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PBAPP allocates RM2.5mil for smart water meters in Balik Pulau



GEORGE TOWN: The Penang Water Supply Corporation (PBAPP) has allocated RM2.5mil to install smart water meters for 2,000 consumer accounts in Balik Pulau this year.

Chief executive officer K. Pathmanathan said the first phase this year would subsequently involve 20,000 consumer accounts in other areas of the state as part of a move towards digitalisation.

"The calculation method remains the same, but with a smart meter, consumers have the option to download their bills online, whether every month or once every two months, depending on their payment preference.

"However, the installation of smart meters requires significant funds.

"A normal meter costs around RM67 compared to RM650 for a smart meter. We have identified suitable locations and PBAPP also needs to assess the input and output obtained from the first phase," he told reporters on Thursday (May 25).

He said this during the 2024 World Water Day at the Bukit Dumbar Recreational Park, which was launched by Chief Minister Chow Kon Yeow and attended by National Water Services Commission (SPAN) chairman Charles Anthony Santiago and Penang Water Watch president Datuk Dr Chang Ngai Weng.

Meanwhile, Chow said the state government had delayed the implementation of the new water tariff, which was approved by SPAN, for almost two years to allow consumers to enjoy lower water rates.

"Many states implemented the new tariff in 2023. We waited until February this year to implement it, meaning we used the old tariff for over a year," he said.

On February 1, Penang doubled its domestic water tariffs, with households consuming up to 20 cubic metres per month paying a higher rate of 50 sen per cubic metre, up from the previous 22 sen.

For consumption between 20 and 35 cubic metres per month, the charge is RM1.10 per cubic metre, up from 46 sen, while consumption exceeding 35 cubic metres incurs a rate of RM2 per cubic metre, an increase from 68 sen.

Following the implementation of the new rates, many consumers in the state were shocked by the increase in their water bills, which rose as much as 100% to more than 150% since February. – Bernama