



More clouds needed to fill dams

PBAPP seeking state's approval for second series of cloud seeding operations

DESPITE all the rain and floods, Penang's dam levels hardly budged.

The regular storm clouds over the state give breezy mornings and windy nights, but both Ayer Itam and Teluk Bahang dams are not even half full.

This has prompted Penang Water Supply Corporation (PBAPP) to seek state approval for a second series of cloud seeding operations beginning next month.

Its chief executive officer Datuk Jaseni Maidinsa said cloud seeding operations done from April 25 to May 27 did increase the effective capacities of the dams but they are still below the 50% mark.

"Ayer Itam dam's capacity has gone up by 12%, from 32.4% to 44.4%, while Teluk Bahang dam has gone up by 2.5%, from 20.4% to 22.9%.

"During the cloud seeding, we recorded 283mm of rainfall at Ayer Itam dam and 1,065mm at Teluk Bahang dam.

"The maximum effective capacity of Ayer Itam dam is 2.16 billion litres while the maximum capacity of Teluk Bahang dam is 18.24 billion litres.

"Teluk Bahang dam's effective capacity is 8.4 times more than Ayer Itam dam. As such, significantly more rainfall is needed to fill it.

"Both dams are still below the normal levels.

"In March, the state government approved the first series of 10 cloud seeding operations over Penang and Kedah. To date, six have been carried out.

"PBAPP is requesting for a second series of six more cloud seeding operations next month to maximise potential rainfall and refill the dams," he said in a press statement.

This came after Chief Minister Chow Kon Yeow joined Jaseni on a



The water level at the Teluk Bahang dam must be increased to ensure water supply security in Teluk Bahang, Batu Ferringhi and Tanjung Bungah until the end of this year. — Filepic

site visit to Ayer Itam dam to check on the cloud seeding results.

Jaseni said the need for a second series of cloud seeding operations next month was because the dams' water levels had been low since Jan 1.

"Due to climate change, abnormally low volumes of rainfall were recorded in the water catchment areas from June last year to mid-April this year.

"Without rainfall, the water of the dams will be further depleted.

"PBAPP has been implementing tight controls to minimise dam

drawdowns since Jan 1.

"But raw water must be drawn down daily from the dams to sustain continuous water supply in the state," he said.

Jaseni said thunderstorms and rainy days have been forecast for June, predicting the presence of rain clouds.

"The volume of rainfall is not predictable and cloud seeding will maximise rainfall yield.

"By July, there may be less rain clouds.

"Ayer Itam dam must store sufficient raw water to meet all the

water supply needs of consumers in Ayer Itam and Paya Terubong until the end of the year.

"Similarly, Teluk Bahang dam must be increased to ensure water supply security in Teluk Bahang, Batu Ferringhi and Tanjung Bungah until the end of this year," he said.

Jaseni said the state also prepare for next year's dry season.

"We must take advantage of every good opportunity to refill our dams with as much rain water as possible, from now until the end of the year," he said.

Jaseni also said water meter reading will resume from next month and the meter readers had been trained to observe a contactless standard operating procedure.

PBAPP customer services centres will open again from 9am to 3.30pm, Mondays to Fridays.

New water services applications can be made again.

During the conditional movement control order, the recreational areas of all dams remain closed and water supply disconnections or meter clamping.