

Air Itam dam water level drops by 30pc

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The Penang Air Itam Dam water level has dropped by almost 30 per cent within a month due to the recent dry and hot weather. — Picture by KE Ooi

GEORGE TOWN, Feb 19 — The Penang Air Itam Dam water level has dropped by almost 30 per cent within a month due to the recent dry and hot weather, according to the Penang Water Supply Corporation (PBAPP).

PBAPP chief executive officer Datuk Jaseni Maidinsa said the water level at the dam was at 92.2 per cent on January 1 this year, before dropping to 67.3 per cent on February 18.

“Low rainfall is the primary reason for the dramatic drop in the effective capacity of the Air Itam Dam,” he said.

He said between January 1 and February 18, the rainfall gauges at the Air Itam Dam recorded only 94 mm of rain.

He said PBAPP had implemented dry weather water supply control measures to ensure water supply sustainability until the wet season arrives.

The Air Itam Dam stores raw water that is used for water supply operations in the Air Itam township and its surrounding areas.

Jaseni said the second reason for the drop in water level at the Air Itam Dam was due to high water consumption.

He said the average daily drawdown of water from Air Itam Dam was 0.40 per cent between January 1 and January 31 and 0.64 per cent between February 1 and February 18.

He said this was a dramatic increase of 167 per cent and 327 per cent from the daily drawdown of 0.15 per cent between January 1 and February 18 in 2018.

“Evidently, water consumption in the Air Itam township and surrounding areas had shot up due to hot and dry weather conditions, as well as festive celebrations, during the period,” he said.

He said such high level of water consumption is dangerous especially when the raw water storage was depleted significantly.

He called on all water consumers in Air Itam and the surrounding areas to reduce their daily water consumption immediately.

“The people must also play their roles to save water in support of Penang’s “no water rationing” policy,” he said.

He reminded consumers that PBAPP cannot accurately predict when the rains will arrive to refill the Air Itam Dam.

In comparison with the Teluk Bahang Dam, Jaseni said the dam recorded a total of 172.5mm of rainfall since January 1.

The water level at Teluk Bahang Dam also increased slightly from 78.8 per cent to 79.1 per cent between January 1 and February 18.