



SURAT KHABAR	:	NEW STRAITS TIMES	
TARIKH	:	16/1/2020	MUKA SURAT : 10
JABATAN	:	SPAN / PBAPP	
KLASIFIKASI	:	PERHATIAN	

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ABNORMALLY LOW RAINFALL

# LOWEST EVER WATER LEVELS

Air Itam dam at 62pc and Teluk Bahang dam at 39.5pc

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**P**ENANG has been placed on high alert after recording the worst dam water levels ever in the state's history.

Water level at the Air Itam dam was at 62 per cent earlier yesterday while the Teluk Bahang dam stood at only 39.5 per cent.

Penang Water Supply Corporation (PBAPP) chief executive officer Datuk Jaseni Maidinsa said they were doing all they could to avoid water rationing.

"The dam was at full capacity before Christmas, but the water level has dropped significantly.

"We are doing whatever it takes to avoid water rationing here in Penang," Jaseni told a press conference here yesterday.

Present were Penang Chief Minister Chow Kon Yeow and state Agriculture, Agro-based Industries, Rural Development and Health Committee chairman Dr Afif Bahardin.

In the last three years, from 2017 to last year, the water level at the Air Itam dam averaged 99.4 per cent, 97.5 per cent and 88.7 per cent, respectively.

The water level at the Teluk Bahang dam averaged 100 per cent, 98.6 per cent and 81.4 per cent during the same period.

From September to December last year, the total rainfall record-



The key dams in Penang have seen their water levels falling since Christmas. PIC BY DANIAL SAAD

ed in the Air Itam dam area was 702mm, equivalent to 44.5 per cent of the three-year average of 1,577mm recorded for 2016 to last year.

Meanwhile, the total rainfall recorded at the Teluk Bahang dam area in the final quarter of last year was 1,732mm, equivalent to 55.9 per cent of the three-year average of 3,101mm.

Jaseni said the primary cause of the low water level was abnormally low rainfall over the past four months due to global climate change.

He said while they understood the need for water, especially during the upcoming Chinese

New Year period, there is also a need to be prudent.

"As we are coming to the festive period, we understand that the Chinese community needs clean water for a host of things. In previous years, there was a drop of even 15 per cent of the water level during such times. So, we advise everyone to use less water.

"Avoid using hoses to clean your home and car and also to water your garden. Do not leave the tap running," he said.

PBAPP is taking the necessary steps to sustain the water supply until the rain arrives, forecasted to be in April or May.

Jaseni said PBAPP had been

minimising raw water draw-downs from the Air Itam and Teluk Bahang dams.

He said PBAPP had also optimised the production of water in the Sungai Dua Water Treatment Plant on the mainland and had pumped more treated water to the island.

Asked if Penang would formally request Putrajaya to carry out cloud seeding in the state, Jaseni said PBAPP would advise the state government once the dam water level dipped below 30 per cent.

Page 1 pic: The Teluk Bahang dam in Penang yesterday.