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Heavy rain nearly fills Air Itam dam for first time in four years



The Air Itam Dam effective capacity at 99.4% on 27.10.2025. © PBAPP 2025

GEORGE TOWN: The Air Itam dam is nearly full for the first time in about four years, thanks to recent heavy rainfall in its catchment areas.

Penang Water Supply Corporation chief executive officer Datuk K. Pathmanathan said the 2,159-million-litre dam reached 99.4 per cent effective capacity on Sunday and Monday, surpassing its previous high of 93.4 per cent recorded on Dec 2, 2021.

He said a total of 526.5mm of rain fell in the dam's water catchment area between Sept 1 and Oct 27, contributing to the replenishment.

He said the raw water drawdowns from Air Itam dam would be maximised for treated water production at the nearby Air Itam Water Treatment Plant.

"The daily drawdown will be increased from the usual 22 million litres per day (MLD) to up to 65 MLD, as needed.

"This measure helps prevent excess water from being discharged into drains and rivers, which could cause flooding in low-lying areas," he said in a statement today.

Pathmanathan also reminded the public that the Air Itam dam remains temporarily closed due to landslides caused by recent storms.

He said the dam would reopen for public recreation once it is deemed safe.

Meanwhile, Pathmanathan said for the Teluk Bahang dam, it is gradually recovering after 788.5mm of rainfall over the past 57 days.

"PBAPP aims to reach 80 to 85 per cent effective capacity by Jan 1, next year, ahead of the dry season.

"The dam's full capacity is 18,240 ML, approximately 8.5 times larger than Air Itam dam, meaning it requires more rainfall and time to fully refill," he said.

As for the Expanded Mengkuang dam, Pathmanathan said it maintains a strong and stable reserve since Jan 1, this year.

It serves as a strategic drought backup to support the Sungai Dua Water Treatment Plant when needed.

For Sungai Muda, Penang's primary raw water source, Pathmanathan said it has been at high levels since Oct 24 following heavy rains in Kedah.

Levels ranged from 3.16m to 4.74m at the Lahar Tiang Intake in Seberang Prai Utara, well above the safe abstraction level of 2.0m.

"Penang's dams are now at 'comfortable levels' to face the upcoming dry season, with forecasts indicating more rainfall expected next month.

"The nearly full Air Itam dam marks a significant milestone for Penang's water security, providing a strong buffer for the state's water supply after four years of lower reservoir levels," he said.