



## Convoy at sea

Decorated fishing boats with Jalur Gemilang flying high make a beautiful sight as they cruise out to sea during the Merdeka@Komuniti sea parade to mark the 63rd National Day starting from the jetty at Kuala Sungai Udang in Yan, Kedah. — G.C. TAN/The Star >3

# Water supply *backup plan*

## Penang embarking on projects to mitigate risks from delay in Sungai Perak scheme

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PENANG Water Supply Corporation (PBAPP) has formulated contingency plans to address the state's water security issues.

Its chief executive officer Datuk Jaseni Maidinsa said the contingency plans, known as Penang Water Supply Initiative 2050 (PWSI 2050), would commence by January and would mitigate the raw water risks faced by the state.

"We commissioned a feasibility study on proposed PWSI 2050 projects, which are scheduled for completion by January 2021," he said during a press conference after PBA Holdings Berhad's (PBAHB) annual general meeting on Tuesday.

He said the contingency plans that were drafted were necessary due to the following: changes to weather patterns, the availability of raw water from Sungai Muda, the threat of logging in Ulu Muda and the Sungai Perak Raw Transfer Scheme (SPRWTS) which has not been implemented yet by the Federal Government.

Although PBAPP has continuously supplied water to all consumers, he said PBAPP

cannot accurately predict the impact of climate change in the coming years.

"It has been projected that Sungai Muda may only be able to meet Penang's and Kedah's combined raw water needs until 2025, and we constantly watch out for the threat of logging in Ulu Muda, which is the water catchment area for Sungai Muda in Kedah.

"As for SPRWTS, the original plan that we developed since 2009, it has reached a stalemate today and it has not been fruitful," he said.

The first plan under PWSI 2050 is Package 12A of Sungai Dua Water Treatment Plant in mainland Penang.

It involves the construction of a new 114 million litres per day (MLD) water treatment module and will allow PBAPP to produce more treated water until SPRWTS is commissioned.

The project will start next year and will be located within the compound of the existing plant.

The second contingency plan is the Sungai Prai Water Supply Scheme (SPWSS).

"Previous engineering studies indicated that raw water from that river may not be

safely treated using conventional water treatment technology. As such, SPWSS will explore the possibility of employing alternative water treatment technologies to treat raw water from there," he said, adding that the project has a potential yield of 136MLD.

The third plan is phase one of Penang Desalination Water Supply Scheme (PDWSS), with a potential yield of 250MLD.

"Phase one of PDWSS proposes to construct a desalination facility in the southern area of the island to cater to Balik Pulau and the upcoming three islands to be reclaimed under Penang South Reclamation," Jaseni said.

Phase one of the project is scheduled for commissioning in December 2024 and subsequent phases will be implemented until 2050.

Jaseni said these contingency plans are to ensure that by January 2025, if SPRWTS is still delayed, Penang will still have enough water resources.

He stressed that PBAPP and the state government would continue to pursue SPRWTS with Federal Government as it is still the most rational raw water solution.

On water supply security, Jaseni said rivers that have become raw water sources in the country should be classified as strategic locations.

"If we are taking water from rivers, they should be classified as strategic locations. Rivers cannot be taken for granted," Jaseni said.

He called on other states to impose a strict 30m buffer zone on both sides of strategic rivers.

Chief Minister Chow Kon Yeow, who is also chairman of PBAHB, said PBAHB's annual general meeting approved a single tier final dividend of 1.75sen per share for the financial year ending Dec 31 last year.

He said with the approval, PBAHB rewarded shareholders with a net single tier dividend, proposed and declared, of 3.5sen for last year.

"During the year in review, PBAHB recorded a total revenue and other operating income amounting to RM363.14mil and our profit after tax was recorded as RM25.15mil," he said.

He added that PBAHB's after-tax profit was achieved without a water tariff review in Penang.