

# Hospital waste found dumped near canal

## Pollution problem worsening — Bhichit

Aphaluck Bhatiasavi

The Public Health Ministry yesterday demanded an explanation from city hall after 16 bags of infectious hospital waste were found near a canal in Nonthaburi.

Public health secretary Udomdej Ratanasatien said the waste was from Ramathibodi Hospital. It included used syringes and posed a health hazard for local residents.

The waste was dumped in black plastic bags. Under regulations, all infectious waste must be disposed of in red plastic bags.

Ramathibodi medicine faculty dean Prakrit Vathesatogkit said city hall was responsible for disposing of the hospital's waste, a task that had been sub-contracted to Bangkok Thanakhom.

The hospital was unaware of the discovery until yesterday, he said.

Provincial health officials moved the waste to Phra Nangklao Hospital, where it would be destroyed.

Also yesterday, former Bangkok governor and environmentalist Bhichit Rattakul demanded swift action on pollution, which he said was worsening nationwide.

In particular, Mr Bhichit said the Foundation for Anti-Air Pollution and Environmental Protection had received complaints of widespread dumping of toxic and industrial waste in public places.

He said most villagers did not understand the threat posed by toxic waste, or how to seek assistance.

He suggested members of the public concerned about waste in their area seek help from the foundation's rapid-response teams of scientists, lawyers, environmentalists and doctors.

Mr Bhichit said only about 20% of the 1.23 million tonnes of industrial waste produced each year was properly treated.

He pointed to severe pollution caused by factories in Chanthaburi's Ko Chan



One of 16 bags containing infectious garbage from Ramathibodi Hospital found dumped along a canal in tambon Bang Krang, Muang district of Nonthaburi, yesterday. — SOMNUK RUDPRADIT

sub-district, Ubon Ratchathani's Sawang Wirawong district, Tak's Mae Sot, Lam-

pang's Mae Mo, and Saraburi's Nong Khae and Kaeng Khoi districts.