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PBAPP confirms treated water in Penang unaffected by Sungai Kulim pollution



BUKIT MERTA JAM: The Penang Water Supply Corporation (PBAPP) has reported no significant change in the quality of treated water supplied in Penang following the reported discharge of farm waste into Sungai Kulim, a raw water resource in Seberang Prai.

PBAPP chief executive officer K. Pathmanathan said this was the result of water quality tests conducted jointly by the Penang Health Department and PBAPP."

"This procedure ensures that PBAPP treated water complies with the Quality Assurance Programme (QAP) parameters set by the Health Ministry.

"PBAPP tests the quality of raw water abstracted from all raw water resources in Penang, as well as treated water from all its water treatment plants (WTPs).

"In the past 10 days, PBAPP's tests have not revealed any major violations of the water test parameters set by the ministry..

"As such, it appears that the reported farm discharge has not affected treated water quality in Penang," he said today.

On Monday, the Penang government confirmed that the discharge from a duck farm in the Sungai Lembu village here had led to the pollution of two rivers. This followed earlier reports that a pig farm in the same vicinity was to blame for the pollution of Sungai Kulim and Sungai Air Merah in Kedah.

State Agrotechnology, Food Security and Cooperative Development Committee chairman Fahmi Zainol said checks by various government departments and agencies traced the pollution to the duck farm. He said the duck farm was found to have released waste directly into a drain that flows into both rivers.

Pathmanathan said PBAPP would continue to vigilantly monitor water quality. The PBAPP Central Laboratory in Sungai Dua is a six-time recipient of the "IKM Excellence Award" that recognises its competency and accomplishments in the field of water testing.

"PBAPP would like to assure all water consumers in Penang that we will report any water quality issues detected in a precise and prompt manner," he added.

Pathmanathan also said Sungai Kulim was an important raw water resource for Penang. He said, during wet seasons, the raw water from Sungai Kulim is pumped to refill the 86.4 billion litre Expanded Mengkuang Dam (EMD), Penang's largest dam.

He added that raw water from Sungai Kulim is abstracted daily for treatment at the Bukit Toh Allang WTP in Seberang Prai Utara (SPU). This WTP produces 40 million litres of water per day (MLD) which is supplied to 17,462 water consumers nearby. The primary raw water resource for the Sungai Dua WTP, Penang's most important WTP, is Sungai Muda and not Sungai Kulim.

"PBAPP's primary responsibility is to continuously supply safe and clean treated water to 689,786 water consumers in Penang.

"To fulfill this responsibility effectively, PBAPP needs access to the cleanest available raw water. However, PBAPP is a licensed water supply operator and not a regulatory body."

"Therefore, we highly appreciate the prompt and decisive actions taken by the Penang government to uncover the actual source and cause of the reported pollution of Sungai Kulim," he said, expressing hope that appropriate regulatory actions will be taken to consistently survey and protect Penang's raw water resources such as rivers and streams.