

Water supply dwindles, consume water wisely, Penang residents told

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GEORGE TOWN: Penang Water Supply Corporation (PBAPP) is urging all residents to use water wisely as the water levels from the state's primary water sources begin to dwindle.

PBAPP CEO, Datuk Jaseni Maidinsa said the hot and dry weather had caused significant drops in the effective capacity of the Air Itam Dam, as well as the water level of the Sungai Muda.

He said the Air Itam Dam reservoir had dropped by 31.8% to 60.4% as recorded yesterday, from 92.2% on Jan 1.

"Now, Air Itam Dam's raw water storage which currently consumed by 175,000 people is projected to last another 59 days if there is no rain until April," he told a press conference, here today.

He said that the water level of Sungai Muda river had also dropped significantly as the water level stood at 1.55m yesterday, slightly above the critical level of 1.5m, compared to 2.35m on Jan 1.

With the latest development, Jaseni said Penang residents were requested to play their roles to minimise the risk of water rationing by reducing their daily water consumption and by avoiding the use of a hosepipe unnecessarily to wash cars, water the garden or cool down the house compound.

"Consumers should use less water daily. We must ensure that Penang has enough water until the rains arrive to refill our dams and raise the water level of Sungai Muda river, our primary raw water source," he said.

Jaseni added that the PBAPP had also planned to initiate cloud-seeding operations around the end of March or early April to fill the water reservoir.

When asked why the PBAPP did not release water from the Mengkuang Dam, he said that was because the dam reservoir was meant for emergency use.

"The role of the Mengkuang Dam is as a strategic dam ... we did not release the water on a daily basis. If anything happens to the water supply from Sungai Muda river or any emergency case like the El Nino phenomenon back in 2016, then only the water will be released," he said. — Bernama