

Water shortage threats 'mere scare tactics'

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The confusion sparked by contradictory claims that Selangor, Kuala Lumpur and Putrajaya would suffer insufficient water supply by the end of 2014 is to favour the contractors involved in the raw water transmission project from Pahang to Selangor.

Coalition Against Water Privatisation (CAWP) coordinator Charles Santiago charged today that politically-linked contractors were behind the federal government's rush to complete the interstate water transmission project, otherwise known as the Kelau Dam project.

"The contractors cannot do their jobs because the project is funded partly by the Japanese Overseas Development Aid and the Japanese government will not release the funding unless they see progress in the work," said Santiago (left), who is also the Klang DAP parliamentarian.

charles santiago water bill issue 020207 replyTo shed light on the recent spat between Energy, Green Technology and Water Minister Peter Chin Fah Kui and Selangor Menteri Besar Khalid Ibrahim, Santiago said:

"A bilateral loan was given under the New Miyazawa Initiative to various countries, including Malaysia, and through the Japan Bank for International Cooperation, RM3.8 billion was granted".

Another reason for the project not kicking off as planned is because the state government has refused to transfer land to the federal government, he added.

Going to town with 'scare tactics'

The federal government was using "scare tactics" to incite fear in the people to enable an Umno-linked beneficiary to get the funds, he claimed.

Chin had said that the National Water Resources Study Report (NWSR) 2000-2050 published by the Economic Planning Unit (EPU) projected that Selangor and the two federal territories would be facing water shortage by the end of 2014.

NONETherefore, Chin (right) had insisted, the water transmission project should be launched straightaway to meet growing demand.

Part of the project involves a 45km long tunnel to channel raw water from Kelau, Telemong and Bentong in Pahang to Selangor.

The tunnel job was awarded last year to a Japanese-led consortium comprising Shimizu Corp (project leader) and Nishimatsu Construction Co and local companies UEM Builder and IJM Corp.

The matter triggered contention as UEM is an Umno-linked company while Nishimatsu is facing corruption allegations in Japan and had been accused of negligence in Singapore over the Nicoll Highway collapse in 2005.

Citing several news reports, Santiago said threats of critical water shortage had been used ever since 1997.

"This was also what the chairperson of Puncak Niaga said in 1997, that water shortage will be critical in 1998, but that year, it wasn't as critical as he had painted it to be".

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