

Johor confident of water deal, says Ghani

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5-24-12-98

JOHOR BARU: Menteri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman has refuted allegations that Johor is upset that the state was bypassed in discussions between Malaysia and Singapore on the issue of water supply.

He said there was no reason why Johor should be upset as it was confident Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and the Federal government would protect its interests when making deals with Singapore.

"Furthermore, we have our representatives to sit in during discussions involving senior officials from both countries on the issue. We are not being bypassed and we are not upset.

"For the record, Johor is happy with the negotiation process and the end result will definitely benefit us," he said.

Ghani, who earlier launched the State-level Home Ownership Campaign, was commenting on reports that he was allegedly unhappy that Johor was not asked to sit in during discussions between Dr Mahathir and his Singapore counterpart Goh Chok Tong.

The Singapore New Paper quoted an article in the PAS-owned *Harakah*, which reported Johor was upset over the matter.

Dr Mahathir and Goh met twice over the past two months to discuss bilateral matters, including the water issue, the latest being a bilateral meeting after the Asean summit in Hanoi last week.

Johor signed the agreements in 1961 and 1962 with Singapore to supply water to the republic until the year 2011 and 2061 respectively.

Under the agreements, Johor will supply about 1.136 billion litres of untreated water daily to the republic at three sen per 4,500 litres and buy back treated water from the Public Utilities Board of Singapore at 25 sen per 4,500 litres.