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Planned water works completed ahead of schedule; some taps flowing in Penang



GEORGE TOWN: Chief Minister Chow Kon Yeow and the Penang Water Supply Corporation (PBAPP) have earned all-round praises after water supply resumed in several parts of Seberang Prai and Penang island after all planned water works have been completed ahead of schedule.

Since late last night, social media has been abuzz with water recovery updates.

PBAPP chief executive officer K. Pathmanathan said they completed all planned water works at the Sungai Dua Water Treatment Plant (WTP) and 22 other locations ahead of schedule yesterday.

He said the stage one of the water supply recovery plan commenced from 11pm yesterday.

"Water supply is being gradually normalised today for 197,025 water consumers (33 per cent of the 590,000 affected consumers) in Seberang Prai.

"Stage one should be completed by 6am tomorrow as scheduled. Stage one is not affected by the mishap at Sungai Prai because the Sungai Dua WTP is pumping water to stage one recovery consumers via other major pipelines," he said today.

Yesterday, PBAPP said it was committed to meeting the 6am deadline today to complete all water works, especially the replacement of two leaking control valves, which warranted the shutdown of the Sungai Dua WTP. The shutdown resulted in a four-day water supply interruption (SWSI) to some 590,000 water consumers throughout the state.

He, however, said their emergency response team (ERT) was dealing with an issue at Sungai Prai, adding that when they shut down water supply yesterday morning, the drop in water pressure dislodged the clamp that they had installed on a leaking section of the 1.35m underwater pipe last month.

Pathmanathan said work is on-going at Sungai Prai, noting that work was delayed last night due to a technical issue. "One of the clamps which was custom fabricated to be placed over the 1.35m-long hole on the pipeline could not be fitted properly.

"Dive operations were postponed. A heavy crane was brought in and deployed to lift that ill-fitting clamp for on-site modification. This is the quickest engineering solution with the lowest risk of long delay."

"The commercial dive team is scheduled to lock the modified clamp in place on the damaged pipeline today," he added. Pathmanathan said stage two of the water supply recovery is due for implementation from 6.01am tomorrow.

In this second stage, PBAPP is targeting to normalised water supply services for 495,065 water consumers (85 per cent of 590,000 affected water consumers) in Seberang Prai and Penang island. "The success of stage two, as scheduled, is dependent on the re-commissioning of the damaged section of the Sungai Prai underwater pipeline.

"There are two 1.35m-diameter pipelines that channel water from the Sungai Dua WTP to three sets of twin submarine pipelines that cross the sea to Penang island.

"The damaged section at Sungai Prai is a section of one of these 1.35m-diameter pipelines. Both pipelines have to be functioning properly for PBAPP to pump enough water to Penang island.

"As such, PBAPP is pushing hard for the completion of the Sungai Prai emergency repair works today," he said.