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Focus-Water

WATER RATIONING BECAUSE OF COMMONWEALTH GAMES & KLIA ?

By: HALIM TAIB

KUALA LUMPUR: Is water being rationed in the Klang Valley to ensure that there is adequate supply during the Commonwealth Games due in September and to the Kuala Lumpur International Airport which opened for business about a week ago?

This poser was raised by some consumers on the ground that these two huge projects do require a lot of water, to the extent that at least a new water treatment would have to be built to cater to their needs.

Because of these two projects and the time required to build the new treatment plant, they contend, the government chose the easy way out by storing or diverting the water supply from the existing plants in the Klang Valley, resulting in water rationing to the other areas.

In the first place, such a question should not have been raised by several consumers in a recent special meeting with Selangor Menteri Besar Datuk Abu Hassan Omar, if there had been transparency in the management of the Water Supply Department or if the facts and figures are known early.

These consumers obviously felt that things were amiss when their water supply was suddenly disrupted, leading the Federation of Malaysian Consumers Associations (FOMCA) to threaten to sue the Selangor state government.

Luckily for the state government, it moved to hold the special meetings with the consumers to explain the actual water situation that has hindered daily life for the past four or five months.

In a recent meeting in Shah Alam, the Director of the Selangor Water Supply Department, Che Mohamad Che Jusoh, stressed that the water rationing has nothing to do with the Commonwealth Games or the KLIA.

He said water supply to these two project or areas had planned for in advance and in any case, their water requirement was too small as to call for rationing on so large a scale as the Klang Valley.

The daily water needs of KLIA is four million litres a day, Cyberjaya 1.68 million litres and Putrajaya 1.36 million litres a day.

The supply needed by the Commonwealth Games Village is 3.6 million litres a day for the short duration of the games from Sept 11 to 21. In fact, the village area is also facing water rationing at the moment.

Che Mohamad reiterated that the rationing was caused by the unexpected long dry spell plus little rainfall over the catchment areas.

At present, the seven districts in Selangor affected by the rationing are Kuala Lumpur, Gombak, Petaling, Klang, Kuala Langat, Sepang and Hulu Langat.

Abu Hassan, in turn, said the Commonwealth Games Village would be provided with additional supply from two "ultra source" potable treatment plants at the Mines Resort Lake in Sungei Besi. These two "ultra source" plants have a capacity to produce five million litres of water a day.

The state government, the Menteri Besar said, had spent RM20.6 million on the rentals of 336 tankers to deliver water, to purchase 492 static tanks, 10 smaller "ultra source" treatment plants with a total capacity of 2.7 million litres of water a day and equipment for drilling for underground water sources.

He said the water crisis is expected to end in October or if there is enough rain, the woes should be over as early as mid-July.

This is because the second phase of the first stage of the Sungai Selangor water treatment project with a total production capacity of 475

million litres of water a day, is expected to be ready by October.

Abu Hassan said the Sungai Selangor project could in fact provide a supply of 100 million litres a day by the middle of this month.

At the same time, the water processing plant at Wangsa Maju should be capable of supplying an additional 45 million litres a day, he said.

He said all the Klang Valley and federal capital region need is an additional 145 million litres a day because statistics collected showed that there is a shortfall of about 105 million litres a day to meet the needs of the over two million residents.

Abu Hassan said the water woes could be overcome effectively if all concerned were to play their roles to resolve problems like loss of water through wastage, water thefts, leaking pipes and extensive car washing.

He hoped that with the establishment of the National Water Resources Council chaired by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, the water crisis in the federal capital region could be resolved through long-term measures.

What was re-assuring was that all the states had agreed to cooperate to supply water to each other.

Apart from Abu Hassan and Che Mohamad, the others present at the Shah Alam session were the chairman of the state "save the water" campaign committee, Datuk Mohd Sharif Jajang, representatives of the Irrigation and Drainage Department and Puncak Niaga Sdn Bhd, state exco members and the respective MPs of Selangor state. -- Bernama

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