

Cloud seeding to raise water level at Air Itam dam in Penang

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The Air Itam dam is at the warning level due to low rainfall in catchment areas and high daily water demand from residents.

GEORGE TOWN: The Penang Water Supply Corporation (PBAPP) is planning to hold 15 cloud-seeding operations to boost the water reserves at the Air Itam dam here.

Its chief executive officer, Jaseni Maidinsa, said the cloud-seeding operations will run from April till August to create rain over the dam's water catchment area.

"The cloud seeding has obtained the Penang state government's confirmation and will be implemented by the State Water Regulatory Body with the assistance of PBAPP.

"The focus is to create rain specifically at the dam's water catchment area, encompassing 5.75 sq km of protected forest area around the dam," he said in a statement today.



There has been some rain in the Air Itam area recently but the dam was still at the warning level due to its low effective capacity of 39%, due to the low rainfall at catchment areas and high daily water demand by Air Itam residents since early January.

Jaseni said the main objective of the cloud seeding is to prevent a water supply crisis in Air Itam and its surrounding areas.

He said that the dam needed to be refilled with raw water as soon as possible before September as it could only rely on rain from its catchment areas.

"We also want to reach an effective capacity of 90% (or higher) for the dam by December to prepare for the next season of drought expected to begin in January 2023," he added.

He said PBAPP thanked the state government and the State Water Regulatory Body for agreeing to implement the cloud seeding as it supported PBAPP's commitment to maintain continuous water supply to Air Itam and its surrounding areas in 2022 and 2023 for the benefit of its people and businesses.

"In 2020, the state government financed the cloud-seeding campaign to prevent a water crisis in Penang, when the Teluk Bahang dam was at the lowest level of 16%," he added.