

February 29, 2024

No rainfall recorded despite cloud seeding operations: PBAPP



GEORGE TOWN: Despite two cloud seeding operations on Tuesday and Wednesday, the Penang Water Supply Corporation (PBAPP) has reported no rainfall in the water catchment areas of the Air Itam Dam and Teluk Bahang Dam.

As such, PBAPP chief executive officer K. Pathmanathan said, these cloud seeding operations did not and would not increase the effective capacities of the two dams.

He said the likely factors for this outcome were unfavourable atmospheric and cloud conditions.

"Cloud seeding may usually induce more rainfall if there are rain clouds at a specific altitude.

"If there are no clouds, not enough clouds, or if the air temperature is too high for water drops to form in the clouds and fall, cloud seeding may not induce any rainfall.

"Despite two cloud seeding operations, PBAPP did not record any rainfall during or after the cloud seeding operations in the water catchment areas of the Air Itam Dam and Teluk Bahang Dam," he said today. PBAPP had requested for cloud seeding to take place next month, during an inter-monsoon season, when rain clouds should be prevalent over the skies of Penang.

"We hope that the National Disaster Management Agency (Nadma) in the Prime Minister's Department will commission the Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF) to conduct additional cloud seeding operations in Penang next month," he added.

The maximum effective capacity of the Air Itam Dam is 2,160 million litres (ML) as of today while the maximum effective capacity of the Teluk Bahang Dam is 18,240 ML.

In terms of water volume, a one per cent drop in the effective capacity of the Teluk Bahang Dam (182.4 ML) is roughly equivalent to an 8.4 per cent drop in the effective capacity of the Air Itam Dam.

Pathmanathan said the effective capacity of the Air Itam Dam was low. "However, it has increased slightly by 4.2 per cent from 32.8 per cent on Feb 5 to 37 per cent today, although there is only 45mm of rainfall in the Air Itam Dam water catchment area and the weather has been hot.

"This increase is due to the Air Itam Dam Action Plan 2024 (AIDAP 2024)," he said. Under the AIDAP 2024, PBAPP has reduced daily drawdowns from the Air Itam Dam by 75 per cent. Accordingly, the treated water output of the Air Itam Dam Water Treatment Plant (WTP) has also dropped by 66 per cent.

To ensure water supply sufficiency in Air Itam, PBAPP is pumping 33 million litres of treated water per day (MLD) from the Sungai Dua WTP in Seberang Perai into the service area of the Air Itam WTP.

The success of the AIDAP 2024 in "defending" the Air Itam Dam until the next rainy season is dependent on three key factors:

- * availability of sufficient treated water from the Sungai Dua WTP and raw water from Sungai Muda in Seberang Prai;
- * sufficient raw water inflow into five raw water intakes for the Air Itam Dam and Air Itam WTP on Penang island; and
- * prudent water consumption of water by the 30,000 water consumers in the Air Itam water supply service area.

Pathmanathan urged the people to use water wisely until the rains arrived to refill the Air Itam Dam.