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Penang flags critical Sungai Muda levels, activates contingency plan



THE Penang Water Supply Corporation (PBAPP) has engaged with the relevant authorities in Kedah to raise urgent concerns over the water level at Sungai Muda, which has reached a critical threshold.

Chief Minister Chow Kon Yeow, who also chairs PBAPP, said the immediate solution proposed is the controlled release of water from Beris Dam.

“This matter has already been communicated to the relevant authorities in Kedah. At the same time, we will continue with the drawdown from Mengkuang Dam to the Sungai Dua Water Treatment Plant,” he told reporters today.

When asked whether the state had applied to the National Disaster Management Agency (NADMA) for cloud seeding operations, Chow said no such request has been made so far.

“Even if it is considered, it would be more suitable to carry it out in upstream areas,” he added.

Earlier, PBAPP chief executive officer Datuk K. Pathmanathan said PBAPP has activated the Sungai Muda Contingency Plan and released about 300 million litres per day (MLD) from the Expanded Mengkuang Dam (EMD) to sustain operations at the Sungai Dua Water Treatment Plant.

The Sungai Dua plant, Penang’s largest and most critical facility, produces an average of 1,100 MLD of treated water and supplies about 465,000 consumers across all five districts in the state.

Pathmanathan said the swift activation of the contingency plan had so far prevented supply disruptions in Seberang Perai Utara, Seberang Perai Tengah, Seberang Perai Selatan, as well as the northeast and southwest districts on the island.

He attributed the sudden drop in river levels to upstream irrigation withdrawals in Kedah, adding that PBAPP had not been informed in advance.

Pathmanathan also urged the National Water Services Commission and the Energy and Natural Resources Ministry to urgently intervene in managing the Sungai Muda system.

“The security of water supply for Penang and Kedah must take precedence over irrigation needs under current conditions,” he said.