



Penang's new undersea water pipeline to meet demand

FMT Reporters March 31, 2021 6:56 PM



There are now three submarine pipelines to transfer water from the mainland to Penang island.

GEORGE TOWN: Penang today announced the opening of a new undersea pipeline to transfer water from Butterworth to the island.

Penang Water Supply Corporation (PBA) said this latest and third twin-submarine pipeline will supply 315 million litres a day (MLD) from the Sungai Dua water treatment plant on the mainland, which draws raw water from Sungai Muda.

The pipeline runs 3.2km from the mainland to Macallum Street Ghaut and then another 7km to a reservoir in Bukit Dumbar near Gelugor.

The amount of water pumped out of this pipeline could fill up 126 Olympic-sized swimming pools daily and would benefit over 500,000 people living in the southern part of the island, PBA said.

PBA chief executive officer Jaseni Maidinsa said the new pipeline will effectively increase the present water supply from 393 MLD to 708 MLD.

Jaseni said the reservoir at Bukit Dumbar primarily serves the Bayan Lepas industrial zone and the Bayan Lepas area on the southern reaches of the island.

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Jaseni Maidinsa

He said when needed, the reservoir could also send water to as far as Balik Pulau on the western end of the island, especially in the event of a prolonged drought.

The pipeline was built over four packages at a cost of RM114.3 million. Work began on Oct 3, 2016 and was completed on Oct 3 last year.

The work included excavation of undersea trenches, land reclamation and shore protection works, besides the laying of land pipelines.

The first submarine pipeline in the state was commissioned in 1973, with a capacity of 143 MLD, while the second was in 1995, with a capacity of 250 MLD.

The new pipeline became necessary as the 1973 pipeline had nearly reached its end-of-life status after nearly five decades in service.

Jaseni said when the first 1973 pipeline was put in service, the water consumption on the island was only at 93.3 MLD.

He said the latest pipeline would help meet demand and ensure supply during prolonged dry seasons.

“This will prolong the reserves of the two dams until the rains arrive to replenish the dams from September to December yearly.”