

Mengkuang dam to close for a week

By Audrey Dermawan - September 15, 2021 @ 4:21pm



The seven-day closure is in compliance with an order by the Seberang Prai Tengah district health office on grounds that public access "may cause an outbreak and spread a contagious disease". - Pic courtesy of Seberang Prai Tengah district health office.

BUTTERWORTH: The Mengkuang Dam here which saw an influx of visitors last weekend, is temporarily closed to the public for a week beginning today to prevent the spread of Covid-19.

The seven-day closure is in compliance with an order by the Seberang Prai Tengah district health office on grounds that public access "may cause an outbreak and spread a contagious disease".

Penang Water Supply Corporation (PBAPP) chief executive officer Datuk Jaseni Maidinsa said it would fully comply with the order in the interest of public safety and to prevent further spread of Covid-19 in Penang.

He said PBAPP's auxiliary police personnel had been directed to prevent public entry into Mengkuang Dam area.

"Members of the public are hereby advised not to go to Mengkuang Dam. All unauthorised visitors will be stopped at the entry point and asked to return home.

"PBAPP regrets any inconvenience caused to people who are seeking to visit the dam for recreational purposes but an official public health closure notice has been issued," he said today.

Earlier today, the New Straits Times learnt that health and local authority officials issued about 14 compounds worth RM1,500 each to visitors of the dam for non-adherence to the standard operating procedures (SOP) set such as not wearing of face masks, no physical distancing and non-compliance of the SOP for Phase Two of the National Recovery Plan (NRP).

Penang transitioned into Phase Two of the NRP on July 7.

Yesterday, Penang police chief Datuk Mohd Shuhaily Mohd Zain warned that police would close recreational spots if visitors who thronged these places failed to abide by the SOP currently still in place.

He had said that this followed an influx of visitors to several recreational spots such as the Batu Ferringhi beach on the island and the Mengkuang Dam here last weekend.

He had also said that checks found an increase of vehicles on the road last weekend.

Suhaily had also hoped that, instead of forcing police to take punitive action, the people would adhere to the SOP.

Jaseni said the safety rules imposed by the Health Ministry would be applied to the Air Itam dam, the Teluk Bahang dam and the Bukit Dumbar recreation park with immediate effect.

Among others, only visitors who are fully vaccinated are allowed to enter the dam area and use the facilities, individuals who are 17-years-old and below are only allowed to enter the dam area with their parent(s) with the condition that the parent(s) are fully vaccinated.

Activities which may cause large gathering of individuals/visitors leading to difficulty in physical distancing and adherence to the instructions by the Health director-general, are strictly prohibited.

He added that only those who showed "low risk" and "casual contact" in their My Sejahtera statuses would be allowed to enter.

These safety rules would also apply to the Mengkuang dam when it reopens.

Jaseni said PBAPP's other public safety rules and regulations at the dams and the Bukit Dumbar recreation park included: limiting the maximum number of visitors to 200 persons at any one time (350 persons for Mengkuang Dam), mandatory registration using the MySejahtera app, individual temperature scanning at entry points (those with a reading of 37.5°C and above will be not allowed to enter) and physical distancing of 3m to 5m.