport sand.

Sand washing and mining operations require operations permits from multiple agencies. And even if they have the required permits, it is subject to various limitations from the Department of Irrigation and Drainage.

StarMetro reported last year that illegal sand-washing activity on a piece of private land in

3rd Mile, Jalan Kelang Lama was causing numerous problems to the community living in and around the area.

In 2013 and 2014, the newspaper exposed illegal sand-washing operations in other parts of Jalan Kelang Lama; one was on government land beside the Seri Anggerik People's Housing Project (PPR) flats in Batu 4, Jalan Kelang Lama while another was in Taman Sri Manja.

Following the reports, the Federal Territories Ministry had ordered the shutdown of several mining companies that were illegally operating on both government and private land in the city.

Federal Territories Minister Datuk Seri Tengku Adnan Tengku Mansor, who issued the closure order, said illegal sand mining went against the Government river cleaning projects.

Residents had tipped off *StarMetro* on previous cases complaining that lorries carrying sand into the area would make as many as 50 to 100 trips daily between 8am and 6pm along Jalan Kelang Lama.

It has been reported the current market price for sand is RM600 per lorry.



Trees and hoarding surround the site, making it impossible to see the activities from ground level.

struction material.

"These activities, which are mostly illegal, are also contributing to all sorts of problems, ranging from air pollution to noise pollution as well as matters pertaining to the health of the river.

"These activities will result in deterioration of the water quality due to encroachment and contamination," said Hanapi.

Hanapi, who is also the Institution of Engineers, Malaysia Water Resources Division chairman, said DID and DOE's sand mining guidelines are clear on the dos and don'ts to minimise the impact of sand mining on Malaysian rivers; however there were no clear guidelines on sand-washing activities.

"We do have an SOP for operators conducting sand-washing activities along riverbanks and these guidelines are there to guide the operators on the best management practices such as proper washing and discharge of sand into rivers," Hanapi said.

He added that the key to proper washing of sand on riverbanks before the discharge goes back into the river is the practice of a multi-pronged washing system whereby the sand is washed multiple times before it is discharged back into the river.

"This is a tedious process, but necessary. But sadly, sand-mining operators never follow them," Hanapi added.

Dr Kalithasan, who had worked on the first phase of the RoL project educating the community through public outreach programmes, said he was sad that the river-cleaning efforts upstream were going to waste downstream.

"Right now, in the upper

stream of the river at Klang Gates dam, which is the source, the water is Class I, which is drinkable.

"From there the water flows through a stream through Taman Warisan where it is still Class I.

"As the water flows downstream; the quality changes to Class II. At this point, it needs to be treated before it can be consumed," he said.

Dr Kalithasan said the river then flows past MRR II and Zoo Negara and as it enters the Ampang township, the quality drops to Class III and as it goes further down into Kuala Lumpur city centre, the quality is between Class III and Class IV; which indicates the water is not even safe to touch.

"We are happy with the public outreach programmes – we have delivered a pristine river.

"The river cleaning effort is going to be in vain if it flows downstream towards the confluence at Masjid Jamek and passes through Brickfields and as it goes further downstream towards Jalan Kelang Lama; the water quality drops," he said.

"It is not an easy task to rehabilitate the 120km-long Klang River.

"We cannot allow the quality of the river water to deteriorate especially since the Government is spending so much money to rehabilitate the river under the RoL project," he said, adding that regular enforcement by the relevant authorities was crucial in preserving the quality of our rivers.

Klang River Basin

> Klang River flows through Kuala Lumpur and Selangor, eventually into the Straits of Malacca.

> It is approximately **120km** in length and drains a basin of about **1,288 sq km**

> It's the **4th** biggest river basin in Selangor

> Selangor: **80km @ 66.7%**
WPKL: **40km @ 33.3%**

> Flows through jurisdictions of **five local authorities**: MPK (21km), MBSA (20km), MPSJ (9km), MBPJ (6km) and MPAJ (24km).

> Klang River has **11 major tributaries** including Gombak River, Batu River, Kerayong River, Damansara River, Keruh River, Kuyoh River, Penchala River and Ampang River.

> There are two major dams upstream of the river – **Batu Dam** and **Klang Gates Dam**, which provide water supply to the people of Klang Valley and mitigate floods.