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Expedition to probe why Sungai Kinta is polluted

IPOH: The state's Forestry and Environment departments are investigating the actual cause of Sungai Kinta's pollution.

Led by the Drainage and Irrigation Department (DID), a 100-member group, which also includes scientists from Universiti Putra Malaysia, Universiti Sains Malaysia and Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, set off for the river on a five-day expedition yesterday.

It will cover half of the 100km-long river, which originates in Gunung Korbu on the Main Range.

Expedition members are expected to present their findings by the end of the year.

DID director-general Datuk Ahmad Husaini Sulaiman said the expedition was its first effort to rehabilitate Sungai Kinta.

The findings would also be forwarded to relevant enforcement agencies for further action to be taken against the polluters, he said.

Perak Health, Environment and Human Resources Committee chairman A. Sivanesan said the group would not only determine the source of pollution, but also the extend of its effect on the surrounding flora and fauna.

He said Sungai Kinta's water quality had deteriorated since the 1990s, when it was classified as only "slightly polluted."

The river, which was Perak's main source of drinking water, also had the potential to be a tourist attraction, he said.

"Chiang Mai's beautiful river, for instance, is one of its main tourist attractions besides its elephants," he told reporters yesterday.

On another issue, Sivanesan said the state expected to receive a report on the collapsed Perak State Park Corporation administrative building on Banding Island at the end of the week.