

## **Hike in water tariffs not like GST**

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**By Susan Loone**

The recent hike in water tariffs for the state cannot be compared to the Goods and Services Tax (GST) as the latter affected 100 percent of Malaysians, says The Penang Water Authority (PBAPP).

PBA Holdings and PBAPP CEO Jaseni Maidinsa said the review of tariff rates which was implemented on April 1 was primarily a water demand initiative to reduce consumption and avoid rationing due to climate change.

"47.4 percent of Penang households are not affected by this review because the minimum charge and tariff for the lowest band of consumption (0 to 20,000 litres) has not been changed," said Jaseni (left) in a statement.

"Another 27.9 percent of Penang households pay a maximum charge of only 0.60 cents per month and not 6 percent more for products or services purchased," added Jaseni.

"As such 75.3 percent of Penang households who use less than 350,000 litres of water per month will continue to benefit from the lowest domestic tariff in Malaysia," he stressed.

Jaseni also refuted claims by Penang Umno Youth that the implementation date of the new water tariff rates for Penang on April was "covert", "sneaky" and "surreptitious".

In a statement issued last week, state Umno Youth chief Rafizal Abdul Rahim said that the implementation date of the new water tariff rates on April 1 - same day as the implement of the GST - was a "covert attempt to hide the matter when the whole country is busy monitoring whether prices of goods and services have increased or reduced".

### **Guan Eng accused of "cheating"**

Rafizal had also accused Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng of "cheating" as Pakatan Rakyat 2008 manifesto dubbed Buku Jingga stated that the coalition will not increase water charges if it came to power.

Jaseni said Rafizal's claims over the implementation date of the new water tariffs were "untrue and unfounded" as it was based on the timing of Putrajaya's approval and gazette according to federal laws.

The review of the water tariff rates were subjected to the approval of the federal government and is in line with provisions of the Water Services Industry Act 2006.

"The date was not specifically chosen by PBAPP or Penang government," Jaseni quipped.

"And this cannot be compared to the GST which affects 100 percent of Malaysians," he added.

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