

Nation

[Home](#) > [News](#) > [Nation](#)

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Four million at risk of water cuts

GEORGE TOWN: About four million people in the north will be affected if the Federal Government does not act fast to resolve the impending water crisis.

Penang Water Supply Corporation Sdn Bhd (PBAPP) chief executive officer Datuk Jaseni Maidinsa said Penangites would be hit hard as both the Beris dam and Muda dam could only last for 30 and 50 days respectively as reported.

“These two dams release water to sustain the water level of Sungai Muda where 80% of Penang water comes from.

“We are concerned with the sustainability of the water level in Sungai Muda,” he said.

Jaseni also raised concern of Kedah’s contingency plan if both dams dried up.

“If they continue to supply water for irrigation in Southern Kedah, they will be in serious deficit.

“That is a fact,” he said at a press conference after the signing of “Corporate Integrity Pledge” (CIP) between PBA Holdings Bhd and Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission at Jen Hotel yesterday.

Jaseni said the company had proposed to the Federal Government to carry out four urgent measures – large scale cloud seeding, postponement of irrigation activities in the northern region, minimising draw down of reserves from all dams and to advise consumers to use less water.

Jaseni said although there were rains on Sunday, they managed to collect only 1mm and 31mm at the Air Itam dam and Teluk Bahang dam respectively.

“We were supposed to get rains for the last three weeks but we did not because of El Nino.

“Business will be crippled. Any water rationing can cause chaos in domestic and commercial activities,” he said.

Jaseni said certain parts of Johor and Perlis have already started water rationing.

“This is getting serious. The national water council should convene and find a solution for the problem because it involves four million people,” he said.