

Admin

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Water supply pressures in all pipelines throughout Penang are expected to be normalised by noon tomorrow, says PBAPP



THE Penang Water Supply Corporation (PBAPP) has projected that water supply pressures in all pipelines throughout Penang would be normalised by noon tomorrow (July 7).

Its chief executive officer Datuk Jaseni Maidinsa said the corporation had to carry out emergency response engineering works related to water production at the Sungai Dua Water Treatment Plant (WTP), Penang's largest and most important treatment plant, this morning (July 6).

"The turbidity of raw water being pumped from Sungai Muda (via the Sungai Dua Canal) to the plant was recorded as 3,000 Nephelometric Turbidity Unit (NTU) at 6am this morning. It was an abnormally high turbidity rating.

"The normal turbidity of raw water from Sungai Muda should be below 1,000 NTU. NTU is used to measure the presence of suspended particles or matter in water.

Jaseni said PBAPP's priority is to ensure safe and sustainable treated water production in Penang.

"At 8am today, all water production operations at the Sungai Dua WTP were temporarily shut down.

"As a remedial measure, PBAPP immediately reduced abstraction of raw water from Sungai Muda and released raw water stored in the Mengkuang Dam to reduce the turbidity of the raw water in the Sungai Dua Canal.

"PBAPP restarted the water production operations at the Sungai Dua WTP in stages at noon today when the turbidity level of the raw water entering the plant was at an acceptable level," he said via a media statement today.

Commenting on the impact of the four-hour Sungai Dua WTP shutdown, Jaseni said the temporary shutdown of the Sungai Dua WTP caused water pressures in all major pipelines in Seberang Perai and Penang island to drop.

"This is because the Sungai Dua WTP produces more than 80% of the treated water that is supplied throughout the state daily.

“We received enquiries and complaints from water consumers relating to low water pressure throughout Penang, including industrial consumers.

“PBAPP apologises for all the temporary inconveniences caused.

“However, all affected consumers should kindly note that the sudden spike in the turbidity of raw water from Sungai Muda is a factor which is beyond PBAPP’s control.

“We have reacted and responded to this crisis in a timely and appropriate manner,” he said.

Jaseni said that PBAPP would continue to monitor the turbidity of water abstracted from Sungai Muda on a 24/7 basis.

“We will continue to draw down water from the Mengkuang Dam to ensure safe raw water turbidity levels for the Sungai Dua WTP,” he added.

Earlier, Chief Minister Chow Kon Yeow said the turbidity level of raw water from Sungai Muda was too high due to the flash flood in Baling, Kedah.

“It made it difficult for our Sungai Dua WTP to treat the muddy water, hence, it was shut for four hours by PBAPP.

“We were told of a similar situation (stop operation) happening at the Sungai Petani and Pinang Tunggal water treatment plants,” he told a media conference.

Chow said PBAPP drew down water from the Mengkuang Dam to the Sungai Dua WTP and other nearby plants to be treated and supplied to the consumers.

“The Mengkuang Dam acts as Penang’s strategic dam which provides clean raw water during a crisis such as this.

“I am not saying that we do not need the Sungai Muda. On normal occasions, we draw raw water from Sungai Muda.

“Penang draws 85% of its raw water from Sungai Muda, while the Air Itam Dam and Teluk Bahang Dam supply about 15% of raw water.

“The raw water from the Mengkuang Dam is our water reserve; only to be used during a crisis or an emergency.

“The Mengkuang Dam has the capacity to last us for about 100 days, in the event that there is no other water supply,” he said.

Chow expressed hope that the turbidity level of Sungai Muda would return to normal as soon as possible for it to be extracted for treatment.

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