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PBAPP: Sungai Muda levels currently 'healthy' for now



The 18,240 ML Teluk Bahang dam serves a customer base of about 45,850 water consumers in Teluk Bahang, Batu Ferringhi, Tanjung Bunga and surrounding areas. — NSTP FILE PIC

GEORGE TOWN: There is no immediate threat to water supply services for about 66.7 per cent of Penang's water consumers as Sungai Muda is relatively "healthy" for now.

According to the Penang Water Supply Corporation (PBAPP) chief executive officer Datuk K. Pathmanathan, as of yesterday (Aug 19), the Sungai Muda water level at Penang's Lahar Tiang Intake was 3.06m, more than 1.0m above the "2.0m safe level."

He said PBAPP was abstracting raw water from this river daily for use at the Sungai Dua Water Treatment Plant (WTP) in Seberang Prai Utara (SPU).

The Sungai Dua WTP produces about 1,026 million litres per day (MLD) of treated water. Its service area includes the majority of areas in SPU, Seberang Prai Tengah (SPT) and Seberang Prai Selatan (SPS). The Sungai Dua WTP's service area also includes the highly populated areas in the southwest district and some areas in the northeast district on Penang island, including the Bayan Lepas FTZ (Free Trade Zone).

"The total number of Penang consumers who are served by the Sungai Dua WTP is about 465,000 consumers, or about 66.7 per cent of Penang's water consumers (according to June 2024 PBAPP data). "This means that there is no immediate threat to water supply services for about 66.7 per cent of Penang's water consumers since the river level of Sungai Muda is relatively 'healthy' for now," he said today.

Pathmanathan said the areas of concern included the water supply service areas of the Air Itam dam and Teluk Bahang dam.

The 2,159 million litre (ML) Air Itam dam serves a customer base of about 28,948 water consumers in Air Itam, Farlim and nearby areas. The 18,240 ML Teluk Bahang dam serves a customer base of about 45,850 water consumers in Teluk Bahang, Batu Ferringhi, Tanjung Bunga and surrounding areas. Its effective capacity is about 8.45 times that of the Air Itam dam.

"The low effective capacities of the Air Itam dam and Teluk Bahang dam constitute a threat to water supply services for a total of about 74,798 water consumers in Air Itam, Farlim, Teluk Bahang, Batu Ferringhi, Tanjung Bunga and nearby areas," he added.

More than a week ago, the New Straits Times reported that raw water reserves at the Teluk Bahang and Air Itam dams have dropped to dangerously low levels, raising concerns about potential shortages. Both fell below the critical threshold of 30 per cent, considered a dangerous level.

Pathmanathan had warned that if there was no rainfall, the water at the Air Itam dam could last less than a month, and the Teluk Bahang dam could sustain its supply for about 80 days. The rainy season is expected to begin next month.

Pathmanathan said PBAPP acknowledged that the "low levels" of the two dams on Penang island was an issue of concern. "However, water consumers must also play positive and constructive roles daily to prevent a water shortage in Penang.

"On our part, we are playing our role to defend the Air Itam dam and Teluk Bahang dam to the best of our ability, and for as long as possible," he said.