

27-4-2026

Penang's Sungai Prai pipeline replacement complete: Long-term water resilience secured



Kerja penyambungan akhir paip menyeberangi Sungai Prai (SP-RCP) siap pada 26.4.2026.
The final connection works for the 3rd Sungai Prai River Crossing Pipeline (SP-RCP) was completed on 26.4.2026. © PBAPP 2026

BUTTERWORTH: The Penang Water Supply Corporation (PBAPP) has completed the replacement of all underwater pipelines across Sungai Prai, effectively eliminating the risk of leaks or bursts that could trigger prolonged water supply disruptions.

Its chief executive officer Datuk K. Pathmanathan said the Sungai Prai River-Crossing Pipelines (SP-RCP) programme, finalised yesterday, provided a long-term solution to strengthen water supply resilience in the state.

He said the programme comprised three projects implemented over the past year at a total cost of RM16.203 million.

"The newly installed pipeline sections replace ageing underwater pipelines laid in the 1990s, which had become increasingly vulnerable to failure and were difficult to repair," he said today.

SP-RCP 1 was completed on April 27, 2025, linking Kampung Telok and Taman Ampang Jajar at a cost of RM7.879 million, followed by SP-RCP 2 on Jan 28, 2026, at Jalan Permatang Pasir (RM3.238 million), and SP-RCP 3 yesterday at Kampung Bagan Serai (RM5.086 million).

The replacement programme was accelerated following a major pipeline burst at Taman Ampang Jajar on Dec 18, 2023, which caused an unscheduled water supply interruption affecting about 200,000 consumers in Seberang Prai and parts of Penang island.

Emergency repairs carried out 3.5 metres below the river surface required specialised expertise and equipment from outside the state, taking 56 hours to complete, with supply recovery for 99 per cent of affected consumers taking a further 72 hours.

Following the incident, Chief Minister Chow Kon Yeow directed PBAPP to undertake a comprehensive replacement of all vulnerable underwater pipelines across Sungai Prai.

Pathmanathan said the final connection works for SP-RCP 3 were completed without any scheduled water supply interruption (SWSI), following the deployment of "hot tapping" and "line-stopping" technologies.

"This allowed continuous water supply during the connection process, avoiding a potential 48 to 72-hour disruption affecting about 10,000 consumers, including factories in Mak Mandin and the Prai Industrial Area," he added.

He said the technologies were first deployed during SP-RCP 2 in January, preventing a scheduled disruption for about 26,000 consumers.

Among the key benefits of the programme are improved supply stability and water pressure for about 465,000 consumers, safer transmission of treated water from the Sungai Dua Water Treatment Plant, and easier access for inspection and maintenance works.

The new pipeline sections are expected to have a lifespan of at least 25 years, while also enabling faster and more cost-efficient repairs in future.