

## Malaysia

# Ground water solution to crisis, states told

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Penang Water Supply Corporation chief executive Datuk Jaseni Maidinsa (pic) had warned that Kedah, Penang and Perlis and the northern parts of Perak would run out of water reserves in 30 days. — Picture by KE Ooi

other remedial measures.

Ground water is drawn from underground sources while surface water, of which the country largely depends on, is from sources like lakes and rivers.

It was reported Penang Water Supply Corporation chief executive Datuk Jaseni Maidinsa had warned that Kedah, Penang and Perlis and the northern parts of Perak would run out of water reserves in 30 days.

The shortage could affect as many as four million people in those states as well as cause significant disruptions to agricultural activity, Jaseni said.

He urged the government to immediately begin large scale cloud seeding in the northern region, postpone irrigation activities, minimise the drawdown of reserves from dams and persuade consumers to save water.

Mamit said it was not feasible to avoid development and growth but new solutions were needed to cope with increasing demand.

"We need to be creative. Most developed countries depend on ground water supplies which are not vulnerable to evaporation the way water stored at dams are," he said.

"The state governments must have plans in place to face the dry season. We cannot be scrambling for solutions only when such situations arise."

Mamit said state governments needed to gazette catchment areas in addition to retaining water.

Malaysia is estimated to have several billion cubic metres of ground water reserves, with Perak alone having an estimated 500 million litres of untapped ground water.

"The supplies are accessible and easily purified. And the technology has vastly improved, with such options as reversible water transfer equipment manufactured by Germany," he said.

PETALING JAYA, April 20 — The water crisis looming in the northern peninsular states of Kedah, Perlis, Penang and Perak could be averted by tapping into ground water reserves.

Deputy Energy, Green Technology and Water Minister Datuk Seri James Dawos Mamit said Malaysia had vast reserves of untapped ground water.

"This is not a fanciful solution. In fact, the state of Kelantan, which draws 70 per cent of its water (from the ground), is a textbook example of how ground water can be relied on for water security," he said.

"We need to reduce our need on surface water as it is subject to adverse weather conditions such as pollution and the current El Nino phenomenon."

Mamit said the ministry would cooperate with other ministries to work out a solution for the water shortage and look into

