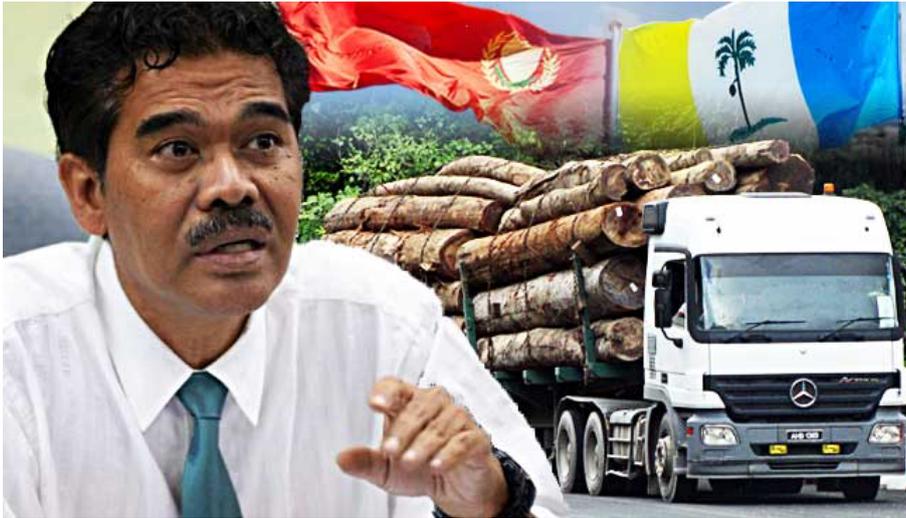


# Logging affects main water source for Kedah, Penang

**Predeep Nambiar**

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**Gazette whole Ulu Muda water catchment area to safeguard future water supply and growth of Kedah and Penang, urges Penang Water Supply Corporation CEO.**



GEORGE TOWN: The whole northern region will “suffer” if logging continues in Ulu Muda, Kedah, Penang Water Supply Corporation (PBA) Chief Executive Officer Jaseni Maidinsa said.

He said PBA had objected to logging activities near the Ulu Muda water catchment area since 1997 as it affects supply of clean water to its tributaries.

“The catchment area is the main source of water for the whole of northern Malaysia. It is a critical engine for economic growth.

“With the latest reports of logging in the area, we can be sure the quality and quantity of water will be degraded in the long run.

“The whole northern region will suffer as a result,” he said at a press conference today.

Ulu Muda is home to the Muda Dam, which is connected to Sungai Muda, from which PBA draws its water near Butterworth for treatment.

Jaseni said although PBA can clean up the murky water in Sungai Muda, it is a costly affair.

“I am sure you have seen Sungai Muda. Why is it ‘teh tarik’ in colour? It is because of logging.

“How long can the treatment plant ‘tahan’ (withstand) this kind of abuse?”

English daily The Star front-paged a story today on the “rampant logging” at the Ulu Muda Forest Reserve. The catchment at the reserve provides water for Perlis, Kedah and Penang.

The 160,000ha site also has high biodiversity value, being home to many large mammals.

Jaseni urged the federal water agencies to gazette important catchment areas like this.

He said the extraordinary dry spell experienced nationwide should be a lesson on the importance of preserving water catchment areas.

“We know the logging is legal. But let’s look at the bigger picture. Kedah earns RM30-RM50 million in royalties from logging activities. But disrupting the regular water supply to Penang and Kedah, which has a combined gross domestic product of RM135 billion, puts all of us at the losing end,” he said.