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Use water wisely until dams re-fill, Penang residents told



GEORGE TOWN: Penangites should use water wisely until the Air Itam and Teluk Bahang dams are re-filled, says Penang Water Supply Corporation (PBAPP) chief executive officer K. Pathmanathan

"In March, PBAPP recorded 66.5mm of rainfall in the water catchment area (WCA) of the Air Itam Dam and strived to stabilise its effective capacity with the Air Itam Dam Action Plan 2024. Its effective capacity dropped by 2.0% over 31 days," he said.

Pathmanathan added in a statement on Saturday (April 6) that the effective capacity of the Teluk Bahang Dam dropped by 11.0% in the same period.

He said the maximum effective capacity of the Teluk Bahang Dam is 18,240 million litres (ML) while the effective capacity of the Air Itam Dam is 2,160 ML.

Pathmanathan then added that a 1.0% drop in the effective capacity of the Teluk Bahang Dam is roughly equivalent to an 8.4% drop in the effective capacity of the Air Itam Dam.

He said there are three key factors that affect and explain the status of the Air Itam Dam and the Teluk Bahang Dam in March 2024.

He said that under the AIDAP 2024, PBAPP has been pumping 33 million litres of treated water per day (MLD) from the Sungai Dua Water Treatment Plant (WTP) into the Air Itam service area to "defend" the low effective capacity of the Air Itam Dam.

"About 133.0mm of rainfall was recorded in the Teluk Bahang Dam WCA, as compared to 66.5mm in the Air Itam WCA. However, the effective capacity of the dam dropped by about 11.0% in March 2024," he said.

Pathmanathan then said that the average daily water consumption in Penang in February was 927 MLD, in comparison to the annual average of 877 MLD for 2023 which reflects an increase of 50 MLD. He added that the best and most rational way to ensure water supply sufficiency in Penang in 2024 is to reduce water consumption by 10%.

On the La Niña phenomenon that is predicted to begin in May, June or July 2024, Pathmanathan said that it cannot be certain that the rainfall will be enough to increase the effective capacities of the Air Itam Dam and Teluk Bahang Dam significantly.

"As such, in the interest of ensuring water supply safety for Penang, I would like to appeal to all water consumers to kindly reduce water consumption by 10% in April, May and June 2024.

"Your 10% water saving will go a long way to ensure water supply sufficiency for all of us this year," he said.