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Mengkuang Dam in good condition, says Penang water supply corp



GEORGE TOWN: The Expanded Mengkuang Dam (EMD), which maximum storage capacity increased from 22 billion litres to 86.4 billion litres, is in good condition, according to the Penang Water Supply Corporation (PBAPP).

Its chief executive officer K. Pathmanathan said the dam serves as a strategic drought reserve and a useful emergency raw water resource for Penang, mitigating the impact if another "Sungai Muda incident" occurs in the future.

"The EMD was handed back to the Penang government in October 2020 after its maximum storage capacity was increased from 22 billion litres to 86.4 billion litres.

"The EMD has more than proven its worth to Penang in 2022 and 2023 when its raw water reserves were released during the PBAPP's emergency response to three major unscheduled water supply disruptions caused by three incidents in Kedah," he said in a statement on Tuesday (Oct 24).

He was responding to National Water Services Commission chairman Charles Santiago's statement on Monday (Oct 23) that seven dams had been identified as high-risk and might cause water supply issues to water treatment plants (LRA) and their surrounding areas in the event of dam malfunction, including due to weather factors.

The seven dams were Pedu and Muda in Kedah; Durian Tunggal, Asahan and Jus in Melaka; Mengkuang in Penang and Linggui in Johor.

Pathmanathan said that without the EMD, the impact of the incident in Sungai Muda, Kedah, on the majority of Penang's water consumers would have been worse as it would take longer to restore water supply to affected areas.

He said that in 2024, the dam's release capacity would be increased from 300 million litres per day (MLD) to 600 MLD, proving that the state government's decision to re-accept EMD in September 2020, before the Mengkuang Dam Expansion Project (MDEP) was completed, was the right strategic decision.

"We look forward to the completion of the RM1.2 billion MDEP by the Federal Government, and the phases of the project that have yet to be completed are Phase 2B, which is the installation of pipelines to upgrade the release capacity to 600 MLD.

"Phase 2C of the project has also not yet been completed, and it involves the construction of a new 440 MLD pump house in Sungai Muda to enable efficient refilling of the EMD during rainy seasons, as well as a new barrage in Sungai Muda to support additional abstraction of raw water from the river during rainy seasons to refill the EMD," he said. – Bernama