

## Penang hopes Putrajaya to complete Mengkuang Dam expansion project



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BUKIT MERTAJAM, Jan 9 -- The Penang government is hoping that the federal government will complete the last two phases of the Mengkuang Dam expansion project (MDEP) as agreed.

Its Chief Minister Chow Kon Yeow said it involved phases 2B and 2C and which were crucial to increase raw water production capacity as well as the rapid replenishment of the expanded dam.

"Although officially, the Mengkuang Dam has been handed over to the state government, there are two more phases to be completed in line with the National Water Services Industry Restructuring initiative introduced by the federal government.

"Mengkuang Dam is the state's largest strategic drought reserve to address its growing water supply needs in the 21st century and has been handed over to us (Penang government) but we are still waiting for the implementation of phases 2B and 2C to be completed as promised," he told reporters today.

Earlier, Chow officiated the opening of the Mengkuang Dam and the handover ceremony of the Mengkuang Dam by the Penang government to Perbadanan Bekalan Air Pulau Pinang (PBAPP), represented by its chief executive officer Datuk Jaseni Maidinsa.

Chow, who is also PBAPP chairman, said the dam expansion project includes four main phases funded by a federal grant worth RM1.2 billion with phases 1 and 2A involving the expansion of the dam and upgrading of Mak Sulong pump house as well as other related work that had been completed.

He said the MDEP was scheduled to be completed in 2016 but the dam was handed over to the Penang government on Oct 26 last year.

“More importantly, the capacity of the dam has increased by 293 per cent from 22.0 billion litres to 86.4 billion litres of water. We need it because it can reduce the risk of water shortages during prolonged droughts and erratic climate change,” he said.

Meanwhile, Jaseni said phase 2B involved the installation of pipelines from the Mak Sulong pump house to the Sungai Dua canal where the new pipeline will increase the dam's raw water transfer capacity from 300 million litres per day (MLD) to 600 MLD.

He said phase 2C was referring to the construction of Lahar Yooi pump house which will enable the additional pumping of 440 litres of raw water to the dam from the second raw water source, Sungai Muda.

In fact, the Mengkuang Dam will serve as a strategic drought storage for Penang during the dry season and it is a core component of the Mengkuang Water Storage Scheme unlike the Itam and Teluk Bahang dams that store water from nearby catchment areas, he said.

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