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Mahathir-Water

DR MAHATHIR: NO DECISION YET TO PRIVATISE STATES WATER DEPTS

SHAH ALAM, March 28 (Bernama) -- The government has not decided whether to privatise all the water supply authorities in the states. Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

"We have yet to make any proposal," the prime minister said when asked to comment on Works Minister Datuk Seri S. Samy Velu's statement yesterday that the high cost of producing clean water would eventually push the state governments to privatise water supply.

Dr Mahathir said he was disappointed with certain parties who questioned any plan for privatisation by the government.

These people had closed minds and did not want to accept any change, he told reporters after launching cranes made by Favelle Favco (M) Sdn Bhd, here.

He said, for instance, that if Telekom Malaysia had not been privatised, it would not have been able to provide good service today.

Today, the Telekom Malaysia was raking in RM2 billion in revenue but previously the government had to pump RM200 million into the Telecommunication Department every year, he said.

From the turnover, the government could collect tax which could be channeled back to the people, he added.

On claims of failure of privatisation like what happened to Malaysia Airlines, he said that what happened to airlines like Swissair and Sabena, which had gone bankrupt, and other airlines was due to the economic recession.

He said that because of the world recession, almost all companies faced problems and hardships.

"If we are afraid to privatise just because of that, I think we will become backward," he said maintaining that privatisation had been proven to bring a lot of good things.

On the Ketari state by-election, Dr Mahathir said the Barisan Nasional's (BN) campaign was going smoothly.

Asked to comment on PAS commissioner idris Omar's call to the Malay voters to support the DAP in the by-election, he said PAS would support the DAP because the latter did not like an Islamic state, he said that if PAS supported the DAP it meant that PAS was against an Islamic state because the DAP did not like an Islamic state.

The Ketari by-election on Sunday is a straight fight between the BN's Yum Ah Ha and Choong Siew Onn of the DAP.

-- BERNAMA

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