

Tapping a second river

Penang's plan to draw raw water from Sungai Perak as an alternative to Sungai Muda in Kedah may soon materialise following a meeting where the Water, Land and Natural Resources Ministry expressed willingness to assist Penang in its prompt implementation. >3



Great teamwork

Participants including people with visual impairment make new friends as they team up for tandem rides during the Run and Ride for Sight (RRFS 2019) at Queensbay Mall in Penang. — LIM BENG TATT/The Star >2

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Help for swifter flow of plan

Ministry to assist Penang in procuring raw water from Sungai Perak

PENANG is seeking the implementation of the Sungai Perak Raw Water Transfer Scheme soon to ensure water supply security until 2050.

Penang Water Supply Corporation (PBAPP) chief executive officer Datuk Jaseni Maidinsa (pic) said a meeting was held with the Ministry of Water, Land and Natural Resources on March 1 regarding the scheme.

"The ministry has expressed its willingness to intervene and to assist in prompt implementation.

"Following the meeting, the Penang government and PBAPP are looking forward to the implementation of a Sungai Perak inter-state raw water transfer solution soon," he said in a press statement on Wednesday.

Jaseni said the scheme would be

the most logical, rational and economical option for achieving water supply security in both Penang and north Perak.

"Sungai Perak is presently under-utilised as a raw water resource and the scheme would ensure a continued supply until 2050.

"When Penang migrated to the National Water Services Re-structuring Initiative in 2011, the Federal Government agreed to fund and implement raw water resource projects for Penang.

"The cost of constructing a conventional water treatment plant in Penang to treat raw water transferred from Sungai Perak is



significantly lower than the cost of setting up a desalination plant of the same capacity," he said.

Large-scale desalination and reverse osmosis processes are also more energy-intensive and cost-intensive.

Water recycling and rainwater harvesting require additional specialised infrastructure, including separate pipeline networks for channelling the raw water and distributing the processed water.

"PBAPP's operating costs would affect Penang water tariffs," Jaseni pointed out.

He said an independent 'Masterplan Study for Potable Water Supply in Penang until

2050' that was commissioned by PBAPP in 2009 had projected water demand to be 1,483 million litres per day (MLD) by 2030, 1,696 MLD by 2040 and 1,884 MLD by 2050.

"Besides meeting projected water demand, the scheme will also mitigate the risks of Penang's over-dependency on Sungai Muda as a raw water resource especially during dry seasons.

"If the primary objective to ensure water security for Penang until year 2050, Sungai Perak represents the best solution for the next 30 years," added Jaseni.

The Penang government and PBAPP have been seeking to tap Sungai Perak as a second or alternative raw water resource for Penang since 2011.

Digging halted pending permit for sand removal



A view of the Macallum seafont where excavation and land reclamation works for the third Penang submarine pipeline have been put on hold voluntarily by the contractor.

THE Penang Water Supply Corporation (PBAPP) has stopped excavation and land reclamation works off the Macallum seafont in George Town.

Its chief executive officer Datuk Jaseni Maidinsa said project contractor Wira Syukur (M) Sdn Bhd (WSSB) had stopped work voluntarily on the implementation of the Butterworth-Penang island twin submarine pipeline on March 30.

It is the state's third twin submarine pipeline project.

He said both PBAPP and WSSB did not receive any official stop-work order from any authority.

He said the contractor told PBAPP it had received a letter from Penang Land and Mines Office (PTG) on March 29.

"In that letter, PTG notified WSSB to apply for a Permit 4B for the removal of sea sand from Penang.

"WSSB applied for Permit 4B via the northeast district and land office but has not received any reply yet.

"As such, we told WSSB to stop all excavation and land reclamation works until it obtains the permit from PTG," he said at a recent press conference at Komtar.

Earlier, fishermen in Penang cried foul as their income had dwindled significantly due to sand digging works in waters near the Macallum seafont.

Penang Fishermen's Association chairman Nazri Ahmad claimed that excavator and sand dredgers were used in sand digging work which started two months ago.

He said the activity had caused the fishermen's catch to drop by at least 50%, adding that the fishermen were worried that the seafood might be contaminated by bacteria.

"The mud at the area might be

polluted by bacteria such as *E.coli* and Salmonella," he told a press conference at the Jelutong fishermen units on March 28.

Jaseni said seabed excavation works were necessary to dig a 3.2km trench across the channel to encase the twin submarine pipelines below the seabed.

"This measure will protect the pipelines and prevent the pipelines from floating upwards," he explained.

The third twin submarine pipeline project is to ensure more efficient delivery of treated water from the Sungai Dua water treatment plant in Seberang Prai.

It will act as a back-up for the first submarine pipeline commissioned in 1973 as well as meet future water demands on the island.

On another note, Jaseni denied claims that Penang has no compre-

hensive long-term plan to manage its water supply and promote water security.

He said Penang has achieved a treated water reserve margin of 32.9% in 2018, the highest and safest in Malaysia.

"Penang is working towards water supply security until year 2050, in accordance to the recommendations of a masterplan study," he said.

He also denied claims that Penang did not follow up on its campaign to save Ulu Muda, the water catchment area for Sungai Muda.

"Penang and PBAPP have highlighted the importance of Ulu Muda as a regional raw water resource.

"However, since Ulu Muda is in Kedah, the onus is on the Federal Government to work with Kedah to carry out the necessary actions."



INFO DAY

Han Chiang University College of Communication (HCUC) will hold its Info Day from 9am to 5pm today and tomorrow. Promotions include the award of Chancellor Scholarships, up to 100% scholarships, bursaries and rebates of up to RM1,100 for early birds and RM4,000 for alumni. For details, call 011-36141088.

HEALTH DAY

Cathedral of the Holy Spirit (CHS) is organising its CHS Health Day tomorrow from 9am to 4pm at the CHS' Holy Spirit Hall at 1, Tingkat Besi, Penang. A blood and organ donation drive will be held from 9am to 4pm while free health screening and live chat sessions will be held from 9am to 1pm. Details, contact 04-6584909.

SUMMONS DISCOUNT

In conjunction with the 212th Police Day celebration, a 50% discount on traffic summons except for accident-related, non-compoundable summons, Ops Selamat Aidilfitri 2018 summons, cases tried at court and lorry summons will be offered on April 9 and 10 from 9am to 4pm at George Town police district headquarters in Jalan Patani.

HOME EXPO

The 17th Home Design and Interior Exhibition (Homedec) will be held from April 12 to 14 at the Setia SPICE Convention Centre in Bayan Lepas, Penang, from 11am to 7pm. Workshops will be available to help visitors gain knowledge in transforming their homes into a calm and peaceful place for retreat after a long day.

SONGKRAN FESTIVAL

The Chaiya Mangalaram Buddhist Temple is organising its Thai Traditional New Year Celebration, the 'Annual Songkran Water Festival' on April 13 at 10am at the temple in Lorong Burmah, Penang. Lunch will be provided to devotees.

AMERICAN MUSIC

The Actors Studio Chorus and Orchestra will bring some pieces of American music selected from West Side Story (Bernstein), Rhapsody in Blue (Gershwin), Old American Songs (Copland) and The Sound of Music (Rodgers) to Penang audiences in their latest concert - An American in Penang - on April 13 at 8.30pm at Stage 3A, Penangpac (Straits Quay, level 3A). Ticket prices are RM40 for adults; and RM30 for students, the physically-challenged, senior citizens above 60, and TAS card holders. Group booking of 'buy 10 free 1' is available. Details, visit www.penangpac.org or call Penangpac at 04-8991722/2722.

HEALTH TALK

There will be a health talk on 'Understanding the Real Benefits of Glutathione in Your Total Wellbeing from the Breakthrough Science of Ribocetine' on April 18 at 7pm at the Grace Room of the YMCA in Jalan Macalister, Penang. Light refreshments will be served. Details, call Robert at 04-6590864 or 014-3483953.

CHARITY FAIR

In aid of the 'Hospice Home Programme' of the Penang Hospice Society, a charity food and fun fair will be held on April 28 from 9am to 2pm at St Anne's Hall, Bukit Mertajam, Penang. For enquiries, call 04-5374140/ 04-2284140.