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Hotels discharging sewage into the sea

By R.S.N. MURALI

KUALA TERENGGANU: Certain hotels and resorts on several holiday isles are among the culprits damaging the rich coral ecosystem found here.

These operators are unwilling to invest in a pipe connection to oxidation ponds and have been discharging untreated sewage and effluence directly to the sea.

This has affected several aquatic species found in the gazetted marine parks off the islands.

With the exception of Pulau Kapas, the area lying within a two-kilometre radius from the beaches of these isles are gazetted marine parks. Fishing and polluting activities are prohibited under the Fisheries Act.

For Pulau Kapas, the marine park zone is only within a one-kilometre radius from its waters.

These parks teem with exotic marine life of about 500 species of coral reef and 300 species of fish.

State Commerce, Industry and Environment committee chairman Toh Chin Yaw admitted that the poor waste disposal system had somewhat caused an impact on the coral ecosystems surrounding the islands.

“We are aware of this and are working closely with environmentalists and other marine agencies to monitor the situation,” he said.

Toh said most of the hotels and resorts operating in the islands felt the onus was on the Government to provide them with a proper sewage system.

“The operators should realise that there are existing drainage system at the isles and they should emulate the prominent hotels and resorts that comply with the requirement for waste management,” he said.

He said the state government had no clout to act as marine parks come under the purview of a federal agency, the Marine Parks Department.

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