

NATION

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Penang acts to solve water woes

GEORGE TOWN: A long-standing water issue affecting some 32,000 consumers in south Seberang Prai (SPS) will be resolved by year end, said Zairil Khir Johari.

The state infrastructure committee chairman said several short- and medium-term plans would be carried out to address the frequent water disruption plaguing residents there over the last four years.

He said among the short-term measures would be to maximise water production at Penang's nine water treatment plants, especially the Sungai Dua Water Treatment Plant (WTP) which produces more than 80% of treated water in the state.

"The state water authority is pumping more treated water from Sungai Dua WTP to the district to meet the water demand of 32,993 registered water consumers.

"They are also deploying water tanks and personnel to address issues of unscheduled water supply interruptions at end-of-line areas," he told a press conference held with Penang Water Supply Corporation (PBAPP) chief executive officer Datuk Jaseni Maidinsa on the sidelines of the state assembly yesterday.

On Monday, some 30 affected residents staged a peaceful protest over the water woes outside the state assembly building in Light Street.

Zairil said residents affected were those living in higher ground areas in Taman Seruling Emas, Taman Widuri, Kampung Sungai Duri, Kampung Sungai Baong, Permatang Ara and the Sungai Baong Industrial area, and end-of-line areas.

He said water consumption in the area had surged by 10.4%, from 843 million litres per day (mld) in 2019 to 931mld in May this year.

"This is a significant increase in a short span as consumption of water for domestic and industrial use has increased post-pandemic, affecting more than 32,000 registered water consumers there," he said.

PBAPP, said Zairil, is looking into solving the issue for both domestic and industrial water use but will need the cooperation of all parties.

He said another measure was the implementation of the SPS-Water Supply Contingency Plan (SPS-WSCP 2022), which came into effect on May 26.

The plan prioritises water supply to the 32,993 water consumers for 12 hours from 6pm to 6am daily.

"During these overnight hours, water supply to the Batu Kawan and Bukit Minyak industrial areas is regulated so that more water can be pumped to residential areas.

"PBAPP is still fine-tuning the SPS-WSCP to optimise supply to end-of-line and higher ground areas," he said.

On the medium-term measures, Zairil said a booster pump would be installed to pump more water to end-of-line and higher ground areas, adding that the Bukit Panchor WTP would also be upgraded to increase water output from 5mld to 10mld.

Zairil said PBAPP also sought the cooperation of factories where new ones would only be approved if they have 48-hour on-site storage.

“This is to comply with the Water Service Industry Act and the National Water Services Commission’s Uniform Technical Guideline,” he said.

On long-term measures, Zairil said the WTP tanks of Sungai Dua would be refurbished and that the new water treatment modules would be looked into.

He said consultants had also been appointed to look into building a WTP in Mengkuang Dam.

“We are looking into solving the water woes in SPS by year-end as all these measures will lead to an additional 569mld of water to the mainland,” he said.

Zairil said there was no leakage and people should refrain from using illegal extensions to extract water from water pumps which would compound the water issue further.