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**OPERATORS BEWARE**

# ILLEGAL E-WASTE FIGHT GATHERS PACE

DoE chief does not want Malaysia to be other countries' dumping ground

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**OPERATORS** of illegal electronic waste (e-waste) factories, already feeling the squeeze from the authorities' crackdown, are set to see the screws tighten further as enforcement is ramped up.

Department of Environment (DoE) director-general Datuk Wan Abdul Latiff Wan Jaafar said he wants to prevent Malaysia from becoming a dumping ground of hazardous waste from other countries.

"Operations to curb these activities will be conducted more aggressively and continuously, as the government views this matter seriously," he told the *New Straits Times*.

He said illegal processing and unlawful importation of e-waste were major issues.

"These activities, conducted without the best and environmentally friendly technology, and without proper pollution control systems or equipment, have a negative impact on the environment, including air, water and soil pollution.

"We do not want our country to become a dumping ground for waste from other countries, leading to pollution that affects the public," he said.

Wan Latiff said many of these illegal operations hired foreign workers, and often broke other laws like the exploitation of undocumented foreign workers and operating without proper documentation.

He said these businesses also lacked licences or permits from DoE to process e-waste.

"Moreover, some of these premises are not in industrial zones but instead operate on government reserve land, agricultural areas or other locations without proper planning approval," he added.

The DoE has been shutting down illegal e-waste processing sites in joint operations with the police and local authorities.

A staggering RM2.86 billion worth of e-waste was seized by police in the first two months of this year, a massive leap from last year's RM1 billion.

One of this year's biggest hauls was from simultaneous raids in Teluk Panglima Garang, Selangor, and Perak, resulting in the arrest of 246 people, most of them foreigners.

Initial investigations revealed that the e-waste had been imported via sea routes. Authorities are investigating whether the factories had foreign backing and if they were part of a larger syndicate.

More raids should be expected.

The latest was on Saturday, when Johor police seized RM23.8 million worth of e-waste, including aircraft components linked to an international airline, along with barrels of spent ammunition.

Last week, Region One Marine Police said the operators of illegal e-waste factories might have changed their tactics to evade enforcement.

Assistant Commissioner Rusley Chi Ari said operators would often leave only a skeleton crew of mostly foreign workers to take the fall when enforcement officers come knocking.

### RECENT RAIDS ON ILLEGAL E-WASTE FACTORIES

Year	Total seizure
2024	RM1 billion
2025 (so far)	RM2.86 billion

- Feb 15:** The General Operations Force Northern Brigade seizes e-waste and machinery valued at RM1.3 billion, the highest in five years, during a raid on an illegal e-waste factory in Rimba Panjang Industrial Area, Perak. They detain 27 people.
- Feb 17:** GOF Southeast Brigade raids two factories in Pekan and Gebeng, Pahang, seizing e-waste valued at RM410 million. Three people, including two foreigners, are arrested.
- Feb 22:** GOF Central Brigade seizes e-waste worth RM721 million and arrests 47 people during 12 raids in Selangor, Negri Sembilan, Melaka and Johor.
- Feb 27:** Region Two Marine Police raid a factory in Kampung Baru Sengkang, Kulai, Johor, and seize e-waste worth RM41.41 million. Fourteen people are detained, including a Malaysian.
- March 4:** Police arrest three foreigners and seize spent ammunition and e-waste worth RM23.8 million at an illegal processing centre in Jalan Lombong, Kota Tinggi, Johor.
- March 4:** Region One Marine Police raid a scrap processing plant in Taman Perindustrian Meru, Kapar, Selangor, that was illegally handling e-waste. Over a million kilograms of metals worth RM33.18 million are seized. A Malaysian man is detained.
- March 5:** GOF Northern Brigade raids illegal e-waste factories in Simpang Ampat, Penang, and Sungkai, Perak, seizing machinery, e-waste, and iron ore worth RM106.75 million. They arrest 22 people, including a Malaysian.

INFOGRAPHIC NST

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