

Water Agreement

20 FEB 20, New Straits Times, p. 11

1962 WATER AGREEMENT

# 'KL HAS RIGHT TO REVISE RAW WATER PRICE'

Malaysia has been generous to Singapore but this was not reciprocated in kind, says professor

KALBANA PERIMBANAYAGAM  
SHAH ALAM  
news@nst.com.my

**M**ALAYSIA has been lenient towards Singapore over the 1962 Water Agreement, which has been long overdue for a revision, experts said.

Singapore has reportedly refused to negotiate over the pend-

ing revision of the current rate at 3 sen per gallon, which was set more than 60 years ago; the agreement had been due for a revision since 1987.

In June 2018, Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad expressed intentions of renegotiating the agreement as the present cost at which water was being exported to Singapore had resulted in Malaysia losing a significant amount of revenue.

Law expert Associate Professor Dr Salawati Mat Basir, at a talk entitled "Perjanjian Air Malaysia-Singapura: Siapa Rugi Siapa Untung?" on Tuesday, said Malaysia had been "generous" to Singapore although it was not reciprocated in kind.

The University Kebangsaan Malaysia academician said Foreign Minister Saifuddin Abdullah

had on March 12 last year considered taking the issue to the International Court of Arbitration.

"Malaysia's strategy to address the issue is inconsistent. It is as if we are reluctant or afraid to pursue the matter at an international judicial platform."

In September 1961, the Federation of Malaya signed an agreement giving Singapore the right to draw up to 86 million imperial gallons (390,000m<sup>3</sup>) of water per day collectively from Sungai Tebrau, Sungai Skudai, the Pontian Reservoir, and the Gunung Pulai Reservoir, with effect through 2011.

A year later in 1962, an additional agreement was signed providing Singapore with the right to draw up to 250 million imperial gallons (1,100,000m<sup>3</sup>) per day



Associate Professor Dr Salawati Mat Basir (second from left) speaking at the talk in Shah Alam on Tuesday. With her are (from left) Sayed Munawar Sayed Mohd Mustar, Khairul Faizi Ahmad Kamil and Professor Datuk Dr Azizan Abu Samah. PIC BY MOHAMAD SHAHRIL BADRI SAALI

from the Johor River until 2061.

Both agreements stipulated the price of 3 sen per 1,000 imperial gallons (4,500 litres), which seemed reasonable at that time and date, without the conversion rates.

Singapore pays 3 sen per thousand gallons of raw water and sells treated water back to Johor at 50 sen per thousand gallons.

The talk, which was moderated by Sayed Munawar Sayed Mohd Mustar, also heard the views of Universiti Malaya Institute of Ocean and Earth Sciences deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research & In-

novation) Professor Datuk Dr Azizan Abu Samah and Johor People's Congress chairman Khairul Faizi Ahmad Kamil.

"Singapore keeps on saying that Malaysia has lost its right to revise the raw water price, stated in the 1987 agreement.

"This is not true because the agreement states the initial 3 sen per gallon could be renewed anytime after 1987," Azizan said.

He said the issue should be brought to the International Court of Justice at The Hague if it could not be solved through diplomatic channels.