

16-2-2024

Phase 2B of Mengkuang Dam expansion project worth RM72.5m handed over to Penang, says state water supply company



GEORGE TOWN, Feb 16 — The federal government officially handed over Phase 2B of the Mengkuang Dam Expansion Project (MDEP) worth RM72.5 million to the Penang government yesterday.

Penang Water Supply Corporation (PBAPP) chief executive officer K. Pathmanathan said the MDEP is a federal government project that has been running since 2011, and Phase 2B refers to the installation of a 7-kilometre raw water pipeline with a diameter of 1.6 metres from the Mak Sulong Pumping Station to the Sungai Dua Canal.

“This pipeline effectively increases the drawdown capacity of the Expanded Mengkuang Dam (EMD) from 300 million litres per day (MLD) to 600 MLD.

“This boosted drawdown capacity will be useful to Penang and PBAPP during extended dry seasons and/or emergency scenarios involving Sungai Muda, Kedah,” he said in a statement today.

According to Pathmanathan, under normal conditions, PBAPP abstracts more than 1,000 MLD of raw water from Penang’s primary raw water resource, Sungai Muda, at the Lahar Tiang Intake in Seberang Perai.

The raw water from Lahar Tiang is channelled through the 14-km Sungai Dua Canal to the Sungai Dua Water Treatment Plant (WTP).

Pathmanathan said the Sungai Dua WTP produces treated water that is distributed to about 465,000 water consumers in Seberang Perai, as well as in the Barat Daya and Timur Laut districts on Penang Island.

He added that under “abnormal circumstances”, PBAPP may now draw down up to 600 MLD of raw water from the EMD, which will be channelled from the dam to the Sungai Dua Canal and, subsequently, to the Sungai Dua WTP.

He said that the EMD mainly serves as a strategic drought dam and not a daily dam like the Air Itam Dam or Teluk Bahang Dam on Penang Island.

“The EMD’s reserves will only be drawn down during dry seasons and emergency response scenarios when PBAPP is unable to abstract sufficient raw water from Sungai Muda.

“As of February 2024, the Sungai Dua WTP requires at least 1,000 MLD of raw water to produce sufficient treated water for all consumers in its service area.

“Even with the new Phase 2B pipeline, the maximum drawdown from the EMD is 600 MLD, which is still 400 MLD short of 1,000 MLD. This means that the EMD still cannot ‘fully back-up’ Sungai Muda as a raw water resource for Penang,” he said.

Pathmanathan said that in order to “insulate Penang” from the negative impacts of future Sungai Muda incidents, PBAPP proposed the laying of additional pipelines to further boost the EMD’s drawdown capacity from 400 MLD to 1,000 MLD.

“With a 1,000 MLD drawdown capacity from the dam, the Sungai Dua WTP need not be shut down in the event of any incident involving Sungai Muda,” he said. — Bernama