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Rains boost Penang dams but waters remain below 'safe' levels



In mid-August, raw water reserves at the Air Itam and Teluk Bahang dams dropped to dangerously low levels, raising concerns about potential shortages.

GEORGE TOWN: Heavy rainfall since the start of the month has helped increase water levels in the Air Itam and Teluk Bahang dams after eight dry months.

However, Penang Water Supply Corporation (PBAPP) chief executive officer Datuk K. Pathmanathan said waters in both dams remain below "safe" levels.

The water levels in the Air Itam and Teluk Bahang dams now stand at 58.3 per cent and 31.3 per cent respectively.

"We have not reached 'safe levels' yet. One of PBAPP's main missions now is to facilitate the optimal refilling of the Air Itam dam and Teluk Bahang dam from September to December," Pathmanathan said in a statement.

He said this was important to prepare for the next dry season which is expected to begin in January.

"Depending on the volume of rainfall and water consumption, it is plausible for the Air Itam dam's effective capacity to increase from 58.3 per cent to 85 per cent or more by December.

"It will take a large volume of rainfall for the effective capacity of the Teluk Bahang dam to improve from 31.3 per cent to 80 per cent or more by December,"

He added that the Teluk Bahang dam's effective capacity of 19.2 million litres was much more than the Air Itam dam's effective capacity of 2.14 million.

Pathmanathan said consumers in Penang should continue to use water wisely, even when it rains.

In mid-August, raw water reserves at the Air Itam and Teluk Bahang dams dropped to dangerously low levels, raising concerns about potential shortages.

At the Teluk Bahang dam, the water level decreased significantly, resulting in parts of an old road, which submerged over two decades, visible.

Pathmanathan said PBAPP would continue to implement the Air Itam Dam Action Plan 2024 to refill the Air Itam dam quickly.

The plan sees PBAPP pumping 33 million litres per day of treated water from the Sungai Dua Water Treatment Plant into the service area of the Air Itam dam.

Meanwhile, Pathmanathan said, at the northwestern side of the island, PBAPP would also pump as much raw water as possible from the Batu Ferringhi and Sungai Pinang water catchment areas to refill the Teluk Bahang dam before January 2025.