Water referendum a political ploy, says Zin

SHAH ALAM: Selangor Barisan Nasional co-ordinator Datuk Seri Mohd Zin Mohamad dismissed the need for a referendum regarding the water issue as proposed by the state government, claiming that the latter's intent was only to politicise the issue.

Zin said that such suggestions were only for the state government to increase their political mileage. "A referendum may be taken while enacting a law where important matters regarding the people's interests are being discussed."

"The water issue is not as the state government is just looking at politicising the matter and blaming Syarikat Bekalan Air Selangor Sdn Bhd (Syabas) instead," he told reporters after handing over 1,000 Ramadan snack packets to commuters at the Shah Alam Keretapi Tanah Melayu (KTM) Komuter station, here, yesterday.

Zin was commenting on an earlier suggestion by state executive councillor Dr Xavier Jeyakumar to hold a referendum on the current water issue to gauge public opinion on whether water rights should be returned to the state.

He also questioned why the state government kept blaming Syabas which only supplies treated water in the state instead of the Syarikat Pengeluar Air Sungai Selangor (Splash) and Konsortium Abass Sdn Bhd that treated the raw water instead.

"Abass's water treatment plant in Semenyih has already exceeded its design capacity which is 546 million litres per day while Splash's plants have already reached the optimum capacity while reserve levels are less than 20 per cent."

The only solution, he added, would be the approval by the state government for the Langat 2 treatment project.

On Monday, the Special Cabinet Committee on Water Issue was advised that the Selangor government would not be able to take over Syabas' management due to substantive and procedural matters.

Deputy Prime Minister, Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, had said that the Federal Government would go ahead with the Langat 2 project even if the Selangor state government did not agree to it. He added that the attorney-general has been directed to look into the legal matters.

The committee, headed by Muhyiddin, was set up to handle the conflict between the Selangor government and Syabas on the water issue in the state.

Supply and Demand of treated water in Kuala Lumpur, Selangor and Putrajaya.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Treated Water Demand (average in MLD)</th>
<th>Treated Water Supply from 34 plants (in MLD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>4,142.71</td>
<td>4,326</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012 Jan - 16 May</td>
<td>4,228.87</td>
<td>4,326</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 May - 15 June</td>
<td>4,316.69</td>
<td>4,371**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 June - 30 June</td>
<td>4,375.80</td>
<td>4,371</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>till July 5</td>
<td>4,323.40</td>
<td>4,371</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(MLD > Million Litres per day)
**capacity increase due to completion of Sg.Labu plant
Source: Syarikat Bekalan Air Selangor (Syabas)

Other members in the committee include Agriculture and Agro-based Industry Minister Datuk Seri Noh Omar, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Idris Jala and Federal Territory and Urban Wellbeing Minister Datuk Raja Nong Chik Raja Zainal Abidin.

Minister of Energy, Green Technology and Water Datuk Seri Peter Chin Fah Kui meanwhile explained that supply of water at the dams was enough but the treatment plants could not cope with the demand.