

Muhyiddin rejects talks on Selangor water issue

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By Koh Jun Lin

Deputy Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin has turned down Selangor Menteri Besar Abdul Khalid Ibrahim's invitation to meet and resolve the state's water issue.

"Muhyiddin said 'no', but Muhyiddin also said it's up to the attorney-general (AG) to advise on the matter," said the Selangor executive councillor in charge of local government Ronnie Liu.

The DPM added that thus far, the AG was still studying the issue and has not issued any report on the matter.

During an interview with Malaysiakini last Saturday, Khalid stated his intention to hold talks with Muhyiddin on the Selangor water issue.

Khalid said he would incorporate the federal government's plan to build the Langat 2 water treatment plant into the state's water restructuring exercise, if the federal government gave the go-ahead for the restructuring Selangor has been seeking.

At a press conference today, Liu also refuted MCA president Chua Soi Lek's claims that Selangor would face a water shortage in two months.

He said that he had received the Meteorological Department's forecast yesterday for August to October, which said normal rainfall is to be expected nationwide including Selangor.

"In other words, the Meteorological Department has the answer, which has proven that what Chua Soi Lek said is completely false," he said.

He also maintained that the state has 14 percent in surplus water reserves, as opposed to two or three percent as claimed by Chua.

On a separate matter, Liu said he had visited the water reservoirs of several housing areas in Balakong, where there had been complaints of low water pressure.

Although the reservoirs are supposed to be restricted areas under water concessionaire Syabas' care, he said he was shocked to find the place completely unguarded, some with missing doors or gates.

Pumps missing

In addition, the pumps meant to transfer water to the water towers above were missing, he said.

Therefore, he said the local councillors who had accompanied him during the visits would lodge a police report on the matter tomorrow.

Meanwhile, he said the government had issued a notice to Syabas to replace the water pumps, failing which the government would replace the pumps by itself and then send Syabas the bill.

Local authorities have also been instructed to send water trucks to the affected areas, the cost of which would also be borne by Syabas, he said.

"Now he have got one more reason to step in (and take over Syabas). We have proven that they don't maintain their reservoirs very well," he said.

When asked if there is a deadline for Syabas to replace the pumps, Liu replied, "We don't wait. They'd have to compete with us," while noting that one of the worst-hit areas, Putra Budiman, had five-storey apartments with no elevators, making it difficult for residents to carry water to their homes.

During the press conference, Khalid was asked about Selangor's plans for its water infrastructure.

"Oh there are many. Among them is that we have called for proposals to increase the supply of treated water at existing water treatment plants," he said.

He explained that the move includes installing pre-fabricated water treatment plants adjacent to the existing plants, and this is expected to boost production by 50 percent.

However, he reminded that the current water issue was due to Syabas' inefficiency in distributing water, not production.

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