

Penang floods: No spillover from Air Itam Dam, says PBAPP CEO

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Penang Water Supply Corporation (PBAPP) CEO Datuk Jaseni Maidinsa (L) and Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng, during a working visit to the Air Itam Dam, on Sept 17, 2017. — Sunpix by Masry Che Ani



Air Itam Dam is currently on its fullest capacity after heavy rain over the weekend. — Sunpix by Masry Che Ani

GEORGE TOWN: The severe floods last Friday was not caused by spillover from the Air Itam Dam, according to Penang Water Supply Corporation (PBAPP) CEO Datuk Jaseni Maidinsa.

He said the floods were instead caused by the extraordinary amount of rainfall recorded at 270mm that day

He said the amount was way above the 3mm to 52mm daily average rainfall for the state.

"The higher than average rain recorded is due to the *Doksuri Typhoon* which hit Vietnam recently too," he said, refuting talk the floods were caused by the dam overflowing.

He was with Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng during a working visit to the Air Itam dam today.

A huge rainstorm on Sept 15 had lashed on the state with more than 100 areas suffering from flash floods.

Several major roads on the island as well as on the mainland of Penang were inundated with water, making them impassable resulting in hundreds of people being stranded.

Some of the worst hit were in Tanjung Tokong where a landslide at Medan Fettes buried a few cars after tonnes of earth came crashing down.

Also severely affected were Bandar Baru Air Itam, Balik Pulau and Jalan P. Ramlee while hundreds were evacuated to emergency relief shelters.

At time of writing, a Penang Fire and Rescue Department statement said there were still 68 persons staying at shelters where 31 were being housed at Dewan Orang Ramai Kampung Kota Permatang Pasir and another 25 at Dewan Banjir Kampung Guar Jering.

Jaseni said no amount of flood mitigation projects could have coped with the volume of water which fell that day.

"Such projects can mitigate the effects though," he nonetheless said.

Moving forward, Jaseni said PBAPP will construct an overflow pipe to connect the Air Itam Dam to the Teluk Bahang Dam.

He said excess water from Air Itam Dam will be channelled to the other dam if such an event happens and construction is to take two years.

"The project will cost RM50 million," he said.

Lim meanwhile commended emergency services and various other agencies which responded quickly to the situation.

"They have done a good job during the crisis, they have done it for the people," he added.