

Penang, Kedah facing imminent water crisis as key dams dry up

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The Muda Dam's capacity was at 7.44% as of yesterday, says PBA. (Pic courtesy of PBA)

GEORGE TOWN: The Penang Water Supply Corporation (PBA) today warned that a water crisis in Penang and southern Kedah is imminent if urgent measures are not implemented to fill up drying dams in the hinterlands.

PBA CEO Jaseni Maidinsa said cloud-seeding operations must be urgently intensified to induce rain at the key Beris and Muda dams in Kedah so that water supply would remain constant.

The two dams supply water to Sungai Muda, a major riverine basin which in turn supplies water to Kedah and Penang. PBA takes water from the downstream of the river near Butterworth and processes it before supplying to 80% of people on Penang Island and Seberang Perai.

Jaseni said the Sungai Muda water level dropped to the alert level of 1.77m yesterday. The normal level is above 2m. "We are raising the alarm for urgent actions to be taken by Kedah and the federal government to ensure no water rationing in Penang and southern Kedah this year," he said.



*An aerial view of Sungai Muda which supplies water to millions of users in southern Kedah and Penang.
(Pic courtesy of PBA)*

He urged users to save water.

Jaseni said the authorities must focus on the 120 billion-litre Beris Dam, which was at 69.87% capacity as of Feb 6, while the Muda Dam's capacity was at 7.44% as of yesterday.

He said with the Beris Dam releasing 864 million litres of water per day, more cloud seeding should be done around that area.

Jaseni said if the Beris Dam runs out of water before the expected rain in April, "there will be a widespread water crisis in southern Kedah and Penang".

"In this present scenario, cloud seeding to induce rain in the catchment areas of the Beris Dam and Muda Dam, as well as the Sungai Muda river basin, must be prioritised and expedited by the relevant authorities and agencies.

"It is critical to ensure that the raw water reserves of the Beris Dam last until the rainy season arrives.

"This is because, besides Penang, a total of 14 Kedah water treatment plants also extract water from Sungai Muda daily to supply water to southern Kedah."