‘Give water to Selangor’

Channel supply from elsewhere to solve problem, says association

PETALING JAYA: More water should be channelled to Selangor from elsewhere to solve the looming shortage, said Association of Water and Energy Research Malaysia (Amre). Its president S. Parapakaran said the proposed Pahang-Selangor raw water transfer project and the development of the Langat 2 water treatment plant would have provided enough water to relieve pressure on existing treatment plants, which were now straining to keep up with demand.

"The rapid development in the Klang Valley has outgrown forecasts of water demand that were made using outdated statistics. "With the proposal of Greater KL under the 10th Malaysia Plan, a water crisis is something that should not be in the equation," he added.

However, Parapakaran said the projects needed to be implemented in conjunction with the water restructuring process in Selangor, which was in a deadlock following disagreements between the state government and water concessionaires.

Water and Energy Consumer Association of Malaysia secretary-general Foon Weng Lian also attributed the problem to a lifestyle of "wasting water" among Malaysians.

"For a country like ours, there is no reason we should be facing a water shortage."

Bringing in more water will only alleviate the problem in the short term but lifestyle change is the long-term solution. 

FOON WENG LIAN

"In a 2008 study we conducted with the Energy, Green Technology and Water Ministry, Malaysians were found to be the highest water users in the region. We use over 200 litres per person each day and 70% of those surveyed admitted they were not likely to change their lifestyle. We have to change our habits of using treated water to wash our cars and water our gardens. Industries have to use water more efficiently," he said.

Foon said in the country's rush to be a developed nation, water had become the least of Malaysians' concerns, adding that there was no holistic plan to balance development with demand.

"Bringing in more water will only alleviate the problem in the short term but lifestyle change is the long-term solution," he added.

Sylbas has warned of water disruptions in the coming weeks in four districts in the state - Hulu Langat, Sepang, Kuala Langat and Petaling - due to an increase in usage for the coming Chinese New Year.

A reader, S.Y. Ng, 50, said she hoped those who remained in Selangor for the Chinese New Year stretch of holidays would be spared the brunt of the disruptions because most residents would have left for their hometowns.

Water issue not about shortage, but providing clean supply

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director Abdul Halim Mat Som said the problem was not a shortage of supply but an increase in demand. "In the last ten years, there have been more developments in the districts, so demand for water supply has increased," he said.

He noted that the issue was not about having enough water in the dams or rivers but providing adequate clean water to consumers.

"Treatment plants are unable to meet the demand although they are operating beyond designated levels," he said.

Syabas had said that the water production rate could not be increased any further although it was not enough to cater to demands. This had triggered unscheduled cuts and low water pressure in the four districts.

Abdul Halim said before the mushrooming of Seri Kembangan and Putrajaya, adequate clean water was easily available.

"Then, we could provide for the districts without difficulty," he said, adding that the districts were now considered "water-stressed" areas. "This means the annual water supply for the areas concerned has dropped below 1,700 cubic metres per person per year. The optimum level is 10,000 cubic metres per person per year."

"Gombak and certain areas in Kuala Lumpur and Klang might face water supply issues if the current situation persists," he added.

Abdul Halim also said Putrajaya was facing initial stages of the problem as the administrative capital's water supply was connected to Sepang.

"For now, we will manage water distribution properly by giving priority to areas with the higher demand. We have also prepared 42 water tanks to assist those affected and they will be deployed anytime they are needed," he added.

Those who require water supply through tanks or want more details can call the company's customer care hotline at 1-800-88-5252.

In a related development, the Selangor government has ordered Lembaga Utang Air Selangor (Luan) to handle the state's water situation, reports A. RUBAN.

Many residents may face supply disruption from Monday due to upgrading works and the increased demand.

Syabas said pipe upgrading works are to take place in Kajang from 5pm on Monday to 2am the following day.

The political secretary to the Mentri Besar, Farkah Hussin said directives had been issued to staff to come up with a detailed report on the matter.