

## With dams at half capacity, Penang folk told to use water wisely

Low rainfall causes the water level at two dams on the island to drop, with the authorities urging the public not to waste water.

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*The Air Itam dam's capacity dropped from 82.5% on Jan 1 to 51.8% on April 10. (Penang Water Supply Corporation pic)*

GEORGE TOWN: The Penang Water Supply Corporation (PBAPP) has advised people in Penang to use water sparingly as the total water level at the two key dams in the state has dropped to almost 50% due to low rainfall and high domestic demand.

In a statement, its CEO K Pathmanathan said the Air Itam dam's water level had dropped by 30.7% and that at the Teluk Bahang dam had dropped by 12.7% since Jan 1.

From January, the corporation recorded 129mm of rainfall in the Air Itam dam and 251mm in the Teluk Bahang dam.

The average daily consumption in the state for January was 875 million litres a day (MLD) and 944 MLD in February. This led to the Air Itam dam's capacity dropping from 82.5% on Jan 1 to 51.8% on April 10, while the Teluk Bahang dam's water level dropped from 64% to 51.3% in the same period.

As a result, PBAPP is implementing various measures to ensure continued water supply and reduce the risk of disruption.

The measures are:

- Optimising raw water abstraction from Sungai Muda and treated water production at the Sungai Dua Water Treatment Plant (Sungai Dua WTP);
- Pumping more treated water from the Sungai Dua WTP to Penang Island (via three sets of twin submarine pipelines) to support water supply on the island;
- Minimising raw water drawdowns from the Air Itam dam and Teluk Bahang dam as far as possible, without compromising water supply services;



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- Stepping up dry weather controls to strategically “defend” the effective capacities of the Air Itam dam and Teluk Bahang dam for as long as possible;
- Re-scheduling planned pipe works to minimise water wastage;
- Responding to public reports of burst or leaking pipes as soon as possible; and
- Preparing contingency plans to address water demand in higher ground and end-of-line areas if the current dry season persists.

“We seek the cooperation of all to use water wisely. Our analysis shows that domestic water use accounts for 61.5% of Penang’s average daily consumption of 868 million litres per day,” said Pathmanathan.

He urged the public not to waste water and advised them to do the following:

- Do not leave any tap running;
- Avoid using a hose as much as possible;
- Wash vehicles (cars and motorcycles) only when necessary;
- Water gardens and plants using watering cans instead of hoses;
- Repair all leaking pipes and faucets immediately; and
- Ensure that household water reserves can last at least a day.