

Rain gives glimmer of hope to Bukit Merah reservoir

By John Bunyan

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The Bukit Merah reservoir has been classified as being in the ‘stage three’ critical level. — Picture by Marcus Pheong IPOH, May 10 — The water level in Bukit Merah reservoir will rise above critical levels if it rains until the end of the month, said Perak Public Utilities, Infrastructure, Energy and Water Committee chairman Datuk Zainol Fadzi Paharudin.

He said the water level had improved considerably since Saturday.

“Rain over the past week have raised the water level by 0.40m since May 1. The water level in the reservoir on May 1 was 6.31m, but now, it has increased to 6.71m,” he told *Malay Mail* yesterday.

“This is a positive sign. It is the highest increase recorded since early March.”

Zainol said rainfall for the past few days was the reason behind the increase of water in the reservoir, which is about 90km from Ipoh.

“The cloud seeding operations produced rain in the areas around the reservoir,” he said, adding a sudden change in the monsoon winds could be another contributing factor to rainfall in Kerian.

Perak Drainage and Irrigation Department director Datuk Abdul Razak Dahalan said water supply for agriculture in Kerian would still be shut off.

“At the moment, we cannot supply water to 22,000ha of padi fields in Kerian. The department would need to assess the situation before resuming water supply for irrigation,” he said.

The department gradually stopped water for irrigation to conserve supply for consumer use.

At a press conference later, Zainol said the state government would assist the 1,800 farmers who are affected in Kerian, but did not elaborate.

It was reported that a meeting was held by the Kerian Drainage and Irrigation Department yesterday to decide whether farmers would get water supply from the Bukit Merah reservoir following the water level increase.