

'Johor needs new water sources when reserves are low'

NUSAJAYA: There is a need to consider alternative methods to source for water, such as harvesting rainwater in buildings and encouraging industries to use untreated water in preparation, for periods when the state's water reserves are low.

Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Mohamed Khaled Nordin said alternative methods would be useful in the event of a prolonged dry season.

He said even when it rained, it did not necessarily occur in water-catchment areas.

"We need to look at rainwater col-

lection technology and how we can encourage every building to have a mechanism to collect rainwater.

"We may need to encourage industries to use rainwater instead of treated water," said Khaled after chairing the Johor Green Technology and Climate Change Council meeting in Kota Iskandar here yesterday.

He said the new committee, which comprised four executive councillors, would need to focus on these alternatives.

The Sungai Layang and Sungai

Lebam dams experience critically-low water levels due to the dry season.

This has led to a month-long water rationing affecting more than 600,000 people in Johor Baru, including Pasir Gudang, and Kota Tinggi. It ends on Sept 15.

Khaled said this year, the state had recorded 50 per cent less rainfall than usual. The annual average is 2,500mm.

He said the average temperature had risen by 1°C in certain places.

He said these factors proved that the weather patterns were changing

and had to be taken into consideration when making contingency plans for water supply.

"We have to anticipate that the planning that goes into a water catchment area will be affected by the weather.

"We must consider that rain will not fall in these areas all the time."

He said contingency plans included pumping water from Sungai Johor to the Sungai Layang dam.

Khaled said the developer of the Petronas Refinery and Petrochemical Integrated Development (Rapid)

project would also channel 30 million gallons of water into Sungai Lebam.

State Public Works, Rural and Regional Development Committee chairman Datuk Hasni Mohammad said cloud seeding may be conducted before Sept 15.

"The matter is being handled by the Meteorological Department Johor branch and Singaporean Consulate-General Office in Johor Baru. They will make a decision.

"I expect cloud seeding will be carried out before the water rationing is over."