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Mahathir-sewerage

PAY FOR PRIVATISED SEWERAGE SERVICES, SAYS PM

ALOR SETAR, Feb 5 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today consumers should pay for the sewerage services provided by Indah Water Konsortium (IWK).

He said consumers, especially those who could afford it, must bear the charges because the government could no longer provide subsidies as it did when the services were run by the local authorities.

"If they (IWK) provide the service, they need to impose a charge. There were instances in the past when the government provided the service but the people did not pay," he told reporters at the Sultan Abdul Halim airport here.

Dr Mahathir said, however, the Housing and Local Government Ministry was studying the move by IWK to impose charges for "non-existent" services.

"It's difficult to say who's at fault. But there are situations where the services provided by IWK and the charges imposed appear to be inappropriate," he said.

The fact was that consumers must pay for the services they were enjoying and should no longer expect the government to subsidise for them, he said.

Dr Mahathir said the fees imposed by IWK should be based on the types of services rendered.

Asked why the charges were low when sewerage services were run by the government, he said the method of calculating the tariffs then was not proper.

"In some places we gave a lot of services but the people paid little...this is because the previous method of calculation was not accurate," he said.

Met by reporters at the Pekan Rabu complex here later, Dr Mahathir suggested that the complex management build a store for the traders to keep their goods.

The lack of proper storage facilities had forced the traders to pile up goods at the stalls, and this was not a pleasant sight at the newly renovated complex, he said.

He urged the traders to change their attitude and adopt more organised business practices.

The advice given by Japanese experts and those from Universiti Utara Malaysia would serve no purpose if it was not put into practice, he said.

The old way of doing business was no longer suitable because people wanted to shop in attractive and comfortable places, he said.

During the visit, Dr Mahathir and his wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah bought food for breaking fast and also placed orders for Hari Raya delicacies.

Later, the Prime Minister, accompanied by Kedah Menteri Besar Tan Sri Haji Osman Aroff, inspected the beautification projects at Sungai Kedah and Sungai Anak Bukit in the town centre. -- BERNAMA