

Putrajaya Rejects Selangor Takeover Of Syabas
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PUTRAJAYA, July 23 (Bernama) -- The Special Cabinet Committee on the Selangor Water Issue has rejected the proposed takeover of Syarikat Bekalan Air Selangor Sdn Bhd (Syabas) by the Selangor government, said Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin.

The deputy prime minister, who chaired the first meeting of the committee, said the takeover could not be done as the state government did not comply with the concession agreement, including allowing a water tariff hike.

"The proposal cannot be considered as several substantive and procedural matters had not been met by the state government and Syabas.

"We will seek the advice of the Attorney-General who will have the final say," he said at a news conference here Monday.

Energy, Green Technology and Water Minister Datuk Seri Peter Chin Fah Kui and Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Idris Jala were present.

The Special Cabinet Committee on the Selangor Water Issue is tasked with studying issues related to the water supply industry in Selangor, Kuala Lumpur and Putrajaya and setting priorities to be resolved, and informing its decisions to the Cabinet.

The committee meets at least once a month.

Muhyiddin said the committee also decided that the Sungai Langat Water Treatment Plant 2 (Langat 2) project would take off the ground and tenders would be opened within a month.

He said the Attorney-General would study the law to enable the federal government to go ahead with the project which would have a capacity of 1,130 million litres per day (MLD) of treated water for Selangor, Putrajaya and Kuala Lumpur.

"Today's meeting is of the opinion that in any circumstances, this project (Langat 2) should be continued. Although the federal government had agreed to provide the allocation, until today, the state government did not give its permission.

"The Attorney-General will delve into the matter this afternoon as I had asked him to address the matter with agency," he said.

Muhyiddin said the federal government would ensure that the Langat 2 project would be awarded to a competent company and hoped it would start this year.

"The committee feels that this is an important matter and if it is not implemented, the situation (water problem) will get worse.

"We want to ensure that the successful company bidding for the project can start work immediately after getting the tender," he said, adding the Langat 2 project would take three-and-a-half years to complete.

On Syabas' proposal for water rationing to be carried out in Selangor, Kuala Lumpur and Putrajaya, he said it was not necessary at the moment, but several areas in the Klang Valley would be facing water problems.

Currently, several areas categorised as red (those saddled with frequent water cut and supplied with clean water) will be facing water problems and Syabas will supply water to them, he said, adding that these areas, included Kapar (Klang), Taman Indah Seputeh, Pandan Indah and Pandan Perdana (Kuala Lumpur).

He said the special cabinet committee also decided that Syabas and the ministry would prepare a contingency plan in the next few days if water-rationing had to be carried out.

Asked why Selangor government representatives were not invited to the meeting, Muhyiddin said it was a federal-level meeting as "we wanted to see it our own way."

"The Selangor government will be involved in certain matters later. At that stage, we will have discussions with them," he added.

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