

## Firms bullish on toxic waste



A waste collector picks up plastic bags from a garbage dump in Ayutthaya for resale for recycling. The government has introduced a waste management pilot project in the province to serve as a national. PATTARAPONG CHATPATTARASILL

Three private companies have expressed interest in managing toxic waste industrial estates.

The three see high potential in the business as the government struggles with limited capacity and technology to deal with the issue, Industry Minister Chakramon Phasukvanich said.

The development follows a lack of progress in government negotiations to use military land for toxic waste industrial estates.

"The three companies are in talks with the Industry Ministry about investing in toxic waste management," Mr Chakramon said.

"The number of factories is increasing, which means demand for waste management is growing in the same direction."

He said one of the three, SET-listed Padaeng Industry Plc, offered to use its old zinc mine in Tak's Mae Sot district as a possible landfill for industrial toxic waste.

The other two companies have proposed locations in Rayong province, which has a deep-sea port and is a prime location for industrial estates.

Each of the three companies owns about 1,000 rai of land that can be used for the toxic waste management project.

"Padaeng told us it has the potential to serve demand for toxic waste management for the entire northern region," Mr Chakramon said.

That would be another solution for the country, which is struggling to manage to its rising toxic waste levels with limited capacity and technology.

The government had planned to obtain military land and degraded forest areas to use as locations by mid-2015, with toxic waste management to start in 2017.

However, negotiations between the Industry and Defence ministries have not progressed well, as the military remains concerned about pollution.

Pasu Loharjun, deputy director-general of the Industrial Works Department, said the government had signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Japan's New Energy and Industrial Technology Development Organization.

Under the MoU, a feasibility study will be conducted in six areas of Thailand regarding development of a 2-billion-baht incinerator with capacity to burn 500 tonnes a year through 2020.

"The study is expected to be completed by September," Mr Panu said.

"The government will then decide where the toxic waste industrial estate should be located."

He said such an estate would require about 10,000 rai of land that was far from any community.

The government has not yet decided which waste management model to use.

It could fund the project on its own via the Industrial Estate Authority of Thailand or open investment up to private firms.

