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## 200,000 CONSUMERS IN PENANG HIT BY WATER CUT DUE TO BURST PIPE IN SG PERAI

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BUTTERWORTH, Dec 19 (Bernama) -- A total of 200,000 consumers in the island's southwest district and Seberang Perai here experienced water supply disruption today after a section of pipe measuring 1.35-metre (m) in circumference located at the bottom of Sungai Perai burst on Monday (Dec 18) morning.

Penang Water Supply Corporation (PBAPP) chief executive officer K. Pathmanathan said that underwater welding works to repair the burst pipe are scheduled to begin today.

"PBAPP is implementing an emergency response plan to repair the damage to 1.35m water pipe which runs across the riverbed after the pipe was found to be leaking at around 8.26 am yesterday (Dec 18)," he said in a statement today.

He added that PBAPP has appointed a specialist contractor based in Port Klang, Selangor, to conduct a probe into the incident as the pipe is located across the riverbed. Sungai Perai is approximately 3.5m deep.

Pathmanathan said that commercial divers from Port Klang arrived at the scene yesterday evening and carried out an underwater inspection at 10.30 pm.

He added that PBAPP has also implemented valve controls to reduce water flow by about 75 per cent to facilitate the underwater inspection work.

"During the inspection, the divers found that the pipe had burst, resulting in a hole measuring 20cm x 30 cm. Today, the workers plan to carry out repair works by welding a 60cm x 60cm steel plate onto the damaged section.

"Since the welding work must be done underwater, the contractor will determine the best time to start work based on visibility and river conditions for safety reasons," he said.

To facilitate the underwater welding work, PBAPP has had to temporarily shut down the damaged pipe, causing unscheduled water supply disruptions to about 200,000 consumers in the Southwest district and Seberang Perai.

He added that PBAPP would announce the list of affected areas shortly.

"PBAPP apologises for any inconvenience caused and we will provide regular updates on the PBAPP Facebook page today. We will also announce the expected duration of the water supply disruption as soon as we receive a commitment from the experts conducting the work today," he said.