

Selangor Firm On Decision To Take Over Water Operations From Syabas
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PUTRAJAYA, July 23 (Bernama) -- The Selangor government is going ahead with its planned takeover of the water operations from concessionaire Syarikat Bekalan Air Selangor Sdn Bhd (Syabas), State Executive Councillor Dr Xavier Jayakumar said today.

He also said that to end the water feud between the federal and state governments, the Pakatan Rakyat state government was also ready to hold a "referendum of the people" where the people of Selangor could decide to solve the problem.

"To this end, we are prepared, if necessary, to hold a referendum of the people where the rakyat (people) can directly vote and have a say whether to accept or reject the intention of the state government to take over Syabas," he told a news conference after visiting the Sg Semenyih Water Treatment Plant, here. Also present was Basar Ishak, general manager (operations) of the plant.

Dr Xavier said the plant, which was owned and run by ABBAS (Konsortium ABBAS Sdn Bhd, 50 per cent owned by Kumpulan Perangsang Selangor Bhd of the Selangor government) has the capacity to produce 546 MLD (million litres per day) but is currently producing 665 MLD.

He said the state government had requested RM225 million from the federal government to carry out water mitigation projects (providing of the necessary infrastructure) through the State Economic Planning Unit (UPEN), but the approval was still pending.

"The Selangor government is prepared to spend its own funds to fulfill these mitigation projects which are actually the responsibility of the federal government to ensure that the people of Selangor have enough water," he added.

According to him, the state government was also prepared to spend an additional RM200 million to RM300 million to upgrade to membrane technology to supply treated water without disruption to the present supply.

Dr Xavier said the state water industry restructuring exercise should proceed immediately as Syabas, according to him, had failed to provide good service to consumers.

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