

Penang takes measures to save water

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GEORGE TOWN — A contingency plan is being worked out as the state attempts to overcome its water woes caused by the current dry spell.

State Agriculture, Agro-based Industries, Rural Development and Health Committee chairman Dr Afif Bahardin said all irrigation activities had been stopped and water supply was being focused on domestic use as the El Nino phenomenon is expected to persist until June.

"Agriculture activities, including padi farming had been delayed due to shortage of water caused by the current dry spell," he said.

"We are doing everything within our resources to solve this issue and we hope

the federal government would assist us in the matter."

He added that although it rained for the past few days, the amount of rainfall was not enough to carry out agricultural irrigation works in the state.

It would be unprecedented if Penang was hit by a water crisis as the state has never implemented water rationing.

Penang Water Supply Corporation and PBA Holdings Bhd chief executive officer Datuk Jaseni Maidinsa has warned that some four million people in the northern region would be badly affected by an imminent water crisis.

He said water reserves in the regional dams would only last until June if the current aridity continued indefinitely, and called on Kedah to stop all irrigation activities involving Sungai Muda as the river was drying up.

Kedah has been continuing its irrigation

of padi fields as the state has had rain for the past few days.

Nearly 80 per cent of Penang's water supply comes from Sungai Muda.

The Science, Technology and Innovation Ministry conducted cloud seeding on Tuesday at targeted dam areas in Perak, Penang, Kedah and Perlis, with limited success.

The operation was conducted from 2.50pm to 5.15pm at Timah Tason dam in Perlis, Ahning dam, Pedu dam, Muda dam and Beris dam, all in Kedah, and Teluk Bahang dam and Air Itam dam in Penang and Bukit Merah dam in Perak.

Minister Datuk Wilfred Madius Tangau said in a statement cloud seeding was done to trigger rain and increase water levels in the dams to prevent a regional water crisis.

The levels at the dams have dropped considerably, some near danger level, due to the extreme dry spell.

"However, the cloud seeding operations in the four states only had limited success as it only rained heavily at the Bukit Merah dam in Perak, while other areas remained dry," he said.

In Penang, water level at the Teluk Bahang dam was recorded at 59.5 per cent while Air Itam dam recorded only 57.4 per cent capacity.



A digital signboard shows worrying figures of water levels at dams in Penang. — Picture by Sayuti Zainudin

Temperature forecast today

- Kota Baru Max: 34°C
- Kuala Terengganu Max: 33°C
- Kuantan Max: 33°C
- George Town Max: 35°C
- Ipoh Max: 35°C
- Alor Star Max: 36°C
- Kangar Max: 39°C
- Putrajaya Max: 36°C
- Kuala Lumpur Max: 35°C
- Petaling Jaya Max: 35°C
- Seremban Max: 36°C
- Malacca Max: 36°C
- Johor Baru Max: 36°C
- Kuching Max: 33°C
- Kota Kinabalu Max: 34°C
- Labuan Max: 33°C

World records highest temperature ever

NEW YORK — Last month was the hottest March in 137 years of record keeping, according to data released on Tuesday by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

It is the 11th consecutive month to set a new record, and it puts 2016 on course to set a third straight annual record.

It might seem premature to talk about setting a new yearly record after just three months of data, but these months have been such an extreme departure from the norm that Gavin Schmidt, who directs NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies, has already made the call.

"I estimate (a greater than) 99 per cent chance of an annual record in 2016," Schmidt wrote on Twitter last week, after NASA released its own record climate readings.

A month ago, following the release of February's data, Schmidt wrote, simply, "Wow."

Since 1980, the world has set a new annual temperature record approximately every three years, and 15 of the hottest 16 years ever measured are in the 21st century.

The March data follows the hottest winter on record worldwide.

Results from the world's top monitoring

agencies vary slightly, but Nasa, NOAA and the Japan Meteorological Agency all agree that 2016 has no precedent in modern climate record.

The most extreme heat swept the Arctic, where winter ice levels were at the lowest on record for this time of year.

In Greenland, ice melted so fast scientists initially thought their calculations might be wrong.

Some of this is the result of a huge El Niño weather pattern lingering in the Pacific Ocean.

But the broader trend is clear — we live on a planet that is warming rapidly, with no

respite in sight. Now, the hottest winter on record is turning into the hottest spring, the beginning of something grimly new. — Bloomberg