

Contradictory claims

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Kuala Lumpur City Hall cannot authorise sand washing activities but an operator in Jalan Kelang Lama says the local authority gave it the nod. >4

Sand washing legal, says operator

Authorities baffled as they say permits were never issued for the operations

By BAVANI M.
bavanim@thestar.com.my

THE owner of the sand washing site at the Sungai Klang riverbank at the 5th mile off Jalan Kelang Lama claims to have the necessary permits from Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL) and Federal Territories Ministry to carry out activities at the site.

Silver Matrix Resources Sdn Bhd managing director Datuk Azman Idris said he had the required papers for the job.

"We import sand from outside and bring it to the site for washing.

"DBKL and the ministry gave me the permits, including one to transport sand," he said, denying that his operation was illegal.

His claim, however, was refuted by Kuala Lumpur mayor Datuk Nor Hisham Ahmad Dahlan. "How can that be?

"We don't have jurisdiction to issue permits for sand washing. That comes under the Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur Land and Mines Office (PTG).

"We only issue permits for transporting sand under the Federal Territories of Kuala Lumpur 1997 by-laws on Transportation of Materials, and we did not issue any to them," he said.

Nor Hisham added that the last permit for transporting sand was issued in 2013 and that was for only three months.

"The operator was issued 50 summonses last year for illegally transporting sand.

"As far as I know, the company doesn't have any right to transport sand," he said.

Nor Hisham said DBKL would assist PTG with enforcements if needed.

"But we will continue to stop lorries from transporting sand at the site as it is a clear violation of our standard operation procedure," he said.

A PTG spokesman said that it did not issue a permit to the company.

"No permit was issued under Section 426 of the National Land Code. They are not mining sand, but washing sand.

"As the issue is sand washing at the riverbank, it comes under the Drainage and Irrigation Department's (DID) jurisdiction," she said, adding that PTG could enter a private site.



DBKL enforcement department director Azman Mahmood (second from right) speaking to the sand washing site operator (left) yesterday.



Nor Hisham says DBKL will assist the Land and Mines Office if needed.



Kepong MP Lim Lip Eng's special assistant Sean Oon who visited the site yesterday morning with officers from all three government agencies – PTG, DID's River Basin Management Division and DBKL – said enforcement teams were sent to the site to investigate the matter.

"I saw many lorries carrying sand in and

out of the site, but now I am confused.

"If both DBKL and PTG say it is not their jurisdiction and they did not issue the permits, then who did?"

"It makes no sense for DID to allow this river encroachment when there are two water quality sampling stations just 2km downstream.

"This has to stop. Billions of taxpayers' money are being spent to clean the rivers and the authorities who are supposed to protect them are not doing anything to stop it," he said.

StarMetro published an exclusive report titled "Sand pirates back in action", exposing the activities hampering the river rehabilitation project yesterday.

The same issue was reported in May 2016 titled "Dirty riverside business" with sand washing activities taking place just 8km away from where billions of ringgit is being spent on the River of Life project (RoL) at Masjid Jamek.

Former Kuala Lumpur mayor Tan Sri Mohd Amin Nordin ordered the site to be shut down, but activities resumed again early last year.

The matter was even brought to the attention of the Federal Territories Ministry which held a meeting with the agencies concerned to resolve the matter.

Sand pirates continue to dodge authorities at the site as they camouflage their location by planting huge trees and building hoardings around the site. The area is visible from above using a drone.