

17 FEB 1998

Mahathir-Water

MALAYSIA WON'T CUT WATER SUPPLY TO S'PORE, SAYS PM

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 17 (Bernama) -- Malaysia will not cut its water supply to Singapore, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

"What we have done is to give an undertaking that we will not cut off water supply or terminate in any way. We'll continue to supply water," he told reporters after accompanying Singapore Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong on a tour of the All-Asia Broadcast Centre (Astro) here today.

Dr Mahathir was asked on Malaysia's undertaking to agree to supply water to Singapore beyond 2061 made during his talks with Singapore Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong yesterday.

A joint communique issued by Wisma Putra today said this undertaking would be confirmed in an agreement within 60 days.

Asked whether the new time frame for the supply had been set, Dr Mahathir said the decision could not be made now as the "situation prevailing at that time is something that we do not know."

"So we cannot make a decision now which will commit the future government," he said.

Asked what was Singapore's response on the matter, Dr Mahathir said there was some suggestion that both countries enter into an agreement now.

"But we are not competent to do that, so I think PM Goh has understood our position," he said.

"Because water is on the state list it is not on the federal list, so I am giving a commitment actually even before getting the state to agree," he said.

"That is why we require this 60 days in order to formalise it," he explained.

On Singapore's request for additional water supply, Dr Mahathir said a study was being done, taking into consideration Malaysia's own future requirement.

Dr Mahathir said from the discussions with Goh, the two countries had decided to "reactivate easy communication" between the ministries and departments to resolve problems.

"But if they can't resolve it at officials level, of course we'll take it up at our level," he said.

On Singapore's investment in Malaysia, Dr Mahathir said they were much welcomed and encouraged.

"We discuss this thing and we agreed where Singapore find it is worthwhile, they will invest in Malaysia," he said.

He said the situation in Indonesia was also discussed generally as both leaders noted that "what happens in Indonesia will have repercussions in the whole region."

"Not that we are in any way trying to interfere in their internal affairs," he said.

Goh, accompanied by his wife Puan Tan Choo Leng and an 18-member delegation, was on the last day of a two-day working visit here.

The entourage later departed for Melaka where Goh would be guest-of-honour at a luncheon hosted by the Chief Minister Datuk Seri Abu Zahar Isnin.-- BERNAMA

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