

## HIGH WATER CONSUMPTION

## 'Regulators requested water tariff hike in Penang'

**GEORGE TOWN:** Penang's proposed water tariff hike by more than 20 per cent is to address high water consumption by domestic users.

Penang Water Supply Corporation (PBAPP) chief executive officer Datuk Jaseni Maidinsa said it was done at the request of regulators, including three Barisan Nasional ministers and Water, Land and Natural Resources Minister Dr Xavier Jayakumar.

He told the New Straits Times Press that the three ministers, all in charge of the water portfolio, were the late Tun Lim Keng Yaik, Tan Sri Peter Chin Fah Kui and Datuk Seri Dr Maximus Ongkili.

"The ministers requested that we take measures to bring down our water consumption rate and reduce subsidies.

"We have been pressured by the National Water Services Commission and the federal government to reduce our water consumption and increase our water tariff rates," he told a joint press conference with Chief Minister Chow Kon Yeow here yesterday.

Jaseni said unlike former Prime



*Datuk Jaseni Maidinsa*

Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak's claim that water tariff rose four times in the past 10 years in the state, it in fact only rose once in 2015, which affected domestic and trade water consumers.

He explained that the introduction and review of the water conservation surcharge in 2010 and 2013 could not be regarded as a domestic water tariff review.

He said the hardcore poor would not be affected by the review as PBAPP was providing free

water for them up to 60,000 litres per month.

Dr Xavier recently announced the tariff and said it had to be raised to ensure that consumers receive good quality water and services.

Following that, Chow said the state's water tariff rate was expected to increase by more than 20 per cent in line with the restructuring of the water supply services industry nationwide.

Various quarters have since objected to the proposed water tariff hike.

Chow, who is PBAPP chairman, said the water conservation surcharge review in 2013 should not be regarded as a domestic water tariff review as it only affected 23 per cent of domestic water consumers in the state who used more than 35,000 litres per month.

The water consumption of 291 litres per capita per day (l/c/d) in 2010 dropped to 276 l/c/d in 2017.

The domestic water tariff rate was increased from 22 sen per 1,000 litres for the first 20,000 litres to 32 sen per 1,000 litres for

the first 35,000 litres in 2015.

Meanwhile, the Kelantan government has no plans to increase water tariff, said Deputy Menteri Besar Datuk Mohd Amar Nik Abdullah.

He said the water tariff in Kelantan remained at a moderate level since 2013, compared with other states.

"The water tariff is not the same in all states as it depends on management and production cost that the water management

authorities have to bear.

"Today, the National Water Service Commission briefed us on the proposed coordination of water tariff in the country and we (Kelantan) have not made any decision on it," he said after the state executive council meeting here yesterday.

Amar said the state government would leave the matter to the state's water concessionaire, Air Kelantan Sendirian Berhad.

**Bernama**