

Selangor MB calls in water experts to monitor Syabas' daily ops
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By Amin Iskandar

SHAH ALAM, July 18 — Tan Sri Khalid Ibrahim announced today he has directed a team of professionals in water supply management to monitor the daily operations of utility company Syarikat Bekalan Air Selangor (Syabas) to avert a supply crisis that has been described as "suspicious".

Heading the four-man team is Kumpulan Darul Ehsan Bhd (KDEB) chief executive Suhaimi Kamaruzaman. The other members comprise Konsortium ABBAS Sdn Bhd director Abas Abdullah; Kumpulan Peransang Selangor general manager (water management) Karim Endut; and Peransang Selangor planning, strategy and investment chief Kevin Lee.

"This group of professionals will be sent to Syabas because they (Syabas) failed to give a detailed and satisfactory explanation on several issues when the company gave a briefing to the state secretary this morning," the Selangor menteri besar said.

He said he was confident Syabas will be able to cooperate with the state's team of professionals who he said are deeply experienced in water supply operations and management.

Khalid, who is also Bandar Tun Razak MP, said he hoped the federal Barisan Nasional (BN) government would not turn the ongoing water dispute into an inconvenience to the public, especially Muslims who will begin their month-long Ramadan fast this weekend.

He said the state government has also prepared a letter to the Energy, Green Technology and Water Minister Datuk Seri Peter Chin conveying its intent to step in and take charge of Syabas' operations.

"State exco Dr Xavier Jayakumar and Teresa Kok will head a delegation to personally hand over the letter to Putrajaya this evening to the ministry because the Selangor state government feels this issue must be resolved as quickly as possible for the benefit of residents in Selangor, Kuala Lumpur and Putrajaya," Khalid said.

"We are consistent that the restructuring of the water supply industry is the most holistic resolution that will benefit the public as intended in the Water Services Industry Act 2006," he added.

On Monday, Khalid said his state administration was invoking clause 32 of the concession agreement with Syabas to take over water supply works as it was sceptical about the water company's plan to impose a water-rationing programme when the dams are currently overflowing due to the rainy season.

The Selangor state government has a 30 per cent interest in Syabas.

Last weekend, Syabas had asked the National Water Services Commission (SPAN) to allow a water-rationing programme that will affect the Klang Valley, particularly Kuala Lumpur, Hulu Langat and Klang.

The utility said things were dire due to the dry season and that subsequently, it had activated an emergency response plan last month.

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