

Selangor pans Syabas for double dipping
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A new scheme by Selangor utility Syarikat Bekalan Air Selangor Sdn Bhd (Syabas) to collect donations from individuals who wants to "return" the state's subsidy for 20 cubic metres of water, was a case of double dipping.

NONEThe Selangor Menteri Besar's political secretary, Faekah Husin (left), said that this was because the state already subsidises Syabas RM11 annually for the free water.

"Syabas does not have the right to collect money for the 20 cubic metres of subsidised water water from any individual. If it does, Syabas is being paid twice for the same 20 cubic metres of water," she said in a statement today.

Faekah said that rightfully, any individuals who do not wish to enjoy the subsidies should rightfully surrender the sum, which works out to RM11.40 monthly, to the state government.

She was commenting on Syabas' new scheme to collect RM11.40 from Selangor residents who wish to waive the free water subsidies which would be used to help residents who have no access to clean water, let alone enjoy state subsidies.

Faekah said that the state government was never consulted over Tabung Budi.

State subsidies for 20 cubic metres of water were hatched soon after Pakatan Rakyat took over the Selangor state government in 2008 in a bid to lift the economic burden of the public.

However, this move was limited to residential houses as it was difficult in terms of logistics to implement the same for high-rises.

Pay cut shock

Meanwhile, Faekah expressed shocked over the scheme's intention to deduct RM11.40 from Syabas staff.

"The question is, is the RM11.40 deduction the same for all Syabas staff? Does it differentiate between white collar and blue collar staff?"

rozali ismail puncak niaga"Will a Syabas technician who earns RM2,000 a month be subjected to the same deduction as Syabas executive chairperson Rozali Ismail (right), who is paid RM425,000 a month or RM5.1 million a year?" she asked.

Faekah said that from the above examples, it was clear that Syabas' Tabung Budi was not a "sincere" effort to help the needy.

"It is very improper for Syabas to burden its workers when its chairperson receives such an extraordinary salary," she said.

PR exercise?

Meanwhile, Faekah speculates that Syabas' Tabung Budi was nothing more than a public relations exercise aimed at boosting its flagging public image.

She said that the company's credibility was in question because the latest audit on Syabas had shown that more than 72 percent of contracts, worth RM600 million in total, were awarded without open tender.

"It doesn't stop there. There is a shortfall of RM325 million when comparing Syabas accounts and the record of contracts that was awarded. Where has the money gone?" she asked.

She adds that records also exposed Syabas' spenthrift ways, citing the example of a RM51.2 million renovation of the Syabas headquarters when the Selangor Water Monitoring Department (JKAS) only approved a RM23.2 million project.

Other examples of irregularities emerging from the audit includes the purchase of pipes from an Indonesian company worth RM375 million, despite a concession agreement stating that such goods must be sourced locally.

"There is evidence that the Indonesian company in question is owned by Rozali," she said.

She said that with such a lacklustre background, there was no rationale for Syabas to implement the Tabung Budi scheme and its seemingly noble goals were rendered meaningless.

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