

Perlis DID stops water release to padi fields

KANGAR: As the state braces for the second wave of the dry spell, the Perlis Drainage and Irrigation Department has ceased releasing water from the Timah Tasoh Dam to padi fields.

The priority is to cater solely for domestic consumption, according to its director Nishad Mohamed CJ Mohd Shaffy.

He said he hoped farmers outside the Muda Agricultural Development Authority (Mada) area in northern Perlis, who had been receiving water from the dam for double padi crop cultivation, would understand the situation.

"Water for domestic needs is more important while the padi fields can depend on scattered rainfall as forecast," he said.

Nishad said the Timah Tasoh Dam was now at 56% of its capacity of 40 million cubic meters and if the water was used for irrigation, it could last for only two months instead of five months.

He said the reservoir level had dropped to 27.59m from the normal level of 29.1m, and unless

water release measures were enforced, the dam could dry up like during the previous El Nino phenomenon. The dam supplies 40% of northern Perlis' domestic water needs while Mada caters to the rest of the state.

Nisyad said DID would submit a proposal to the Perlis government to create a reciprocal arrangement between the Timah Tasoh and Pedu dams in Kedah to assist each other during contingencies because there would be times when one of the dam's excess capacity had to be released.

However, Perlis Farmers Area Organisation director Shaidan Nordin said the Perlis DID decision to stop releasing water to padi fields outside Mada would hamper second cropping this year, which normally runs from September.

Paya Farmers Organisation chairman Had Bakar urged DID to reconsider the decision as some padi fields outside Mada had already been ploughed and needed water supply. — Bernama