Taps run dry in Balakong

Apartment residents weary of collecting water at common tap for daily use

By THO XIN YI
tho@the-star.com.my

Residents in Belimbing Heights, Balakong, are without water supply at their apartments due to the current hot spell.

Without water, they are in dire straits as they cannot cook or even take baths.

They have to queue up to collect water from a tap near the main entrance of their apartment.

Joint management body chairman M. Elangovan said they had even resorted to buying water from a private company.

“We paid them RM520 to deliver 23,000 litres of water in four tankers, and the water finished within two hours,” he said.

Elangovan added that Syarikat Bekeratan Air Selangor (Syabas) had sent them water tankers but they did not come regularly.

“Calls to Syabas also went unanswered,” he said, adding that there are 403 units in Belimbing Heights.

Serendang MCA chairman Datuk Diew Yuen Keong and his deputy Datuk Hock Hee Lee visited the apartment recently.

During their visit, residents were seen queuing up with bottles, pails, containers and even pots and kettles to collect water from the tap.

Some had also come with trolleys to cart home the pails.

Resident Ng Boon Hong, 64, said his back started to hurt after carrying pails of water for three days.

“Besides the inconvenience, we have incurred extra expenses as we are forced to eat out,” he said.

A 77-year-old resident, Chee Sooi Yen, was also seen queuing up for water. Her son, Eddie Low, said they had to resort to cleaning themselves with wet towels.

Joining the locals at the tap were Iranian residents, including Nasim Sahbi, 33, who is nine months pregnant.

“It is tiring to queue up for water. I also cannot bathe because there is no water supply,” she said.

Liew urged Syabas and the state government to take proactive measures to ensure sufficient water supply for the people.

“The water issue has been politicised although people should be the priority,” he said.

Liew added that residents from Taman Balakong Jaya and Taman Sungai Besi Indah had also complained about water supply in their areas.

He said the area was experiencing water shortage because it was located at the end of the water supply system.

“In 2000, the water treatment plant in Batu 11 Cheras was upgraded, and the supply pipes were replaced with larger ones to increase water pressure.

“Water supply was okay since then. However, due to rapid developments and the recent hot spell, we are affected again. To me, this is only just the beginning of a serious problem,” he said.

Another resident, Jess Chong, is wondering why water shortage should occur in Selangor if the state government claimed to be “rich”.

“Why is there water shortage here? Don’t make us the victims,” she said.

Meanwhile, a neighbouring residential area, Taman Bukit Belimbing, also experienced problems with their water supply.

Residents association deputy chairman Vincent Raj said the supply has been inconsistent for the past one month.

“Sometimes our taps are dry for four to five hours,” he said.

Vincent said they were frustrated that calls to Syabas went unanswered.

“They only sent us water tankers these two or three days, but the drivers did not stop or honk to alert the residents. We have to stop them to get water,” he said.

Liew urged the Selangor government to work with the Federal Government on the Langat 2 water treatment plant project.

“The disruption in water supply proves the Langat 2 water treatment plant is needed,” he said.