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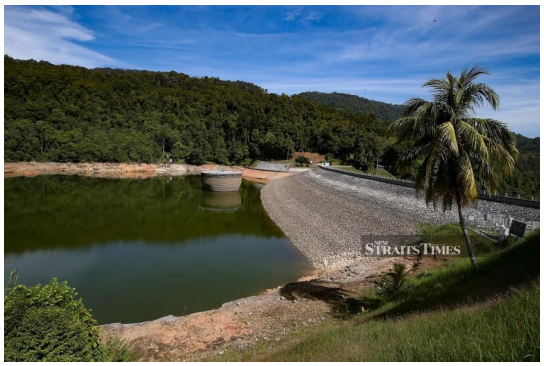
Penang water corp: Cloud seeding operations ongoing to prevent water crisis in Air Itam



GEORGE TOWN: Cloud seeding operations are scheduled to be conducted in the skies above Penang island today and tomorrow.

The goal is to induce as much rainfall as possible in water catchment areas (WCAs) of the Air Itam Dam and the Teluk Bahang Dam.

These operations are directed and coordinated by the National Disaster Management Agency (Nadma) in the Prime Minister's Department and will be conducted by the Royal Malaysian Air Force.

Penang Water Supply Corporation chief executive officer K. Pathmanathan said, according to an official notification to the Penang Water Supply Regulator (BKSA), the scheduling and implementation of the cloud seeding operations are subjected to "atmospheric and cloud conditions".

He said between Feb 1 and Feb 27, PBAPP recorded only 45mm of rainfall in the Air Itam Dam WCA and 71.5mm of rainfall in the Teluk Bahang Dam WCA.

The effective capacity of the Air Itam Dam today stood at 37 per cent while Teluk Bahang Dam is at 79.6 per cent.

The effective capacity of the Air Itam Dam on Jan 1 was at 68.9 per cent while Teluk Bahang Dam was at 95.4 per cent.

"Last year, successive cloud seeding operations in May and June contributed to a total of 30.5mm of rainfall in the Air Itam Dam's water catchment areas.

"This rainfall helped to ensure that there was no water crisis in Air Itam in 2023.

"This year, we thank Nadma, RMAF, the National Water Services Commission (Span) and the Penang government for their rapid responses to cloud seeding requests made earlier this month," Pathmanathan said today.

Elaborating, he said the effective capacity of the Air Itam Dam was low while the effective capacity of the Teluk Bahang Dam was dropping.

"Hence, any amount of rainfall will be useful as we strive to defend the raw water reserves of these dams until the next rainy season," he added.

Meanwhile, Pathmanathan said PBAPP's implementation of its "Air Itam Dam Action Plan 2024" (AIDAP 2024) was gradually raising the effective capacity of the Air Itam Dam.

Before Chinese New Year on Feb 5, the effective capacity of the Air Itam Dam was 32.8 per cent while during Chinese New Year on Frb 17, the effective capacity of the dam was 32.4 per cent.

https://www.nst.com.my/news/nation/2024/02/1018467/penang-water-corp-cloud-seeding-operations-ongoing-prevent-water-crisis

"The AIDAP 2024 has 'increased' the effective capacity of the Air Itam Dam by 4.2 per cent over the past 22 days, during a hot and dry Chinese New Year season when water demand was high," he said.

The AIDAP 2024 is based on the four key water supply engineering contingency measures:

* minimising raw water drawdowns from the Air Itam Dam to the Air Itam water treatment plant by 75 per cent daily, from 44 million litres per day (MLD) to 11 MLD;

* optimising raw water intake from the Main's Intake and Tat's Intake (the two other raw water resources for the Air Itam WTP) at a rate of 6 MLD;

* reducing treated water production at the Air Itam WTP by about 66 per cent from 50 MLD to 17 MLD per day; and,

* pumping 33 MLD of treated water from the Sungai Dua WTP (Seberang Prai) into the service area of the Air Itam WTP. This measure is making up for the 33 MLD shortfall in treated water output from the Air Itam WTP.

Today, the river level of Sungai Muda is 2.23m.

PBAPP is abstracting raw water from this river to support optimal water production at the Sungai Dua WTP.