

Johor to restore dam water level

OPTIONS: State could pump water from Sungai Johor into dam or do cloud seeding

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MENTERI Besar Datuk Seri Mohamed Khaled Nordin said water will be pumped from Sungai Johor to restore the critically low levels of water at the Sungai Layang dam.

This could improve the water level at the dam, which is one of two in Johor facing water shortage because of the dry weather.

Khaled said the move was among two measures taken to restore the water reserves in the state.

The other was the month-long water rationing exercise carried out here, part of Johor Baru and parts of Kota Tinggi which would ensure the water reserves return to normal.

Yesterday, the water level at the Sungai Layang Dam was at 19.1m, below the critical level of 23.5m.

* The Sungai Lebam dam near Kota



Johor Menteri Besar **Datuk Seri Mohamed Khaled Nordin** (second from right) visiting the Layang Dam at Kong Kong in Masai. With him is state Public Works, Rural and Regional Development Committee chairman **Datuk Hasni Mohammad** (right). Pic by Hairul Anuar Abd Rahim

Tinggi, which is the other dam affected, recorded water levels at 9.63m yesterday, which is below the critical level of 12.27m.

"The water level at the Sungai

Layang dam remains at 19m despite the water rationing.

"If we were to wait for rain, it would take three years for the water level at the dam to be restored.

"The options we have now is to either pump water from Sungai Johor or conduct cloud seeding.

"We are currently awaiting approval for the use of (Singaporean)

airspace," Khaled said after visiting the Sungai Layang dam in Kong Kong, near here yesterday.

He said the approval to conduct cloud seeding over the dams was being sought at federal level, and it was a matter to be decided between the Malaysian and Singapore governments.

"We have to wait for the approval and we hope an agreement will be reached (to conduct cloud seeding)."

Khaled said the cause in the drop of water levels at the two dams was the weather patterns in the last two years.

"The rainfall has seen a different pattern in the last two years. There was rain in the years before that, but the rainfall was 50 per cent less," he said.

"We cannot dismiss that the world's changing weather pattern has affected our country."

Khaled said Badan Kawal Selia Air Johor (Bakaj) was looking into protecting the water catchment areas around the dams in Johor.

The *New Straits Times* had recently reported that Bakaj was gazetting and fencing up water catchment areas, totalling 2,575ha, around Sungai Layang and Sungai Lebam to prevent encroachment that may affect natural sources of raw water.