

# Malacca to get \$250m to help overcome water problem

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# Cabinet responds to SOS

By Jerry Francis

IPOH, Thurs. — The Cabinet has approved the Malacca Government's request for \$250 million to overcome the State's short and long-term water problem, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

To help the State meet its short-term requirements, the Cabinet has also approved \$24 million to finance water storage facilities to ease the problem, the Prime Minister said.

Dr Mahathir added that the Cabinet had decided to make public the report prepared by the Malacca Government on the water problem, particularly the issue concerning the drying up of the Durian Tunggal Dam.

He was speaking at a Press conference at the Kraftangan Malaysia centre at Kampung Perik, near Kuala Kangsar here, today.

In Malacca, *Bernama* reports that the Malacca Water Authority today began pumping water from a pond at Gapam in Air Keroh, to the Air Keroh recreation lake for public supply as the water crisis in the State worsened.

the respective State Governments.

Providing water supply was not very profitable in view of the cost of building dams and other costs, Dr Mahathir said. The main aim of the Federal Government's proposal is to ensure that all States receive adequate water supply, he added.

Earlier, when opening the \$2.8 million Kraftangan Malaysia's Perak branch at Kampung Perik, Dr Mahathir called on the local handicraft industry to accept modernisation and move into mass-production.

Those in the industry should not stick to their old ways by producing their items at leisure. He said they could sell their products across the world provided they were reasonably

A spokesman for the Authority said the pond contained about 45 million litres of water and that it will take about four days to pump the water.

On the Federal Government's proposal that water supply be placed under its control to overcome shortage in some States, Dr Mahathir said the Federal Government had yet to receive the support of all States.

Some States with plenty of water feel that the supply of water could generate good profit, he said. But they did not consider the capital cost factor, he added.

He said it was not the aim of the Federal Government to deny profit to the States, adding that the Federal Government would distribute the profit equally with

priced and of high quality.

Although the Kraftangan Malaysia centres had provided training to thousands of young people, very few had been willing to work for what they had been trained, he said.

The Government did not expect all of them to work for what they had been trained and would have been satisfied if 20 per cent make the effort to do so.

Dr Mahathir said the Government was giving importance to handicraft training with two objectives — to maintain the traditional aspect of the industry and help raise income levels.

The Prime Minister said the country's handicraft could grace homes all over the world if their quality was good and prices reasonable.

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