

## **'Federal gov't lets Syabas hold people to ransom'**

**MalaysiaKini.com**

**July 23, 2012**

**By Lee Long Hui**

By barring Selangor from taking charge of Syarikat Bekalan Air Selangor (Syabas), the special cabinet committee is allowing the water concessionaire to hold people of the state to ransom.

It seems the federal government is more interested in supporting a crony company like Syabas, whose chairperson Rozali Ismail was a former Selangor Umno treasurer, state executive councillor Dr Xavier Jayakumar told a press conference today.

"This, rather than looking after the interests of the Selangor rakyat as a whole, especially on a vital issue such as water," Xavier said in blasting the cabinet committee after visiting the Sungai Semenyih water treatment plant.

Committee chairperson and Deputy Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin said earlier today the federal government has made an initial decision not to allow the Selangor government to take over the operations of Syabas.

'Syabas committing criminal contempt'

Muhyiddin also said that there was no cause at present to ration water supply to Selangor and the surrounding areas of the Federal Territories.

Xavier said Muhyiddin's admission that there was no need for water rationing proved that Syabas had been committing a criminal contempt.

"It proves that Syabas created the crisis.

"If the (special) cabinet committee says that there is no need for rationing water and there is no problem of pure water supply, than I hold Syabas for a criminal contempt in the terms of frightening the people of Selangor and talking about rationing the water," he added.

As such, he said the state government and the consumer could bring Syabas to court.

Said he was not surprised by the committee's rejection because its members - Muhyiddin, Pemandu chief Idris Jala, energy and natural resources minister Peter Chin and agriculture minister Noh Omar - have openly supported the Langat 2 water treatment plant project.

Referendum

Meanwhile, Xavier suggested that a referendum be held to decide whether the state government should take over the water concessionaire.

He said that the referendum should be held for the people of Selangor, Kuala Lumpur and Putrajaya.

"I think we can have referendum very easily done, we can do at all the 9 administrative districts in Selangor."

Xavier is very confident that the people will understand that the state government is trying to uphold their interest in keeping water tariff low.

He said Selangor cannot allow more than a 12 percent increase while Syabas is promised a 34 percent increased in the agreement inked with the previous administration.

Mitigation projects

Xavier added that the state government is mulling a special state legislative assembly sitting to approve a RM225 million allocation for two mitigation projects.

The two projects involve establishing two water treatment plants at Sungai Selangor which are under the purview of the state government.

This will be used as a last resort should the Putrajaya reject the state government's application for a loan to initiate the project.

"Even if they don't approve the loan or they are in the process of approving it, we have enough money in the state, and we are going to use the money in the state to tender this work.

"The tender sub-committee of the state is already at work, and we will be tendering the works out while we are waiting the finance ministry to approve the loan that we have asked for," he said.

Based on Xavier's calculation, he said the two proposed plants can supply approximately 200 mega-litre per day of treated water, which is currently below maximum capacity output.

The Sri Andalas assemblyperson said that the state government also planning to spend additional RM250 million to upgrade all four water treatment plants to prevent any disruption of water supply in the state.

He said that a consultant is currently working out the actual cost and the government will get the permission from the state assembly once the figure is confirmed.