

# To put an end to logging at Ulu Muda Forest, pay Kedah, Govt told

**GEORGE TOWN:** The Muda Dam water catchment area at the Ulu Muda Forest Reserve in neighbouring Kedah has shrunk by 87.3% – from 98,400ha in 1969 to just 12,484ha this year.

This has alarmed the Penang Water Supply Corporation because the dam provided 80% of the daily raw water needs for this state.

Its chief executive officer Datuk Jaseni Maidinsa urged the Federal Government to compensate Kedah if the state gazetted the entire 106,418ha forest reserve as a water catchment area – putting an end to logging there.

He said the forest reserve was the most important water catchment area in the Northern Corridor Economic Region but timber production there was growing because Kedah depended on logging as a source of income.

“When Muda Dam was built in 1969, its water catchment area was 98,400ha,” said Jaseni.

“According to a Kedah Forestry Department report in 2008, the gazetted catchment area for the dam was 22,611ha while 78,052ha of forest land was allocated for timber production.

“In a written reply to a parliamentary question raised by Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng in August, the Natural Resources and Environment Ministry stated that only 12,484ha of the 106,418ha Ulu Muda Forest Reserve was gazetted as a water catchment area,” Jaseni told reporters in Komtar yesterday.

He said the statistics reflected a disturbing and dangerous trend in Ulu Muda.