

10 APR 1998

Mahathir-water

NO DISCRIMINATION IN WATER DISTRIBUTION

KUALA LUMPUR, April 10 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad tonight dismissed any notion of discrimination in water rationing in the Klang Valley to alleviate public hardship during the current dry spell.

The low water level could be the reason why most of the affected areas could not get their supply, he said.

"I don't know of any discrimination," he told reporters after chairing the Umno Supreme Council meeting at the party headquarters here.

Dr Mahathir, who is party president, was asked on allegations that certain settlements of low-income earners were subjected to rationing while residential areas of the well-to-do such as Damansara, Bangsar and Petaling Jaya were spared.

He said the present water crisis was not a normal occurrence.

"We should remember that this is an unusual thing. If we are used to this situation, we will know who should be responsible.

"Under present circumstances, everyone is trying to resolve the problem, thus there will be this assumption that someone is responsible," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the Selangor Waterworks Department and the Kuala Lumpur City Hall were trying their utmost to find a solution according to their jurisdiction.

He said there was no special body to handle the present water crisis.

Nevertheless, the Prime Minister said : "We welcome constructive criticisms."

Dr Mahathir also said the government would provide more water treatment facilities such as those using the ultrasource technology now in place at The Mines Resort lake here.

These machines draw and treat water from the lake before distributing it through existing pipes or using tankers.

"We have 10 such machines and we will provide 10 more within two weeks," he said.

Attributing the present water crisis in the Klang Valley to the current drought, Dr Mahathir said that for the long term, the government would purchase bigger filtering machines for use during emergencies. -- BERNAMA

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