

PBAPP: Cloud seeding operations to be carried out to refill Air Itam Dam

By **Audrey Dermawan** - April 16, 2022



A series of 15 cloud seeding operations will be carried out from April to August to induce rainfall in the water catchment area (WCA) of the Air Itam Dam. - NSTP/DANIAL SAAD

GEORGE TOWN: A series of 15 cloud seeding operations will be carried out from April to August to induce rainfall in the water catchment area (WCA) of the Air Itam Dam.

These cloud seeding operations are endorsed by the Penang government and will be implemented by the State Water Regulatory Body (Badan Kawal Selia Air - BKSA) with assistance from Penang Water Supply Corporation (PBAPP).

PBAPP chief executive officer Datuk Jaseni Maidinsa said PBAPP had written to state Infrastructure Committee chairman Zairil Khir Johari on Tuesday, requesting for cloud seeding.

He said Zairil informed PBAPP yesterday that the BKSA would carry out cloud seeding as per PBAPP's request.

"The cloud seeding operations is necessary to prevent a water supply crisis in Air Itam and its surrounding areas in the period between April to August, if there is insufficient rainfall in the dam's WCA and persistent high water demand.

"We also want to refill the dam with as much raw water as possible before the September rainy season. The Air Itam Dam may only be refilled by rainfall in its WCA.

"And finally, we also want to achieve a 90 per cent effective capacity (or higher) for the Air Itam Dam by December, in preparation of the next dry season that should commence from Jan 1, next year.

"This is an essential measure in support of PBAPP's commitment to sustain continuous good water supply services in Air Itam and its surrounding areas in 2022 and 2023, for the benefit of the people and businesses," he said today.

The Air Itam Dam WCA encompasses 5.75 sq km of protected forestlands surrounding the dam.

As at yesterday, the effective capacity of the Air Itam Dam was only 39 per cent compared with 89.3 per cent on Jan 1, this year, Teluk Bahang Dam (69.5 per cent compared with 87.8 per cent) and Mengkuang Dam (90.9 per cent compared with 93.2 per cent).

Jaseni said, recently, there was some rainfall in Air Itam.

He, however, said the Air Itam Dam remained under "alert status" due to a low effective capacity of 39 per cent.

"The primary cause is low rainfall in its WCA since Jan 1, this year.

"The secondary cause is high daily water demand in the Air Itam township and surrounding areas since the start of the year," he added.

In 2020, the state government funded a cloud seeding campaign to prevent a water crisis in Penang, when Teluk Bahang Dam's effective capacity was at its lowest at 16 per cent.