

Meeting with Dr Xavier was routine, not specific to water agreement, says Johor MB

16 Feb 2020



Sahrudin Jamal

JOHOR BAHRU, Feb 16 -- The meeting between Johor Menteri Besar Datuk Dr Sahrudin Jamal and Water, Land and Natural Resources Minister Dr Xavier Jayakumar in Putrajaya last week, was to talk about issues in Johor which involved the ministry.

Dr Sahrudin said it was a routine meeting and not one to specifically touch on the 1962 Water Agreement between the governments of Malaysia and Singapore.

"It was definitely routine for me to meet with ministers to discuss issues in Johor, and last week, I did meet with Dr Xavier to talk about various matters including the water agreement between Malaysia and Singapore.

"Nevertheless, we need to wait for the Federal government and the Singapore government (on any latest developments concerning renegotiations on the agreement)", he told reporters after the opening of an event related to the MARRIS (Malaysian Road Record Information System) road upgrade project, held here today.

The Menteri Besar said this when asked about the status of the renegotiations.

On April 9 last year, Malaysia and Singapore agreed to find an amicable settlement in relation to renegotiations on the water agreement, and this included settlement through arbitration.

This decision was made during the 9th Malaysia-Singapore Leaders Retreat in Putrajaya, with Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his Singaporean counterpart Lee Hsien Loong in attendance.

The water agreement re-emerged as a hot topic in mid-2018 when Dr Mahathir was reported to have said the price of raw water sold to Singapore was unfavourable to Malaysia, with the premier suggesting a renegotiation of the terms of the agreement.

The agreement which ends in the year 2061, gives Singapore the right to extract raw water at the rate of 250 million gallons daily (mgd) from the Johor River, at three sen for every 1,000 gallons, with Johor then purchasing treated water from the republic at 50 sen for every 1,000 gallons.

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