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No more water cuts? Penang looks to upgrade pipelines without disrupting supply



GEORGE TOWN, Jan 28 — The Penang Water Supply Corporation (PBAPP) will consider installing main pipeline connections using the ‘No Scheduled Water Supply Interruption (SWSI)’ method for future large-scale projects to avoid inconveniencing consumers.

Penang Chief Minister Chow Kon Yeow said the approach will be given priority, particularly for initiatives that could affect 20,000 or more account holders in the state.

He told reporters this during a site visit to check on the progress of the final connection work of the second Sungai Perak crossing pipeline, which was completed today ahead of schedule.

“The implementation of new technologies, such as line stopping and hot-tapping, allows PBAPP to avoid initiating scheduled water supply disruptions, which used to potentially affect about 26,000 consumers in Seberang Perai Utara and Seberang Perai Tengah.

“The Sungai Perai underwater pipe leakage incident in December 2024 was one such emergency situation, requiring prompt action, including sending in divers to patch up the leaking underwater pipe section, but it was to no avail due to the strong water pressure.

“A decision was then made to implement a bypass to replace the leaking pipe section to ensure the supply of water could be resumed,” he told a media conference during the visit.

Chow said pipe replacement work involved four locations of the Sungai Perak underpass that had been in use since the 1970s, including in Ampang Jajar, Kampung Telok, Pengkalan Tambang and Kampung Bagan Serai.

He added that work to replace the pipes began in January 2025, and work at two preliminary locations was completed on April 20, 2025, but the operation back then resulted in a temporary water supply disruption to consumers.

However, he said that for the two other locations, the PBAPP used the new method, enabling the reconnection to be carried out without stopping the water supply.

PBAPP chief executive officer Datuk K. Pathmanathan said the entire cost for the four pipelines across Sungai Perak was RM18.6 million. — Bernama