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# Kedah dams worryingly low

## Respite from water crisis not likely in north states

**TheStar Exclusive**

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**ALOR SETAR:** The water crisis in northern states is unlikely to get better with two dams in Kedah already hovering at the danger level.

Just a few days ago, Penang issued a water alert after the effective capacity at the Air Itam dam and Teluk Bahang dam went lower than normal.

A check by *The Star* at Pedu Lake in Kuala Nerang and the Muda Dam in Sik showed that the water level had been going down and there were concerns that the prolonged drought season could affect supply to consumers.

Kedah's Syarikat Air Darul Aman Sdn Bhd (Sada) chief executive officer Mohd Suhaimi Mohd Jusoh said Kedah had been identified as among the states on the west coast of the peninsula to be affected by the drought and dams in the state were at low levels.

In a statement, he said the capacity of the water reserve at the three main dams in Kedah had been at a critical level.

As of Jan 15, the effective capacity recorded at the dams in Ahning, Pedu, Muda, Beris and Malut in Langkawi was 62.48%, 47.60%, 17.88%, 81.15% and 85.6%.

Mohd Suhaimi said the ongoing drought and the growing number of affected areas would result in water disruption to users such as those in the Kota Setar district and parts of Kuala Muda and Langkawi districts.

"Several areas in Langkawi are starting to face water cuts due to the drop in Sungai Melaka's water level to below critical," he added.

Former teacher Ismail Awang from Kampung Belantik Luar, Sik said the water supply to most villag-



**Alarming figures:** A man taking a sip near a board that displays water levels at various dams in Penang.

es there was still adequate.

"But if this weather pattern continues, the state could face a serious water crisis," said the 67-year-old.

Ismail said most villagers got their water supply from the nearest hill and some of them used the boring water pump system to get their daily need.

He said there had been no rain since about a month ago.

He hopes the relevant authorities will take the necessary action to ensure that there is enough water supply to last until the current drought ends in March or April.

In Kuala Nerang, villager Mohd Zainusi Mansor, 42, was worried about the persistent hot weather till the next few months.

"I hope the rain will come soon as the dam is drying up fast," he said.

Pokok Sena MP Datuk Mahfuz Omar said the federal and state governments were working to initiate cloud seeding to overcome the water stress at dams in Kedah.

"The state government wants to do that but, unfortunately, is unable

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Mohd Suhaimi Mohd Jusoh

to because there are no clouds," he said.

Mahfuz said the state authorities could be forced to carry out water rationing if the drought prolonged.

"In the meantime, the people should try to save water and use it responsibly," he added.

Mahfuz also said the Kedah Islamic Council (MAIK) and the mufti's office had asked all mosques in the state to conduct special

prayers for rainfall.

Water, Land and Natural Resources Minister Dr Xavier Jayakumar, in a statement on Thursday, said that the ministry had been conducting scheduled monitoring on main dams in the country through the National Water Services Commission (SPAN) to ensure that there was enough water to supply to consumers during the dry season.

Penang had earlier announced its first water alert after its two main dams on the island had recorded a significantly lower level than normal due to low rainfall last year.

Penang Water Supply Corporation chief executive officer Datuk Jaseni Maidinsa said they were doing their best to ensure that the state had enough water until the rain arrived in April.

In the second phase of the north-east monsoon, Malaysia, especially the northern states in the peninsula, get little or no rain during this period, which is expected to run until March.