

Penang to start cloud-seeding operations to fill dams from April 29

The water capacity at the Air Itam dam has dropped by 37.7% since the beginning of the year.

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The state government has approved RM400,000 for the cloud-seeding operation to fill two dams in Penang. (Penang Water Supply Corporation pic)

GEORGE TOWN: Cloud-seeding operations to induce heavy rainfall in Penang will be carried out from this Saturday.

Penang Water Supply Corporation (PBAPP) CEO K Pathmanathan said the meteorological department had recommended the April 29 to May 7 period for the first wave of operations.

“The primary objective is to induce heavy rainfall over the water catchment areas for the Air Itam and Teluk Bahang dams.

“Heavy rainfall is required to refill these dams with as much raw water as possible,” he said. He added that the water at the Air Itam dam, which was at 82.5% capacity in January, now stood at 44.8%. At the Teluk Bahang dam, it is down to 48.6% from 64% at the beginning of the year.

He said this meant the capacities of both dams had dropped by 37.7% and 15.4% respectively since Jan 1. This was mainly due to the low rainfall at the water catchment areas and higher water demand this year.

The maximum capacity for the Air Hitam dam is 2,160 million litres (ML), and 9,240 ML for the Teluk Bahang dam. He said it would take a few days after the cloud seeding for the rainfall to occur and for the water to flow into the dams.

Pathmanathan said the state government had approved RM400,000 for the cloud-seeding operation.

PBAPP may request additional allocations to fund a second wave of cloud-seeding operations later, he added.

Pathmanathan said water consumption in Penang increased to 944 ML per day in February this year compared to 868 ML per day for the same period last year.

About 61.5% of Penang’s total water consumption is for domestic water consumption.

He urged Penangites to reduce their daily water consumption and to stop wasting water.