

## Sanusi fires back over Penang's attacks on Kulim airport project

FMT Reporters August 30, 2021 9:41 PM



*Kedah menteri besar Muhammad Sanusi Md Nor has accused the Penang government of scaremongering over the Kulim airport project, which Penang claims is too near the Sungai Muda.*

ALOR SETAR: Menteri besar Muhammad Sanusi Md Nor has slammed Penang's interference in Kedah's plans to build the Kulim airport through provocative statements, saying it was impeding the state's rights to do what it wanted.

He accused the Penang Water Supply Corporation (PBAPP) of "scaremongering and raising environmental matters over the airport project", saying clear plans had been laid out to mitigate the worst of its effects.

"I don't take the PBAPP's statements as theirs. I take it as the voice of the Penang government. They continue to be a nuisance over the right of the Kedah government to carry out projects it deems fit for the progress of the state," Sanusi said in a statement.

PBAPP had recently raised the alarm over the Kulim airport proposal, saying it was being built too close to Sungai Muda and might affect future supply of water to Penang. PBAPP uses the river's water to supply 80% of its population.

Sanusi, in a 40-point broadside against Penang, said it should first take a look at its own backyard, with three of its rivers being the filthiest in the country according to federal authorities.

"Sungai Perai, Sungai Pinang and Sungai Juru are in the list of the worst polluted rivers in the country. Penang leaders are like 'crabs wanting to teach their offspring to walk', with no shame, talking about a topic that could come back to hit them," he said.



### **Riparian rights over Sungai Muda**

Sanusi said Penang leaders were ungrateful and unrepentant in refusing to pay for the upkeep of a catchment forest where Sungai Muda originates.



He said there were 10 years worth of letters to Penang asking for payment to conserve the forest, through a 10 sen per cubic metre charge for water drawn from the river, but “arrogant” Penang leaders had yet to respond.

“Under international riparian rights principles, there is a limit on drawing water from a source that flows between states and countries. It is measured according to the area of the catchment and where the river basin is.

“In this context, Penang is only allowed to use 5% of Sungai Muda’s water. Penang uses 56% of the river, while Kedah only uses 44%.

“Yet, they have no shame to question, protest, provoke and harass Kedah for projects it wants to carry out for the progress of its people and the state,” he said.

Penang had previously said it drew water from its side of the river near Kepala Batas and would not pay Kedah “a single sen” for it.

Sanusi said the Kulim airport would be far away from the river, some 500m away, according to an environmental study.

He added that Penang’s concerns could be construed as being deliberately carried out to give the public a bad perception of the project.