

NATION

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Penang expects water supply to be at 100% by 6pm on July 7

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GEORGE TOWN: Penang Water Supply Corporation (PBAPP) will continue to ramp up production at the Sungai Dua Water Treatment Plant (WTP) and is hopeful to reach an optimal level of 100% by 6pm on Thursday (July 7).

Its CEO Datuk Jaseni Maidinsa, however, said consumers in end-of-line and higher ground areas throughout Penang may have to wait for a few additional hours for water supply to reach their premises at normal pressures.

"PBAPP hopes that the water production at the Sungai Dua WTP will be at the optimal level of 100% which means an average of 988 million litres per day by 6pm.

"The slight delay in restoring supply at Sungai Dua WTP is because of raw water turbidity issues at the WTP's raw water intake point," he said at a press conference at the Sungai Dua WTP in Tasek Gelugor on Thursday (July 7).

"We will continue to draw down water from the Mengkuang Dam to ensure safe raw water turbidity levels for the Sungai Dua WTP.

"The duration of water supply disruption and restoration in the affected areas varies and depends on the location and water pressure in the water supply distribution system.

"Water supply to the affected consumers will be channelled in stages," he added.

As of 10am on Thursday (July 7), treated water production capacity at the Sungai Dua WTP had reached 61%.

"Water supply services for about 48% of Penang's registered water consumers affected by Sungai Dua WTP shutdown have been normalised as at 10am on Thursday (July 7).

"Water supply to consumers on Penang island namely northeast district to Bukit Dumbar and Sungai Pinang up to Balik Pulau town has been normalised.

"As for the Seberang Prai area, north Seberang Prai up to Bukit Minyak has been restored," he said.

Meanwhile, the water production capacity of the Sungai Dua WTP, Penang's largest and most important WTP, had reached 61%.

The Sungai Dua WTP had to be temporarily shut down due to the abnormally high turbidity of incoming raw water from Sungai Muda at 8am on Wednesday (July 6).

"This emergency measure was necessary to prevent the production of unsafe treated water that is not compliant to the Drinking Water Quality Control parameters set by the Health Ministry.

"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 which channels raw water to the Sungai Dua WTP," he said, adding that PBAPP restarted water production at noon on the same day.

Jaseni added that the normal turbidity rating to the plant was between 700 and 800 nephelometric turbidity units (NTU) while it exceeded 3,000 NTU on Wednesday which prompted the decision to shut down the plant.

Jaseni explained that the temporary shutdown of the Sungai Dua WTP caused water pressures in all major pipelines in Seberang Prai and Penang island to drop, as Sungai Dua WTP produces more than 80% of the treated water for Penang daily.

Meanwhile, to ensure the quality and quantity of raw water supply from Sungai Muda, Jaseni said the Ulu Muda water catchment area must be gazetted to ensure sustainability.

"Besides, the implementation of the Sungai Perak water transfer scheme must be sped up," he said.

Penang Chief Minister Chow Kon Yeow had urged the Federal Government and the related ministries to speed up the Sungai Perak Raw Water Transfer Project.

"The project has been delayed for 11 years now and we urge the government to look into this issue as it will affect our lives as well as the economy if not resolved immediately.

"We must look for alternative raw water supply to complement Sungai Muda, and Sungai Perak would be our important raw water supplier," he said.