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Mahathir-Water

S'PORE MUST BE REASONABLE OVER PRICE OF WATER, SAYS DR MAHATHIR

PETALING JAYA, Aug 6 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that Singapore must be reasonable about the price it pays to buy water from Malaysia which, at three sen per 1,000 gallons and unchanged since 1927, does not make sense.

"The price should be fair, it doesn't make sense that the price has remained unchanged for 75 years," he told reporters after opening the National Women Entrepreneurs Convention, here.

He said: "We don't want to sell water to Singapore because we are losing money.

"We don't depend on them to bring us revenue to finance the government as income from selling water is a small fraction (of our revenue).

"It's not a major source of income for the government," he said when asked to comment on reports that Singapore is not renewing one of two water agreements it has with Johor.

"Can you tell me anything that has been sold for three sen in 1927 (for which) the price still remains up till now? If you can show me, I will be happy to entertain you," said Dr Mahathir about the pricing which was obviously lopsided.

"We are just doing a favour for them by selling water according to the agreement signed," he said.

Malaysia and the island-republic signed two water pacts in 1961 and 1962 with Malaysia supplying 214 million litres of raw water daily to Singapore.

As for Singapore not wanting to renew one of the water agreements it has with Johor, Dr Mahathir said: "We can stop even now, we are losing money".

"Both parties need to agree to an agreement to supply water but in this case (pricing), we have to disagree," he said.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia was not keen to sell water to Singapore as it was losing money selling at three sen per 1,000 gallons.

In contrast, Singapore was selling treated water back to Malaysia at a higher price of 50 sen per 1,000 gallons and at an even much higher price for Singaporeans, he said.

"We promise to sell water to them but not for them to sell for a profit.

"We can sell to our people in Malaysia itself. In Melaka, (for instance), we can sell for 30-40 sen per 1,000 gallons," he said.

-- BERNAMA

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