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Chow is not here to be popular



GEORGE TOWN: Chief Minister Chow Kon Yeow has told his critics that he if he wanted to be popular, he would have asked the Penang Water Supply Corporation (PBAPP) to postpone the major water repair works scheduled on Jan 10.

He said he would have asked the PBAPP to postpone the works to ensure the people would not suffer from water supply disruption and to wait for his successor to undertake the works in future.

"I have said it. If I wanted to be popular, I would have asked PBAPP to postpone the works.

"But my obligation, responsibility and conscience do not allow me to do as such.

"We are ready for 'war'," he told newsmen after checking on the jumbo tankers at the compound of the City Stadium here today, as a preparation for the impending scheduled water supply disruption from Jan 10 to Jan 14.

The four-day water supply disruption would affect some 590,000 consumers in Penang, including non-domestic consumers in all key industrial areas.

The interruption was to cater to two major valve replacement works in Sungai Dua, Butterworth, and would be the first major planned disruptions in nearly three decades.

Chow and PBAPP have come under fire from various quarters following the planned water supply disruption, including from his predecessor Lim Guan Eng.

The former chief minister had chastised PBAPP head for allegedly asking people to store more water, instead of providing more tankers on standby.

In a leaked video of a closed-door meeting, which has since gone viral, Lim had taken the company's chief executive officer K. Pathmanathan to task ahead of the four-day water shutdown in the state beginning Wednesday.

Elaborating, Chow said they had reached the 48-hour countdown and any criticisms, reasons and explanations had sufficed for the past one month.

"There is no need for further explanation, no need for any fight and no need for any dispute.

"Let us now focus on ensuring the smooth success of this operation.

"Let us hope that nothing untoward happens during that duration to minimise any impact," he added.

Asked if civil servants could work from home during the four-day water supply disruption, Chow said, in such a crisis, the civil servants should go to the ground to help in whatever way possible rather than being at home.

Earlier, Chow said all preparations have been put in place to face the impending water supply disruption.

"We understand this challenging situation and we apologise for it," he said.