

07 JUN 1999

MAHATHIR-CLOB

CLOB ISSUE WILL REMAIN SEPARATE ISSUE

KUALA LUMPUR, June 7 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today reiterated that the Central Limit Order Book (CLOB) issue will be maintained as a separate issue from the outstanding package of issues between Malaysia and Singapore.

"We have agreed that CLOB is a separate issue. Only the problem of water (supply to Singapore) and railway is a government issue," he added.

Dr Mahathir was asked to comment on Singapore prime minister Goh Chok Tong's remarks, over the weekend, that the CLOB issue should not be left out (hanging) of the present outstanding package of issues between both countries.

He said: "CLOB was not started by this government (Malaysia). We have never participated in it and neither have we been responsible for it.

"We do not see why we should be responsible for it now," he told newsmen after opening the 46th annual meeting of the People's Progressive Party (PPP), here.

Goh was quoted as saying: "You cannot just resolve the (bilateral) issues as package and leave CLOB hanging. You can have two tracks, but the end point must be the same."

Goh and other Singapore Government ministers have stated that the CLOB issue was initially in the agenda for the bilateral discussions but had been taken off the table at the request of Dr Mahathir.

Singapore and Malaysia have held three meetings to negotiate an outstanding package of issues between the two countries, including water supply to Singapore and the relocation of Malaysian Customs and Immigration facilities.

Meanwhile, asked if it was true that Malaysia had told Singapore to look for alternative sources of water supply after the 2060 agreement expired, Dr Mahathir said: "We have not. We are still negotiating with them and we are willing to supply them with water on condition we gain from it."

He added that Malaysia was selling raw water to Singapore at three sen per 1,000 gallons and buying back treated water at 50 sen per 1,000 gallons.

"In fact they are not paying for anything. They take the treated water and sell to us and take the money. We do not complain ... but, we say that by the year 2060, the supply of raw water must stop and from then on, we will supply them with treated water. It is a fair thing," said Dr Mahathir.

The prime minister said the current agreement of water supply was drawn up by the British during their (British) period and it favoured more on Singapore.

"We are now independent countries, you cannot expect us to take our money to pay them so that they can pay us three sen. We pay 50 sen, they pay back three sen to us," Dr Mahathir said.

It is "a no go thing," he stressed.

"We cannot continue to do that (sell water at three sen), we will supply them water, we do not want to deny them water but we will supply them with treated water until the agreement terminates," he said.

He pointed out that the raw water has been priced at three sen per 1,000 gallons for ages now, adding that "each time, we want to raise the three sen, they will raise the cost of treated water." -- BERNAMA

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