

Penang Water Supply Corporation to control water pressure as dry weather continues

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28.1.2020: Mengkuang Dam at 73.4% © PBAPP 2020

Jaseni said PBAPP has been drawing between 50 MLD and 100 MLD from Mengkuang Dam since January 8 to supplement the daily abstraction of raw water from Sungai Dua. — Picture courtesy of PBAPP

GEORGE TOWN, Jan 29 — The Penang Water Supply Corporation (PBAPP) will be implementing water pressure management initiatives during peak consumption hours in a bid to reduce water consumption in the state.

PBAPP Chief Executive Officer Datuk Jason Maidinsa said if there is a spike in water consumption, some suburban areas on higher ground or at the end of water pipelines will experience low water pressure.

“This is a necessary measure to moderate or contain water consumption during the dry season,” he said, adding that this is to ensure there is sufficient water for all consumers until the rains arrive to fill up the dams and raise the levels in Sungai Muda.

He warned that the Sungai Muda water level, which is the main source of raw water for the Sungai Dua Water Treatment Plant, is currently low.

The water level of the river has dipped below the 1.80 metre alert threshold since January 1 and the level has dipped to 1.46 metre as at January 28. The normal level for Sungai Muda is above 2.0 metre.

Jaseni said the capacity of the Muda Dam in Kedah, which releases water into Sungai Muda, is reported to be 9.56 per cent while the capacity of Beris Dam that also releases water into Sungai Muda is reported at 75.33 per cent.

He said despite cloud seeding being carried out in Kedah, there was minimal rainfall in the northern region as water levels in Sungai Muda, Air Itam Dam and Teluk Bahang Dam continue to drop.

The effective capacity for the Air Itam Dam has dropped to 56.2 per cent and Teluk Bahang Dam has dropped to 36.1 per cent as at January 28.

He also called for cloud seeding operations in Kedah and Penang to continue during this dry season so induce rainfall can increase the capacities of the dams in both states.

“These cloud seeding operations are important to produce immediate results, as well as to mitigate the risks of a prolonged drought,” he said.



28.1.2020: Sungai Muda level dropped to 1.46m, at Penang's Lahar Tiang Intake © PBAPP 2020

Jaseni warned that the Sungai Muda water level, which is the main source of raw water for the Sungai Dua Water Treatment Plant, is currently low. — Picture courtesy of PBAPP

He said the south-west monsoon season is expected in April but its actual arrival date, and the amount of rainfall it will bring, cannot be accurately ascertained at this point.

Jaseni said PBAPP has to minimise drawdowns from both Air Itam and Teluk Bahang dams to prolong the lifespan of strategic drought reserves on Penang island.

Instead, PBAPP has been optimising the production of treated water at the Sungai Dua Water Treatment Plant.

The average production of treated water from the plant was 950 million litres per day (MLD) since January 1.

“PBAPP is not taking any chances and is drawing down raw water from the expanded Mengkuang Dam,” he said.

The effective capacity of the Mengkuang Dam is 73.4 per cent as at January 28.

He said PBAPP has been drawing between 50 MLD and 100 MLD from Mengkuang Dam since January 8 to supplement the daily abstraction of raw water from Sungai Dua.

“It should be noted that the maximum volume of raw water that PBAPP is able to draw down from the Mengkuang Dam is 300 MLD while the average treated water consumption in Penang in 2019 was 842.6 MLD,” he said.

This means Penang is still highly dependent on Sungai Muda on a daily basis.

He reassured Penang consumers that there will not be water rationing but called on all consumers to save water for the next two to three months as a measure to avoid water rationing.