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## Penang makes 'save water' appeal as dam levels drop below 30%

*Water authority says increased rainfall in the first 12 days of August is not enough to meet consumption demands.*



PETALING JAYA:

Consumers in several Penang districts have been advised to begin conserving water because dam levels supplying their areas are abnormally low.

The Penang Water Supply Corporation (PBAPP) urged households in Air Itam, Farlim, Teluk Bahang, Batu Ferringhi, Tanjung Bungah and nearby areas to reduce their water usage throughout this month because levels at the Air Itam and Teluk Bahang dams have dropped below 30%.

Its CEO, K Pathmanathan said PBAPP has useful water conservation methods available on its website and encouraged consumers to make use of them.

“The volume of rainfall recorded so far in August cannot increase the effective capacity of the Air Itam dam because PBAPP is drawing down an average of 22.2 million litres per day from the dam to meet demand,”

he said, adding that the dams only received 48mm of rainfall throughout July.

Pathmanathan said rainfall increased during the first 12 days of August but it was not enough to meet consumption demands, merely slowing the drop at the dams.

“Although September is projected to bring significant rainfall, the volume is uncertain.

“In view of the low effective capacities of the dams, PBAPP personnel are continuing to operate on a high alert basis, 24/7,” he said.

Pathmanathan also said the national disaster management agency is awaiting the meteorological department’s advice and analysis before carrying out cloud seeding across the state.

Penang has had to contend with a series of water shortages over the past 12 months. In March, PBAPP appealed to all its users to cut their water consumption by 10% immediately.

On March 18, Pathmanathan said Sungai Muda had dropped below its 2m safe level for water abstraction at the Lahar Tiang intake in Seberang Perai.

During December and January, consumers in the southwest district faced extensive disruption to water supply as PBAPP attempted to upgrade main pipes under Sungai Perai, encountering a number of unexpected setbacks during repairs.

Meanwhile, the state has been embroiled in a long-standing feud with Kedah over access to draw raw water from Sungai Muda.