

Malaysia

Penang's water treatment plants damaged by storm

NOVEMBER 06, 2017



PBAPP personnel clearing fallen trees and debris at the aqueduct in the Guillemard water treatment plant in Penang. — Picture courtesy of PBAPP

GEORGE TOWN, Nov 6 — Penang Water Supply Corporation (PBAPP) said its three water treatment plants and infrastructure were damaged by last weekend's storm recorded as the most violent in the state's history.

PBAPP chief executive officer Datuk Jaseni Maidinsa said the raw water intakes of three treatment plants on the island were damaged or choked by debris from storm waters.

"The viewing bridge in front of the waterfall in the Penang Botanic Gardens was washed away," he said in a statement issued today, labelling the impact of the November 5 storm as the "most violent recorded in PBAPP history".

He said 320mm of rainfall was recorded at the Air Itam Dam in 24 hours over the weekend and the dam capacity increased by 10 per cent overnight.

"This is a new rainfall record, higher than the previous record of 270mm on September 15," he said.

He said there were also landslides at various locations along Jalan Empangan Air Itam, so the road was now temporarily closed.

Over at the Waterfall Water Treatment Plant, Jaseni said the viewing bridge in front of the water in Penang Botanic Gardens was completely washed away.

"One raw water intake was washed away and two other raw water intakes were completely submerged and choked but due to strong water flow, it was too dangerous for any clearing work to be done," he said.

He said work to repair the intakes will start once the water flow slows down to a safer level but repair work will take time due to the extensive damage.

Jaseni said the aqueduct leading to the Guillermaid Water Treatment Plant was blocked by landslides and uprooted trees, but he said the aqueduct is being cleared and will be fully in operation by tomorrow.

Over at the Sungai Pinang Water Treatment Plant, intakes at Titi Kerawang were choked with debris; fallen trees blocked access to the upper intakes and the lower intake pipes were choked with debris.

Work to clear the blocked Titi Kerawang intakes will commence today.

PBAPP is pumping raw water from the Teluk Bahang Dam to this plant for treatment and distribution in Balik Pulau.

"There has been no previous recorded case of a storm that has generated such a violent impact in just 24 hours, in the history of PBAPP," he said.

Despite the damage, he said water supply to affected areas such as in Jesselton, Pulau Tikus and Jalan Air Terjun has resumed after a few hours of interruption.

PBAPP has successfully addressed the issue by pumping more water from the Sungai Dua Water Treatment Plant to the affected areas, he said.

Another area affected by water supply disruption is the Farlim housing area due to a Tenaga Nasional Berhad (TNB) power failure.

"Working with TNB, PBAPP has successfully normalised water supply in the Farlim area, as at 6am today," Jaseni said.

Yesterday, a team of 16 PBAPP and Royal Army Engineers Regiment (Rejimen Askar Jurutera DiRaja — RAJD) personnel participated in an "emergency water aid operation" to help flood victims.

The team will also supply water from water tankers at the following flood-hit areas from 3pm — 8pm today:

- Pusat Pemindahan Banjir Lubuk Meriam, Tasek Gelugor;
- Dewan JKKK Padang Menora, Tasek Gelugor;
- Sekolah Kebangsaan Padang Menora, Tasek Gelugor;
- Sekolah Al-Mashoor, Jalan Air Itam, Penang Island;
- Taman Free School Flats, Penang Island;
- Areas around Masjid Hashim Yahya, Jalan Perak, Penang Island; and
- Solok Rawana, Taman Free School, Penang Island.

"Besides supplying water to the people for drinking and cleaning premises, the team will also help to clean up affected schools and public areas," Jaseni said.

Consumers with any water supply issue can call the 24-Hour Call Centre at [04-255 8 255](tel:04-2558255).