

Counter measures to take effect if dry weather persists

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GEORGE TOWN: Dry weather control measures will be initiated if the hot weather persists over the next two months, said Penang Water Supply Corporation Sdn Bhd (PBAPP) chief executive officer Datuk Jaseni Maidinsa.

He said the measures include initiating an emergency drawdown of raw water from the Mengkuang Dam, requesting Kedah to release more water into Sungai Muda and appealing for cloud seeding from the federal government as well as seeking a delay in the padi planting season so that more raw water can be used for water supply purposes.

“Among the actions taken to ensure no water rationing are the daily monitoring on Penang dams, Sungai Muda and the Kedah dams that release water into Sungai Muda, minimising raw water drawdowns from the Ayer Itam Dam and pumping water from other sources to meet water demand in the Ayer Itam and Paya Terubong areas,” he said.

He added that the Ayer Itam Dam’s raw water storage is projected to last another 59 days from Wednesday.

“The capacity of the Ayer Itam Dam is now at 60.4% compared to 92.2% on Jan 1. The

weather has caused significant drops in the capacity of the Ayer Itam Dam on Penang Island, as well as the level of Sungai Muda in Seberang Prai.

“The supply area of the Air Itam Dam covers the township of Ayer Itam and Paya Terubong, as well as the surrounding areas along Jalan Ayer Itam up to Jalan Masjid Negeri,” he said yesterday.

Jaseni said the level of Sungai Muda, Penang’s main raw water resource, has also dropped significantly from 2.35m on Jan 1 to 1.55m on Wednesday.

“Without Kedah’s strategic raw water releases from the Muda Dam, the level of Sungai Muda would have fallen below the critical level of 1.5m.

“More than 80% of Penang’s raw water is sourced from Sungai Muda daily. The status of the river level affects water supply to all water consumers in Seberang Prai. It also affects water supply to a significant number of water consumers on the island, especially domestic and trade consumers in the southwest district and Balik Pulau,” he said.

Jaseni urged consumers to use water wisely to ensure that Penang has enough water until the rains arrive to refill the dams and raise the Sungai Muda level.