

Perlis has yet to transfer water assets to PAAB

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KUALA LUMPUR: Perlis, despite having signed a water restructuring deal with Pengurusan Aset Air Bhd (PAAB), has yet to transfer its water assets to the latter, according to chief executive officer Datuk Ahmad Faizal Abdul Rahman.

“They (Perlis) have signed the agreement. They need to corporatise their water supply department before transferring it to PAAB,” he said on the sidelines of the Perdana Leadership Foundation CEO Forum 2013.

So far, six states have signed water restructuring deal with PAAB, including Perlis. In May 2012, the Perak Water Board had inked an agreement with PAAB that would see RM999.2mil worth of state water assets being transferred to the latter.

PAAB has been entrusted with the restructuring and consolidation of the country’s fragmented water sector by taking over the assets and making state concessionaires asset-light, thus allowing them to focus on treatment and distribution.

Earlier at a panel session entitled *Water, Energy, Oil and Gas: The Real Issues, Current Scenario and Future Projections*, Ahmad Faizal said the water sector could be streamlined further, given that currently seven ministries are in charge of water-related issues.

“We hope to streamline this. Singapore has only one ministry in charge of water.”

In addition, he said PAAB would co-exist with National Water Services Commission (SPAN) to enhance the water services industry in the country, with PAAB and SPAN each regulating the physical and operational sides of the water industry, respectively.

Ahmad Faizal also assured the availability of water supply and that the quality of water treatment would not be compromised. He added that most states in Malaysia maintained a water reserve of 15% to 20%.

“Generally, our water quality conformed to the Health Ministry and World Health Organisation standards, below nephelometric turbidity units (NTU) of five,” he noted.

However, he said the treated water would be pumped to reservoirs through pipelines before reaching individual homes. At any point along the distribution system, if the system is not maintained properly, the originally drinkable water might be contaminated.

He also said at 54 sen a cu m, water rates in Malaysia were among the lowest in the Asean region.

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