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Not out of the woods yet: Water levels up at Air Itam, Teluk Bahang dams but 'still not safe'; Penang water firm urges residents to conserve



GEORGE TOWN, Sept 23 — After an eight-month dry spell, the effective capacities of the Air Itam and Teluk Bahang dams in Penang have shown a significant rise following heavy rainfall since the beginning of this month. However, they have yet to reach a “safe level”.

Penang Water Supply Corporation (PBAPP) chief executive officer Datuk K. Pathmanathan, said that as of today, the effective capacity of the Air Itam Dam stands at 58.3 per cent, while the Teluk Bahang Dam is at 31.3 per cent.

He noted that one of the corporation’s main goals now is to optimally replenish both dams between September and December, in preparation for the state’s next dry season, expected to start in January 2025.

“Depending on rainfall and water usage, it is reasonable to expect the effective capacity of the Air Itam Dam to rise from 58.3 per cent today to 85 per cent or more by December 2024.

“However, it will take a substantial amount of rain for the Teluk Bahang Dam’s effective capacity to increase from 31.3 per cent today to 80 per cent or more by December 2024,” he said in a statement today.

Pathmanathan explained that the effective capacity of the Air Itam Dam is 2,159 million litres, while the Teluk Bahang Dam’s capacity is 19,240 million litres, adding that the 2024 Air Itam Dam Action Plan (AIDAP 2024) will also be continuously executed to quickly replenish it.

In light of this, he urged Penangites to conserve water, despite the rainfall.

Meanwhile, in the island’s north-west, he said as much raw water as possible will be pumped from the Batu Ferringhi and Sungai Pinang water catchment areas to fill the Teluk Bahang Dam before January 2025.

However, Pathmanathan noted that it is impossible to precisely predict the amount of rainfall in the catchment areas of these two dams over the next three months.

Among the three dams, he highlighted that the Air Itam Dam is the smallest, serving around 28,948 consumers in Air Itam, Farlim, and nearby areas.

Since February, PBAPP has been executing the AIDAP 2024 to maintain reserves, including pumping up to 33 million litres of treated water daily from the Sungai Dua Water Treatment Plant to the Air Itam Dam service area, reducing daily output and facilitating faster replenishment.

Meanwhile, the effective capacity of the Mengkuang Dam stands at 90.3 percent as of today. — Bernama