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Penang water company puts in place Hari Raya contingency plans



GEORGE TOWN: The Penang Water Supply Corporation (PBAPP) is deploying 13 water tankers as a stand-by measure to avoid or minimise supply disruptions in Penang during the hot and dry festive season.

These tankers, including three jumbo tankers (maximum capacity of 40,000 litres each), are on stand-by to serve some neighbourhoods in Seberang Prai Selatan (SPS) as well as a few high-ground and end-of line (EoL) neighbourhoods in Relau and Bukit Belah, in the southwest district.

According to PBAPP chief executive officer K. Pathmanathan, the primary rationale for PBAPP's Hari Raya Aidilfitri 2024 Water Contingency Plan is projected high water consumption before and during a hot and dry festive season.

He said, in February, PBAPP recorded a high average water consumption figure of 927 million litres per day (MLD) in Penang.

The amount is 50 MLD higher than the 877 MLD annual average recorded last year.

He said PBAPP is anticipating that water consumption during the "balik kampung" and Hari Raya Aidilfitri festive period from yesterday until this Sunday (April 14) might equal or exceed 927 MLD.

"As such, we are deploying a fleet of water tankers as a preventive and mitigation measure, together with 47 static water tanks (maximum capacity of 2,000 litres) during the same period.

"If necessary, this deployment will be expanded (with more tankers) or extended (over a longer period of time), in response to water demand," he said today.

Pathmanathan said almost all other states in Peninsular Malaysia, including Johor and Selangor, were also implementing similar festive water contingency plans due to the prevailing weather and water supply scenarios. (<https://www.nst.com.my/news/nation/2024/04/1033132/johor-govt-ensure-uni...>)

"If possible, PBAPP wants to avoid water supply interruptions. As such, we want to seek the kind cooperation of water consumers to use water wisely during the Hari Raya Aidilfitri celebrations.

"Penang is still experiencing hot and dry weather which is depleting dam storage reserves," he added.

As of Sunday, the effective capacity of the Air Itam dam was at 34.1 per cent, the Teluk Bahang dam at 64.9 per cent and the Expanded Mengkuang dam at 89.6 per cent.

Elaborating, Pathmanathan said the Air Itam dam's effective capacity is being "defended" by PBAPP's Air Itam Dam Action Plan 2024 (AIDAP 2024).

About 33 MLD of treated water is being pumped from the Sungai Dua Water Treatment Plant (WTP) into the Air Itam service area.

The Expanded Mengkuang Dam is a strategic drought reserve dam.

Its reserves will only be drawn when there is insufficient raw water to extract from Sungai Muda.

On Sunday, the river level of Sungai Muda, Penang's primary raw water resource, was 2.12m at PBAPP's Lahar Tiang Intake, which is above the 2.0m "safe level".

The raw water that is abstracted from Sungai Muda is used to produce treated water at the Sungai Dua WTP.

About 85 per cent of the 927 MLD of treated water that was consumed by Penang's 689,786 consumers in February was produced at the Sungai Dua WTP.

Pathmanathan said, for now, the overall water supply status in Penang is under control.

"International and local weather forecasts indicate that there should be significantly higher rainfall in Penang in the coming three to four months, due to a projected transition to a La Niña phenomenon and the arrival of an inter-monsoon season.

"However, PBAPP will continue to operate at a high alert status until actual rainfall increases the effective capacities of all the key dams that affect water supply in Penang.

"Allow me to reiterate PBAPP's appeal to all water consumers in Penang to kindly reduce water consumption by 10 per cent in April, May and June," he said.