

## Ministry to probe 49 'black' firms

The Environment Ministry has classified 49 companies as "black" for operations that neglect environmentally friendly standards. In the 2010-2011 Environment Management Performance Ranking Program (Proper), the ministry found that the companies in question, which operate within various sectors, were careless in treating their waste.

Sudariyono, the ministry's deputy on environmental law management, said the ministry would investigate and collect data to find out whether the companies could be brought to court. "We will conduct investigations as soon as possible. We have a shortage of human resources, but we're trying to do things as fast as we can. We will not offer special treatment during the investigations. Whether they are state-owned enterprises, local companies or foreign companies, all black-ranked companies will be investigated," he said.

The ministry monitored 1,002 companies in the manufacturing, mining, energy and petroleum, agroindustry and services sectors in the assessment.

There are five classifications in the assessment: gold, green, blue, red and black. Red and black rankings are the lowest; red is given to companies that do not follow environmental standards, while black goes to companies that destroy the environment, either deliberately or unintentionally.

Meanwhile, gold is the highest ranking and is awarded to companies that maintain good waste disposal practices for a minimum of three consecutive years.

Of the 49 companies that received black marks in the 2010-2011 assessment, one is a cigarette company, three are jamu traditional medicine producers, three are palm oil companies, five are sugar companies, five are fisheries' processing companies, and 10 are steel processing companies.

The companies that received gold rankings were primarily based in the energy sector, particularly geothermal.

Environment Minister Balthasar Kambuaya said the ministry tried to integrate Proper's monitoring results into the law enforcement system.

He cited that of the 24 companies receiving a black ranking in the 2009-2010 Proper, seven were undergoing investigation, 13 were reprimanded, while four have since implemented improvements and have been restored into the Proper monitoring mechanism.

Charles Saerang, head of the Jamu Entrepreneurs' Association, hoped the government would inform the association as to which of its members received black rankings.

He said if he had received the news beforehand, he would have informed the Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Kadin) to offer recommendations to the companies concerned.

The three jamu traditional medicine producers that were awarded black marks in the 2010-2011 Proper were, Sido Muncul, Jamu Cap Jago and Air Mancur, all companies based in Central Java. Charles said his association would assist the jamu producers, either with legal issues or environmental issues. He said he had heard complaints about hygiene concerning one of the companies.

"If the jamu producers follow the herbal medicine-making procedure correctly, there will not be any waste because most jamu-making procedures are clean and waste free," he said.

The Indonesia Palm Oil Association, however, refused to comment about their members being awarded black marks.