

Cloud seeding in Penang as dam level sinks

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GEORGE TOWN: The Ayer Itam dam here is fast drying up, and is now at just 28.4% capacity, enough only for less than a month.

The dam serves around 180,000 residents of Ayer Itam, Paya Terubong and Jalan Masjid Negeri and to ensure supply is not cut off, the state government is resorting to cloud seeding.

It has appointed a company to carry out the seeding at a cost of RM492,000.

The cloud seeding will be to create rain at the dam's water catchment area, encompassing 5.75sq km of protected forest areas.

Penang Water Supply Corporation (PBAPP) chief executive officer Datuk Jaseni Maidinsa said the company, which was appointed on Wednesday, would carry out cloud seeding 12 times between June 10 and Dec 15.

"This is the immediate measure being taken and we are looking at a capacity of 80% by December as we are expecting the wet season to begin in September," said Jaseni.

"We need a few months of rain to raise the capacity to 80% and with



the current dry season, cloud seeding is the only option.

"Other measures will involve controlling the drawdown of the dam.

"Penangites will have to use water wisely."

However, other parts of Penang are not badly affected as the Teluk Bahang Dam is at 57% capacity.

"There is no worry on the mainland as it has been raining continuously with the Muda and Beris dams running at full capacity," he added.

Cause for concern:

The Ayer Itam dam is now at just 28.4% capacity, enough only for less than a month.

— LIM BENG TATT/The Star