

Penang to seed clouds in bid to increase water levels at Air Itam dam

Some quarters blame problem on drought, climate change

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PBAPP chief executive officer Datuk Jaseni Maidinsa says in a statement that the plan is to gradually increase the dam's water levels to 90% by year end. – PBAPP Facebook pic, April 16, 2022

GEORGE TOWN – Penang will see a series of 15 cloud seeding initiatives from now until August to ramp up catchment at its Air Itam dam, which dipped to dangerous water levels early this year.

It is hoped that the dam, which supplies water to some of the densest neighbourhoods, will see a rise in water levels after the measure taken by the Penang Water Supply Holdings Corporation (PBAPP).

Despite the considerable rainfall in Penang this week, some quarters have blamed the dam's low water levels on drought and climate change.

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

PBAPP chief executive officer Datuk Jaseni Maidinsa said in a statement that the plan is to gradually increase the dam's water levels to 90% by year end.

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

This adds to setbacks faced by the PBAPP, after it had disagreements with Kedah over water rights to Sg Muda.

Additionally, Perak recently rejected Penang's offer to buy raw water, forcing the PBAPP to consider other alternatives including a water desalination project.

This has fuelled speculation among consumers that they will have to pay higher tariffs in the future.

Currently, Penang has one of the lowest water tariffs in the country.