

Air Itam reserves dwindling, use water wisely, PBAPP urges consumers

Dip due to dry spell, high consumption in some areas, says authority

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The Penang Water Supply Corporation says the only way to replenish the reserves of the Air Itam dam is to wait for seasonal rainfall or to induce rainfall via cloud seeding. – PBAPP Facebook pic, April 2, 2022

GEORGE TOWN – The dry spell in certain parts of the state has caused the water levels to dip at the Air Itam dam and Bukit Dumbar reservoirs, with the Penang Water Supply Corporation (PBAPP) urging consumers to moderate their usage.

PBAPP said the secondary cause of the lower water levels is the high daily usage in the Air Itam township and surrounding areas.

It added that the only way to replenish the reserves of the Air Itam dam is to wait for seasonal rainfall or to induce rainfall via cloud seeding.

For now, consumers are advised to use water wisely, especially between April and May.

The water level of the Air Itam dam is at 38.5% as of March 31, while Bukit Dumbar reservoirs are seeing low levels.

After recording water usage in the state for the past three months, PBAPP found that there has been consistent high water usage by consumers.

On March 31, metered water consumption was almost 900 million litres per day (MLD), as compared to the average of 860 MLD in 2021.

The treated water pumped from the Sg Dua water treatment plant (WTP) in Seberang Prai to the Bukit Dumbar reservoirs in Penang island daily is drawn down fast.

Water demands in the southern parts of the island are also significantly high.

Since the treated water levels are low at the Bukit Dumbar reservoirs, PBAPP cannot pump water at adequate pressures to all end-of-line (EOL) and higher ground areas. The water pumps will trip or shut down automatically as well as risk being damaged.

Meanwhile, PBAPP is implementing several solutions to counter disrupted water supply and low water pressure in Seberang Prai Selatan, Air Itam hillside areas and several blocks of the five-storey apartments at Bukit Gedung.

Among them are ramping up treated water production at all nine water treatments plants in Penang and increasing treated water production at the Air Itam WTP, Guillemard WTP and Batu Ferringhi WTP to support a gradual build-up of treated water reserves in the Bukit Dumbar reservoirs.

PBAPP has also since installed taps at fire hydrants to provide water supply to the Bukit Gedung residents. Due to low water pressure, water supply can now only reach the ground floor and first floor of several blocks.

It has also advised building management corporations to install residential pumping systems at EOL or higher ground areas to mitigate issues of low water pressure during dry seasons. – The Vibes, April 2, 2022