



Conserve: With hot and dry months ahead, and with water levels in two key dams significantly lower, people in Penang are being told to ration water.

Penang on water alert due to low rainfall

Levels in two dams lower than normal

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GEORGE TOWN: Penang is on water alert as the water level of its two key dams on the island are significantly lower than normal due to low rainfall last year.

Penang Water Supply Corporation (PBAPP) chief executive officer Datuk Jaseni Maidinsa said the effective capacity of the Air Itam Dam and Teluk Bahang Dam were at 62% and 39.5% respectively as of Tuesday.

He said the lower water level was due to the abnormally low rainfall in the past four months as a result of climate change.

Effective capacity is the maximum capacity according to the dam design and the resources it has.

"We are doing our best to ensure that the state has enough water until the rain arrives in April.

"We will be able to pull through with the help of Penangites in using water wisely and responsibly," he said during a press conference at Komtar yesterday.

Jaseni said the total rainfall recorded in Air Itam Dam was 702mm from September to December last year.

He said comparing with the same corresponding period from 2016 to 2018, the amount was well below the yearly average of 1,577mm.

He said for Teluk Bahang Dam, the total rainfall recorded was 1,732mm from September to December last year.

This is lower than the yearly average of 3,101mm for the past three years.

"The water level at our dams is at an all-time low," he said.

Jaseni said PBAPP has been minimising

raw water drawdown from the Air Itam dam and Teluk Bahang Dam since November last year, adding that they had anticipated such weather pattern.

"In order to meet water demand during the festive period, we have optimised the production of treated water in the Sungai Dua Water Treatment Plant on the mainland, and pumped more treated water to the island.

Jaseni urged people to use water wisely in the coming festive season. "Avoid using a hose to clean your home or wash your vehicle. Use broom instead and a mop to clean it.

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

Also present at the press conference were Chief Minister Chow Kon Yeow and state agriculture and agro-based industries committee chairman Dr Afif Bahardin.

Chow said they were monitoring water level at the dams closely and had been receiving daily reports on the matter.

"From the statistics, it shows clearly that climate change has a huge impact on our water supply.

"With public involvement, we can overcome the challenge to avoid water rationing during this dry season," he said.

On water supply problem faced by padi farmers on the mainland, Dr Afif said water pumps had been deployed to the affected padi fields.

He said the water pumps and tube wells had been installed to draw water from Sungai Muda to help the padi farmers.

Thousands of padi farmer from Central and Northern Seberang Prai had voiced their concern recently over the insufficient water supply to their padi fields which can destroy their crops before they can be harvested.