

PAS' delayed meet on MB may worsen water crisis

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PAS repeated delay of its central committee meeting to decide on Selangor Menteri Besar Abdul Khalid Ibrahim's fate may see the water crisis in the state worsen, warns DAP's Klang MP Charles Santiago.

This, Santiago said, is because Abdul Khalid is reluctant to take any controversial action to address the water shortage such as rationing as it will jeopardise his position.

"Khalid will not make any decisions now because his political life is at stake.

"If he were to introduce water rationing on Monday, people will protest and he is bound to lose his position.

"He cannot be depended to make decisions in the interest of the state right now," he told Malaysiakini when contacted.

As such, Santiago who today held a press conference on the matter, said the state legislature needed to step in to address the government's paralysis over the crisis.

"It's time for the legislature to exercise its power and to discuss whether rationing is needed and what strategies are needed to address the problem.

"It can also look at the health impact of the state government's move to use former mining pond to supply raw water due to the shortage," he said.

PAS which initially set its pow-wow meeting for tomorrow had delayed it to Aug 13 and later again to Aug 17th as the Selangor menteri besar crisis unfolds.

PKR, which has found it difficult to work with Abdul Khalid, has demanded that he resign and be replaced with PKR president Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, a decision backed by DAP.

However, PAS remains split over Abdul Khalid's fate and will make a decision at its central committee meeting on Aug 17.

Abdul Khalid had promised to resign if all three coalition partners in Pakatan Rakyat wanted him out.

'Water level near critical'

According to the Selangor Water Management Authority website, the Sungai Selangor dam

which supplies water to 60 percent of the Klang Valley's population stands at 32.10 percent today, slightly above the 30 percent critical level set by the state government.

Selangor is also pumping water from former mining ponds into Sungai Selangor to cope with the shortage, which reduces strain on the amount of water the dam needs to release.

On a separate matter, Santiago said his office has been inundated with haze complaints in Klang as a result of opening burning in peat lands affecting some 15 residential areas.

Santiago said he had met with the Department of Environment which has agreed to install an Air Pollutant Index reader there and Putrajaya may consider a localised environmental emergency if the situation does not improve.

This, he said, is to allow federal agencies to step in and more effectively enforce regulations and introduce policies to stop the open burning.

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