

Groups: Water crisis likely

'Demand will exceed supply if nothing is done to address issue'

PETALING JAYA: Various watchdog groups on water have predicted that there will be a danger of water shortage if nothing is done to feed the growing demand for treated water.

Association of Water and Energy Research Malaysia (AWER) is standing by its estimation that Selangor, Kuala Lumpur and Putrajaya would experience a water crisis by 2014 if the Langat 2 treatment plant continues to be delayed and the demand in the state increases between 2% and 2.5% annually.

"Using statistics published by the Malaysia Water Industry Guide 2011, AWER found the average increase of annual treated water production (and hence, demand) in

these three areas to be 2.14%," said president S. Piarapakaran, who first announced the association's predictions earlier this year.

He added that if this continued for the next few years, it would raise the demand to more than 4,397 million litres per day (MLD) by 2014; which is above 99% of the projected maximum supply capacity (4,431 MLD) of the to-be-upgraded treatment plants and the recently completed Sg Labu treatment plant.

"We need a 1% reserve margin to allow for leakages and ensure that the water pressure within the pipes is maintained at a level that prevents untreated water from outside the pipes from flowing in," said Piarapakaran, adding that a safe level of

water reserve margin was about 20%.

The current water production reserve margin, according to the National Water Services Commission (SPAN), is less than 1%.

The Water Association of Selangor, Kuala Lumpur and Putrajaya (SWAn), on the other hand, is very worried with reports that the current hot weather has increased water demand in the Klang Valley beyond the maximum production capacity of the water treatment plants that supply the area.

In a press statement released last week, SWAn said according to Syarikat Bekalan Air Selangor (Syabas) data, the average water demand in the three areas had risen

to 4,329 MLD, compared with the maximum operating and distributable capacity of the water treatment plants of 4,371 MLD (including the newly commissioned Sg Labu Water Treatment Plant).

Meanwhile, at a recent conference organised by the Selangor Government, Coalition for Sustainable Water Management chairman Dr Lee Jin claimed that the Federal Government's projections based on the National Water Resource Study (NWRS) 2000 was flawed as it overestimated the increase in demand in the state.

Citing the latest (unpublished) NRWS 2011, Dr Lee said the graph of water consumption in the state had actually flattened.