

Angry residents want heavier penalties on river polluters

JOHOR BARU: Residents affected by the water cuts in Johor want the government to impose heavier penalties on anyone found to have polluted the state's water catchment areas.

They said it was not enough to merely impose fines as these polluters would do it again.

Sahrulerman Abd Rahim, 38, said many were forced to endure days without water supply due to the shutdown of water treatment plants.

He said the nightmare kept recurring and many were asking why nothing was done to stop the polluters for good.

"They should not be let off with just a slap on the wrist.

"They will continue their activities because they can afford to pay the fines.

"The authorities should impose heavier penalties, like shutting down any operations found to be polluting rivers or ordering their relocation," said Sahrulerman, who lives in Taman Nusa

Bestari 2 in Gelang Patah with his wife and three children.

He said their lives were affected whenever there was a water disruption.

"The last time the Semangar plant was shut down, the water disruption lasted three days. It was a nuisance."

Sahrulerman was commenting on the move by SAJ Ranhill Sdn Bhd, the state's water utility company, to shut down three water treatment plants along Sungai Johor — the Semangar, Sungai Johor and Tai Hong plants — on Friday following the increase in the level of ammonia in the river.

The ammonia level at the intake point of the Semangar plant was 2.75 parts per million (ppm) on Friday night, almost twice the permissible level of 1.5 ppm set by the Health Ministry.

The authorities traced the latest case of ammonia pollution to a poultry farm that processed fertiliser from chicken manure.



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Norazilah Ab Rasul says her area was affected a day after the water cut notice. PIC BY HAIRUL ANUAR RAHIM

Resident Norazilah Ab Rasul, 36, said her area faced water disruption a day after SAJ Ranhill's announcement.

"I knew about the closure of the

Semangar plant, but the water supply at my house was initially not affected," said the housewife from Taman Nusantara.

She said she agreed that more

stringent action should be taken against polluters.

"Strict action must be taken against them to act as a deterrent."