

Cut water for padi fields, says PBA chief

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Three-quarters of river water supply in the north goes for irrigation of farms, says Jaseni



GEORGETOWN: Water supply for padi farming in northern states must be cut in view of an impending shortage, the Penang Water Supply Corporation said today. PBA chief executive Jaseni Maidinsa said three-quarters of water drawn from rivers in the north went to irrigation, while the remainder was used to process potable (drinkable) water.

“When there is not enough water in our dams, you ought to stop irrigation,” he said.

“Irrigation only produces one product, padi. But keep in mind water is required in everything else. When you cannot produce everything else, you will lose everything,” he said at a press conference at Air Itam Dam today.

Jaseni said the PBA has called for an emergency meeting with water-related agencies of the Federal Government to discuss a moratorium on water for irrigation.

On Penang’s water levels, he said the dams had enough water to last until June, but called for more cloud-seeding efforts in Penang, especially at water catchment areas.

At 10.30am today, the water levels at Penang’s three major dams were: Teluk Bahang 58.7%; Air Itam 57.2%; Mengkuang 90.5%.

Neighbouring Kedah has reported that the Beris Dam and Muda Dam were at critical levels with water supplies to last 30 to 50 days.

Kedah Menteri Besar Ahmad Bashah Md Hanipah was reported as saying the water level at two other dams, Pedu and Ahning, was still high, at 68.9 per cent and 75.4 per cent, and was marked safe.

The Muda and Beris dams release water into the Sungai Muda, which in turn is used by 14 water treatment plants in Kedah and Penang to draw water.