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84pct of Penangites to get water supply back in 72 hours



BUTTERWORTH: About 33 per cent of the 590,000 water consumers set to be affected by a four-day water supply disruption on Jan 10, are expected to get their water supply within 48 hours.

The 197,025 affected consumers are in most key areas in the Seberang Prai Utara and Seberang Prai Tengah districts.

Penang Water Supply Corporation (PBAPP) chief executive officer K. Pathmanathan said about 84 per cent or 495,965 affected consumers are expected to get water supply in 72 hours.

He said they are in most key areas in the northeast district and southwest district on the island, which include George Town, Bayan Baru, the Bayan Lepas free trade zone (FTZ) and Penang International Airport (PIA), as well as the Seberang Prai Tengah and Seberang Prai Selatan districts.

"We are targetting 99 per cent water supply service recovery in 96 hours for the rest of the other areas.

"Localised recovery for the remaining one per cent of consumers in end of line (EoL) and higher ground on a case-by-case basis, based on localised problems.

"PBAPP is incurring about RM10 million losses as a result of this," he said today.

On Monday, the Penang government has asked PBAPP to coordinate a faster recovery of water supply for the scheduled water supply interruption next month.

Responding to public feedback, Chief Minister Chow Kon Yeow said he had told Pathmanathan to do his best to reduce the inconveniences to the public and businesses in Penang.

About 80 per cent of Penang's water consumers are affected.

Pathmanathan said PBAPP's projected recovery of water supply services in stages is based primarily on consumers' proximity to the Sungai Dua Water Treatment Plant (WTP) and consumers' location near major Penang water supply infrastructure such as treated water reservoirs and pump stations in Batu Kawan, Bukit Minyak, Bukit Dumbar and Bukit Gedung.

Explaining, Pathmanathan said PBAPP could not target simultaneous recovery of water supply services for all 590,000 affected consumers due to several reasons.

Among others, he said, major pump houses might only be re-started, in pre-set sequences, only after empty reservoirs are refilled with sufficient volumes of treated water.

"Treated water from the Sungai Dua WTP must be pumped through thousands of kilometres of underground pipelines to reach all 590,000 affected consumers in various districts and areas in the state. We have about 6,200km of pipelines.

"PBAPP will have to address all issues related to proper refilling of reservoirs, pipeline pressurisation, potential burst pipes and release of 'air-locks' in all pipelines before achieving 100 per cent water supply recovery status," he added.

Meanwhile, Pathmanathan said they had written to the National Water Services Commission (SPAN) to request for more water tankers, although SPAN normally provides during times of emergency.

It was reported that some 590,000 water consumers in the state, including non-domestic consumers in all key industrial areas, would experience a four-day water supply interruption from Jan 10 to 14, next year.

This would be one of the major planned disruption in nearly three decades.

The four-day interruption was unavoidable to cater to two major valve replacement works in Sungai Dua, Butterworth.

The two 1,200mm valves are within the Sungai Dua WTP and near the WTP fence which are leaking.

Various ancillary water works projects at 22 other locations throughout the state would also be carried out simultaneously.