

9<sup>th</sup> MAY 2016

## **PRESS STATEMENT**

*by Dato' Ir. Jaseni Maidinsa,  
Chief Executive Officer,  
PBA Holdings Bhd (PBAHB) and  
Perbadanan Bekalan Air Pulau Pinang Sdn Bhd (PBAPP)*

## **PBAPP HAS NEVER RELEASED ANY RAW WATER INTO SUNGAI MUDA OR THE SEA**

PENANG, Mon (9/5/2016): Perbadanan Bekalan Air Pulau Pinang Sdn Bhd (PBAPP) is not releasing any raw water into Sungai Muda or the sea, as alleged by some farmers.

In fact, Penang does not have a dam that can release water into Sungai Muda. The raw water installation at Rantau Panjang is the Sungai Muda Water Scheme Barrage (SMWSB).

There is an overflow at the barrage as it is not designed to completely stop or block the flow of water from Sungai Muda into the Straits of Malacca.

There was a mini-demonstration by about 100 farmers at the barrage on 7<sup>th</sup> April 2016. As this is a security area, PBAPP deployed its auxiliary police force to secure the area and to ensure the farmers' safety.

PBAPP sympathises with the plight of farmers who cannot plant crops due to Super El Niño. However, they are expressing their anger and frustration at the wrong party and the wrong water installation.

## **PURPOSE OF THE BARRAGE**

The SMWSB was commissioned in 1973 to:

- a) Prevent salinity intrusion of sea water from the Straits of Malacca into water abstraction areas along Sungai Muda;
- b) Sustain sufficient river levels for PBAPP to abstract water upstream at the Lahar Tiang Intake; and

- c) Provide a compensation flow in the form of a 5% to 10% overflow which is required by the Waters Act 1920 (revised 1989) so that Sungai Muda stays "alive" all the way to the Straits of Malacca.

The structure is 43-years-old. It is still functioning properly.

its height is fixed, and cannot be raised or adjusted. It cannot be manipulated in any way to reduce the amount of overflow. However, gates at the bottom of the barrage may be opened to release flood waters whenever there is excessive rainfall to prevent the river from overflowing its banks.

## **OVERFLOW AT THE BARRAGE**

The overflow at the barrage, caused by high river levels, may be attributed to:

- Release of water from two dams designed to release water into Sungai Muda - the Beris Dam and the Muda Dam in Kedah; and/or
- Heavy rainfall upstream in the Greater Muda Catchments.

PBAPP is not in control of the release of water from the Beris Dam and the Muda Dam. And, we cannot control the amount of rainfall in the catchments.

## **BARRAGE CANNOT BE 'MODIFIED IMMEDIATELY'**

The SMWSB cannot be modified or raised as a stop-gap measure. Any plan to raise this barrage must be subjected to a proper in-depth engineering study.

An unauthorised stop-gap measure to raise the barrage is dangerous and may result in disastrous consequences. If the barrage structure is compromised, sea water will flow upstream. If the barrage collapses, the river level will drop.

Such mishaps will compromise daily raw water abstraction works by PBAPP's Sungai Dua Water Treatment Plant and 14 other upstream water treatment plants in South Kedah.

All these facts may be easily verified with the Department of Irrigation and Drainage (JPS).

## **EASIER, FASTER AND SAFER WAY**

The easier, faster and safer way to reduce the overflow is to reduce the release of water from the Beris Dam and the Muda Dam in Kedah.

PBAPP has publicly and repeatedly called for less water release from these dams. This action will prevent water wastage and will help to sustain the levels of these dams for as long as possible.

Please allow me to clarify again:

1. PBAPP is not releasing raw water into Sungai Muda or the sea. There is no dam in Penang to release water into the river.
2. We are not in control of the release of raw water from the Beris Dam and the Muda Dam in Kedah.
3. We cannot raise or modify the barrage in Rantau Panjang without an engineering study and extensive engineering works.
4. We are not to blame for the overflow at the barrage.

Thank You.

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