

Perlis dam level drops despite rain

PADANG BESAR: The decreasing water reserve at the Timah Tasoh dam, the only dam in the state, has triggered public concern, particularly among residents in northern Perlis.

Despite cloud seeding exercises, which successfully brought rain to a few areas in the state in the past few days, the water level in the reservoir has continued to drop about 0.02m every day, bringing the water level to beyond its critical level of 25m.

Yesterday, the water level was at 26.15m, about 0.02m lower than the day before.

State Irrigation and Drainage Department deputy director Mohamad Nor Hafiz Nor Azmi said no water supply could be drawn from the dam when the level dropped to 25m, adding that the water reserve could last only about a month.

Although several locations experienced rainfall almost every night recently, he said, it was not enough to improve the water level at the dam as no downpour was recorded at major water catchment areas.

"It has started to rain in a few places lately, but the rainfall is too little to boost the water reserve.

"For example, yesterday, there was only 6mm of rain in Padang Besar. However, there was no rainfall near the Timah Tasoh dam."

A resident in Kampung Kolam, which was among several villages in northern Perlis affected by the water rationing exercise that began on April 16, expressed her concern over the situation.

Pah Hashim, 67, said she feared that the drop in water level at the dam would worsen the water crisis faced by the residents in the village, who experienced very low water pressure at midnight, in addition to having no water supply in the day.

Pah said she had to take care of her

four grandchildren by herself from morning to evening when her daughter goes to work to earn a living for the family.

"Looking after four children everyday is quite challenging at my age and it's even harder with the water crisis. I cannot carry the water provided by Syarikat Air Perlis, which brings water to our village every other day.

"All I can do is place as many large containers as I have in front of our house and wait for the lorry driver to fill the containers with water.

"Then I would just leave it outside my house and bathe my grandchildren or do the laundry there," she said yesterday.

Pah said in the past few days, the weather had not been as hot as it was before, where temperatures reached high as 39°C.

In **Johor Baru**, operations of SAJ Holdings water treatment plants in Kota Tinggi and Mersing resumed despite the drop in water levels at the Sungai Lebam and Congok dams.

SAJ corporate communications head Jamaluddin + Jamil said the water level of treatment plants in Sungai Gembut and Lok Heng, which catered to the treated tap water supply for Ko-

ta Tinggi, dropped an average of 0.03m each day.

"To continue operations, we have to reduce the production of treated water and only supply enough water for minimal use to users during the ongoing water rationing exercise, which will end by mid May."

The exercise affects 8,845 accounts in Kota Tinggi and 8,167 accounts in Mersing, respectively.



Mohamad Nor Hafiz Nor Azmi



Jamaluddin + Jamil

Page 1 pic: A girl carries buckets to collect water at a village in Dala township on the outskirts of Yangon, Myanmar, on Thursday. EPA pic