

Penang a fine example of how to manage water resources well



By **Marina Emmanuel** - September 8, 2020 @ 3:14pm



This pic dated Sept 7 shows residents near AU3 Keramat, filling up their water containers following the water crisis. - NSTP/ SITI NOORFARAH HANAN MAT ZAHIR

As water supply disruption hit the Klang Valley yet again last week, finger-pointing and endless posturing has taken centre stage.

Water consumers are understandably tired and frustrated at having their lives uprooted yet again, with endless consequences to jobs, schooling for children, seeing to the health and safety of their elderly and a host of other concerns in between.

While some who had the luxury of taking off from the Klang Valley for a break managed to get some respite over the weekend, others were stuck as they frantically rushed to buy bottled water or had to wait patiently for the water trucks to come by their neighbourhood.

Further up north, Penang's water supply has remained stable, thankfully, even during the last months as the nation battled the Covid-19 pandemic.

Thanks to its water operator, the Penang Water Supply Corporation (PBAPP), supply to all registered water consumers has been delivered without a hitch, even though climate change had reduced rainfall since 2019 and depleted the raw water reserves of the Air Itam and Teluk Bahang dams on Penang island.

"We made sure that there was sufficient supply to all households as the people limited their movements and stayed at home to stay safe from the coronavirus," chief minister and PBA Holdings Bhd (the holding company for PBAPP) chairman Chow Kon Yeow said today after the company's 20th annual shareholders meeting.

Even sweeter to the ears of the company's shareholders, was the fact that the public-listed company on Bursa Malaysia has been paying dividends to its shareholders for 19 years in a row.

As custodians of the state's water resources, PBAPP's key performance indicators (KPIs) include the following:

- 100 per cent water supply coverage to urban areas and 99.8 per cent supply coverage in rural areas,
- Supply of water on a round-the-clock basis, with no incidence of water rationing or disruption
- Treated water quality to be one of the best in Malaysia, based on the test results for 3,150 treated water samples taken in 2019.

And the list of plus points goes on and on, of how PBAPP continued to lead the way in water supply management in Malaysia in 2019.

In working hard to meet the expectations of shareholders, the company can stand out as a fine example of how other states can go about managing their water resources, without any political posturing.

In 2002, the company was listed on the main bourse, when it was administered by Barisan Nasional and its non-executive chairman was the then Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon.

The state today is ruled by the Pakatan Harapan government and PBA Holdings is chaired by the current Chief Minister Chow.

As far as the company's shareholders are concerned, its business as usual, and they continue to derive solid and consistent dividends which contribute to a steady flow of income.

And for the over half a million registered water consumers in the state, they continue to be grateful that the custodians of their natural resources, such as water, are doing their job well and keeping everyone happy and hydrated.