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Cloud seeding begins in Penang

The operation is being carried out after water levels at the state's main dams dropped due to dry weather.



GEORGE TOWN: Cloud seeding has begun in Penang after water levels at the state's main dams dropped due to the dry weather.

Penang Water Supply Corporation (PBAPP) CEO K Pathmanathan said the two-day cloud seeding operation was needed because rainfall had been "significantly low" in recent weeks.

"The decision (to carry out cloud seeding) comes as the Air Itam dam recorded only 45mm of rainfall and the Teluk Bahang dam 71.5mm since the beginning of the year, significantly lower than anticipated," he said in a statement.

The cloud seeding operation was jointly conducted by the National Disaster Management Agency and the Royal Malaysian Air Force, he said.

Pathmanathan said last year's cloud seeding operation in May and June, contributed to 30.5mm of rainfall in the Air Itam dam's catchment areas and prevented a water crisis in 2023.

On Jan 31, the water level at the Air Itam dam dipped below 40%, which meant it had about a month's worth of water to supply some 170,000 residents in Air Itam, Paya Terubong and parts of Green Lane on the island.

The drop in water levels was caused by "excess use" of water from the dams to make up for a shortfall in over 80% of the state due to a ruptured pipe on the mainland, which took weeks to repair.

PBAPP subsequently reduced its reliance on the dam for supply and redirected 33 million litres a day of water to the greater Air Itam area from Butterworth.