

# Many still waiting for water

Over 700 new projects have no supply despite receiving planning permission

MORE than 700 new developments in Selangor are awaiting water approval despite having received planning permission as of Jan 31, this year.

Urban Wellbeing, Housing and Local Government Minister Tan Sri Noh Omar said in reply to Budiman Mohd Zohdi (BN-Sungai Besar) that the applications for the 761 projects needed 467 million litres of water a day.

He was responding to a question on whether the ministry received reports or complaints from housing developers who were unable to

complete their projects due to water shortage in the state.

Of the number, 40% or 305 projects involved new apartments or terrace houses, said Noh, adding that the developments included township, commercial and mixed development.

Green Technology and Water Minister Datuk Seri Dr Maximus Ongkili said as of 2017, RM2.7bil had been spent to upgrade or develop the country's water supply system, which included work on water assets, water pipes and meters.

Ongkili said this was in line with

the Government's goal to reduce the amount of non-revenue water (NRW) for the country to 31% by the end of 2020, from 35.2% in 2016.

The effective management of NRW involves a huge model or capital expenditure (capex) to carry on works such as upgrading or developing water assets, replacing water pipes and meters, and creating a District Meeting Zone.

For states that had finalised the restructuring of its water supply industry, capex was provided by Pengurusan Aset Air Bhd (PAAB) through the build-and-lease model

and up to 2017, PAAB spent RM2.7bil for this, Ongkili said.

He was replying to a question by Dr Azman Ismail (PKR-Kuala Kedah) on the percentage of treated water lost as NRW in each state and the steps taken by the ministry to address the issue.

To a supplementary question by Dr Tan Seng Giaw (DAP-Kepong) on the challenges the ministry was facing in reducing NRW, Ongkili said one of the biggest hurdles in reducing NRW was the cost involved.

It also did not have an immediate effect, he added.