

TARIKH	JUMAAT, 1 JULAI 2022
AKHBAR	THE STAR
TAJUK ARTIKEL	GREEN COVER FOR TOXIC MENACE: 'SITE NEEDS EXTENSIVE CLEAN-UP AFTER CONTAMINATION STUDY'
M/S	3
BIDANG	WASTE
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'Site needs extensive clean-up after contamination study'

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"A proper procedure to convert the land status must be done first before such activities were allowed," he said, adding that this process often involved paying a high premium.

He also raised suspicions that some of the ewaste brought to these facilities could be imported from overseas.

"The lush greenery in this area provides these operators with a perfect cover to hide their activities.

"Authorities must investigate to ascertain the origin of the discarded products," he added.

A check by PTASKL at the Kuala Langat Land and District Office found that two of the three facilities were operating on agricultural land.

The details of the third site had yet to be obtained by the association.

According to the Kuala Langat Local Plan 2030, which is the official town planning document, the processing of toxic waste is considered heavy industry.

This means that the facilities can only operate on land plots that are gazetted for such activities.

It is mandatory to secure approval for the environmental impact assessment from the Department of Environment (DOE).

Pua said a report was lodged with the department and Kuala Langat Municipal Council (MPKL), urging them to investigate.

She stressed that there should be a clear separation between agricultural and industrial areas to avoid the potential for disasters.

Following a tip-off, DOE raided the three facilities, which were ordered to cease operations.

They were also fined a total of RM500,000.

Selangor DOE director Nor Aziah Jaafar said the operators began renting the respective land plots a few months ago.

"They initially started as a warehouse but then turned into an illegal facility to process electronic waste.

"We suspect that they do not have a licence from the local council as the status of the land is agricultural.

"We thank *StarMetro* and PTASKL for bringing this matter to



Nor Aziah: The operators are believed to have been renting the land plots for a few months.



Pua: There should be a clear separation between agricultural and industrial areas.



DOE personnel checking a container that may have been used to transport ewaste during a raid on three facilities in Telok Panglima Garang.

our attention," she said, adding that the waste could have been imported.

At press time, MPKL has yet to respond to requests for comments.

Pua called for a heavy penalty to be imposed on the operators to deter more such facilities from setting up bases here.

"The authorities must be sterner and not take a lackadaisical attitude towards such blatant disregard for the law," she added.

Profitable enterprise

Waste management specialist Dr Theng Lee Chong said ewaste often contained valuable metals, making its processing a lucrative business.

"For example, the circuit boards found in electrical appliances usually contain a small amount of sil-

ver, gold or platinum.

"These metals can be extracted via chemical treatments that will produce toxic substances that need to be disposed of properly.

"This process is costly and illegal operators tend to take the easy way out by simply discarding the by-products," he said.

Theng added that the by-products generated by ewaste processing were non-degradable and would accumulate in the environment.

He said there was a possibility that such activities could affect the ground and surface water, in turn, poisoning the surrounding land.

"A proper study must be conducted to ascertain the extent to which the ewaste has contaminated the area.

"The site should then be exten-

What is electronic waste?

1. The United Nations defines electronic waste, also known as ewaste, as any discarded item with a battery or plug that contains hazardous substances.
2. In a 2015 report, it estimated that up to 90% of global ewaste worth some US\$19bil was traded illegally.
3. Ewaste is not biodegradable and accumulates in soil, air, water and living things over time.
4. Open-air burning and acid solution used to recover valuable materials from ewaste release toxic chemicals.
5. Among the contaminants produced are lead, mercury, beryllium, thallium, cadmium and arsenic.
6. Exposure to these substances may cause adverse health effects which include cancer, miscarriage and neurological problems.
7. In Malaysia, ewaste is categorised as "scheduled waste" under the Code SW110, First Schedule, Environmental Quality (Scheduled Wastes) Regulations 2005.
8. Department of Environment (DOE) classifies ewaste by its source, either from industries or households.
9. In 2025, DOE estimates that Malaysia will produce 24.5 million ewaste units, comprising air-conditioner, refrigerator, washing machine, television, computer and mobile device.



Source: Geneva Environment Network, Department of Environment

TheStar graphics



Computers being dismantled to salvage their components at one of the raided ewaste facilities.

sively cleaned up before any other activity can be allowed there," he stressed.

Though the facilities have been ordered to close, a source told *StarMetro* that the operators were reportedly struggling to move the accumulated ewaste to comply with the DOE order.

Separately, ewaste is not the only material found in the Telok

Mengkuang area, as another site is used as an illegal dumping ground for domestic waste.

Located by a roadside, the stinking piles of rubbish are found a few steps away from the river, a tributary of Sungai Langat.

It is unclear if the rubbish comes from nearby industrial activities or has been dumped by local residents.

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