

Penang issues water alert due to reduced rainfall

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The Penang Water Supply Corporation (PBAPP) has issued its first alert to Penangites to reduce water consumption as the water levels at two key dams on the island are significantly lower than normal due to a lack of rainfall last year.

PBAPP CEO Jaseni Maidinsa said the message was dedicated to the Chinese community, who will start cleaning their houses to prepare for the Lunar New Year.

"Avoid using a hose to clean your home or wash your vehicle. Use a broom and a mop to clean your home," said Jaseni at a press conference in Komtar today.

"Wash your car or motorcycle less often, and use a bucket and sponge when you do so," he added.

"Do not use a hose to water your garden or plants, use a watering can instead. Do not leave the tap running, shut off every tap after use and kindly teach your children to follow your example," he stressed.

Accompanying Jaseni were Chief Minister Chow Kon Yeow and state executive councillor Dr Afif Bahardin.

The alert came in the wake of the affective capacities of the Air Itam Dam being 62 percent, while the Teluk Bahang Dam is at 39.5 percent.

During September to December last year, the total rainfall recorded in the Air Itam Dan was 702mm, equivalent to 44.5 percent of the average three years — 2016, 2017 and 2018 — of 1,577mm.

The total rainfall recorded at the Teluk Bahang Dam in the same period was 1,732mm, equivalent to 55.9 percent of the three-year average of 3,101mm.

Jaseni said the primary cause for the situation was the "abnormally low rainfall for the past four months due to climate change".

To prevent water rationing, PBAPP has been minimising raw water drawdowns from the two dams.

"To meet water demand during the year-end festive period, we had optimised production of treated water in the Sungai Dua Water Treatment Plant on the mainland, and pumped more treated water to the island," Jaseni said.

"With the onset of this year's dry period, we must make sure our dam reserves can last until the rain arrives in April or May," he added.

"When the dams' water level goes down to 30 percent, we will request the state government to carry out cloud seeding," he stressed.