

# Villagers complain scheduled water cut three days early

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**KOTA TINGGI:** Villagers at Felda Lok Heng here are disappointed that the water supply to their area was cut three days earlier than the date announced by the state water concessionaire.

The settlement, which has more than 18,000 consumers, was among many areas in Kota Tinggi and Mersing affected by cuts on 85,000 domestic and industrial consumers.

Water concessionaire SAJ Holdings had announced that the areas would undergo scheduled rationing for 28 days from April 18 to May 15.

Housewife Zalimah Bujang (pic), 53, claimed the supply stopped on Friday.

"Why did they cut it three days early and not give us a chance to store some water first?"

"They should have let the water flow on Sunday so that we could prepare," she said at her house yesterday.

Her neighbour Misah Saat, 67, who has lived in the settlement for 32 years, hoped the cut would not go on till the Muslim fasting month which was expected in June.

Housewife Suparti Mohamed, 55, said that although the cut began on Friday, she claimed the water tankers from SAJ Holdings only came in yesterday.

"We had to buy bottles of mineral water and make do with the water from the lorries," she said.

She said the state government had said earlier that no rationing was needed in Johor.



**Critical:** The low water level of Sungai Sedili Kecil at the Lok Heng water treatment plant.

"So why are we now told that there are cuts between April 18 and May 15?" she said.

Foodstall operator Sally Dahar, 53, said she was using a portable tank which provided her with water for three days.

"My business is not affected. But I hope the cut will not last until the fasting month," she added.

SAJ Holdings corporate communications chief Jamaluddin Jamal said the cut was due

to operational issues.

He said that during the rationing exercise, water would flow for one day, followed by two days of dry taps, and the cycle repeated.

"The exercise is necessary after levels at the four water treatment plants in the two districts became critical," he said.

The plants are in Lok Heng and Sungai Gembut in Kota Tinggi, and Sungai Mersing and Tenglu in Mersing.

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Jamaluddin Jamal

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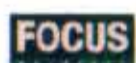
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# Four million at risk of water cuts

Dams in northern states at critical levels

**GEORGE TOWN:** About four million people in the north will be affected if the Federal Government does not act fast to resolve the impending water crisis.

Penang Water Supply Corporation Sdn Bhd (PBAPP) chief executive officer Datuk Jaseni Maidinsa said Penangites would be hit hard as both the Beris dam and Muda dam could only last for 30 and 50 days respectively as reported.

"These two dams release water to sustain the water level of Sungai Muda where 80% of Penang water comes from.

"We are concerned with the sustainability of the water level in Sungai Muda," he said. Jaseni also raised concern of Kedah's contingency plan if both dams dried up.

"If they continue to supply water for irrigation in Southern Kedah, they will be in serious deficit.

"That is a fact," he said at a press conference after the signing of "Corporate Integrity Pledge" (CIP) between PBA Holdings Bhd and Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission at

Jen Hotel yesterday.

Jaseni said the company had proposed to the Federal Government to carry out four urgent measures - large scale cloud seeding, postponement of irrigation activities in the northern region, minimising draw down of reserves from all dams and to advise consumers to use less water.

Jaseni said although there were rains on Sunday, they managed to collect only 1mm and 31mm at the Air Itam dam and Teluk Bahang dam respectively.

"We were supposed to get rains for the last three weeks but we did not because of El Nino.

"Business will be crippled. Any water rationing can cause chaos in domestic and commercial activities," he said.

Jaseni said certain parts of Johor and Perlis have already started water rationing.

"This is getting serious. The national water council should convene and find a solution for the problem because it involves four million people," he said.

## No rationing in Klang Valley for now

**PETALING JAYA:** There will be no water rationing in Selangor, Kuala Lumpur and Putrajaya for now.

The water situation in Selangor was stable and all water treatment plants were fully operational, said Air Selangor corporate communications head Amin Lin Abdullah.

In the northern parts of Perlis, water rationing exercises began last Saturday in Wang Kelian, Kaki Bukit, Titi Tinggi, Beseri and Abi.

Syarikat Air Perlis (SAP) chief executive officer Abd Hamid Sahid said the company was reducing production at Timah Tasoh dam so there would be reserve water for a few more days.

Timah Tasoh supplies 30% of Perlis' water needs.

"There is water but the pressure is low for those in lower ground areas. We have been sending water tanks daily to help them out," said Abd Hamid.