

Abg Johari responds to viral plea over water woes by UMS student

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KUCHING: Sarawak Premier Datuk Patinggi Tan Sri Abang Johari Tun Openg has responded to a viral open letter from a Kuching-born student at Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) regarding ongoing water supply issues at the university.

In a statement released by his office here yesterday, Abang Johari acknowledged the concerns raised by Mohammad Rasul Rozmiezan, a second-year sociology student, and expressed appreciation for the information.

However, he clarified that the matter falls under the jurisdiction of the federal Ministry of Higher Education and not the Sarawak government.

Mohammad Rasul's letter, which gained national attention after being picked up by The Star, highlighted the dire situation faced by UMS students, who have endured days without consistent water.

He detailed how students resorted to using faculty toilets, the mosque, and the Chancellor Hall for basic hygiene, as well as instances of students using bottled water or pay RM1 to shower at shopping malls.

"I understand the Premier's limitations, but I believe he can help amplify our voices. What he does to help Sarawakians can also benefit Sabahans," he wrote, adding that the letter aimed to voice the concerns of Sarawakian students and



The Sarawakian student brings up water woes at UMS.

push the issue onto national attention.

In response, the Premier assured that the matter will be forwarded to Minister of Higher Education Dato Seri Dr Zambry Abdul Kadir.

Additionally, Sabah Works Minister Datuk Shahelmei Yahya and federal Deputy Higher Education Minister Datuk Mustapha Sakmud have also taken note of the matter.

Shahelmei expressed disappointment over the situation and assured the public that the Sabah government is working with the Water Department (JANS) and UMS to resolve the issue, adding that he has visited the affected areas at UMS.

On Monday, he informed that water inflow into UMS' main reservoir, R13, had stabilised over the past days. However, a faulty indicator has caused inaccurate readings, and the JANS will replace the faulty device within three weeks.

The R13 reservoir has the capacity of 10 million litres, while two other tanks on campus store 6.75 million and 3.5 million litres, respectively.

Mustapha, on the other hand, stated that although the supply from JANS remains inconsistent and the tube well system cannot meet the university's demand of 5 million litres, priority will be given to UMS' water distribution schedule by the Sabah Chief Minister's office.