

**DPM: I'm concerned for consumers, not cronies**  
**Malaysiakini.com**  
**July 13, 2010**

Deputy premier Muhyiddin Yassin has defended himself against a claim that his comments on water management in Selangor were intended to protect the federal government's cronies.

Muhyiddin Yassin (right) said instead that he had made the remarks in the public interest and to ensure that consumers in Selangor, Putrajaya and Kuala Lumpur have routine access to water supply.

"The actual issue is that water is given free (of charge in Selangor) and the company (concerned) has to face losses.

"It is not an issue of cronyism ... If the (concessionaire) faces losses and closes down, you and I will not get water supply," he said.

"That is the real issue. We do not want ... Selangor, Putrajaya and Kuala Lumpur to face a severe water crisis."

Muhyiddin, who is also the education minister, was speaking to reporters after launching the 2nd Asean Schools Sports Meet this morning.

He was asked to comment on Selangor Menteri Besar Khalid Ibrahim's dismissal of his claim that the state government will go bankrupt if it continues to provide free water.

Khalid (left) had further said Muhyiddin's remarks appeared to show that it is more important for BN "to take care of its cronies instead of providing cheaper and more efficient water supply to the people".

Tariff hike 'acceptable'

Muhyiddin said he does not think consumers will protest if there is a substantial increase in water tariff, if this comes with clean water supply.

"We should look at the circumstances and reality faced by the Selangor government (in supplying free water) to consumers. This is not about the contract or cronyism," he said, pointing out that a water crisis would be detrimental to both consumers and industries.

For instance, he said, Muslims would have to perform bertayamun (ablution) before prayers, by using sand rather than water.

"We are truly in a Catch-22 situation, and the Selangor government cannot run away from the situation," said Muhyiddin.

He warned that if the situation is not handled properly, Selangor may face a water crisis in two years.

On Khalid's jibe that the water tariff in Johore had been raised when he was the menteri besar, Muhyiddin said Johor charges a higher water tariff because it involves a higher cost.

"The people of Johor did not complain. In Selangor, the cost to produce clean water is rising. It is not fair to the water companies. It is not the issue of profits but responsibility... the state government has to act with sincerity," he said.

Copyright © 1999-2007 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd.  
Source : <http://www.malysiakini.com/news/137164>