

Anti-flood plan in pipeline

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By Crystal Chiam
Shiying and G.c. Tan



PENANG Water Supply Corporation (PBAPP) will spend about RM150mil to install a pipe to transfer water from the Air Itam Dam to the Teluk Bahang Dam.

Its chief executive officer Datuk Jaseni Maidinsa said that although Friday's flood was not due to the overflowing of Air Itam Dam, the water at the dam increased by 25% overnight.

"This has never happened before and after looking at the pros and cons, PBAPP will be installing a pipe to pump water to the Teluk Bahang Dam which has a bigger capacity.

"The pipe will help alleviate flood woes due to dam overflow and optimise the water from the Air Itam Dam.

"Imagine if the Air Itam Dam had overflowed due to the heavy rain on Friday.

"It would have been devastating for Penang as the water would have flowed into Sungai Air Putih, causing an even more serious flood," he said yesterday.

Jaseni said that now, when the water overflows, its final destination is the sea and this was a waste as PBA could have earned revenue from the extra water.

He added that work to install the pipe measuring between 7km and 9km was expected to be completed in two years.



Jaseni says the pipe will be completed in two years.

“Currently, we are still at the planning stage. We have to do an engineering study to confirm the best route, tender and other works. Normally, the engineering part will take six months and the laying of the pipe will take 18 months.”

Jaseni said the 270mm of rainfall recorded on Friday was almost the volume of rainfall on a typical month.

“Fortunately, the Air Itam Dam’s level on Friday was only 74% so it could take in more water.

“The dam management ensures that the water level at the Air Itam Dam does not exceed 75% during the rainy season which usually starts in September,” he said.

Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng said it was fortunate that the Air Itam Dam did not overflow.

“We are also thankful that everything has returned to normal. This flood was the worst in Penang island’s history.”

He added that the cost of installing the pipe would be borne by PBAPP and it would be a green project.

In Kedah, the flood situation has improved with 231 residents still staying at five relief centres in Langkawi, Pendang and Bandar Baharu.

Kedah Disaster Management Committee’s secretariat coordinator Kapt (Civil Defence) Saifuddin Abdullah said a new flood relief centre was opened at Cendera-wasih Hall in Pendang to shelter a family of five.