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Rais-water

MALAYSIA HAS THE RIGHTS TO REVIEW WATER PRICE, SAYS RAIS

PUTRAJAYA, Oct 15 (Bernama) -- Malaysia has the rights to review the price of water supplied to Singapore because water is part of its national asset, said Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Dr Rais Yatim today.

"Whoever says that Malaysia has lost its right is not true and there is no law which can strip a country of its rights over water or land," he said on Singapore's claim that Malaysia no longer has the rights to review the price of water it supplied.

Speaking to reporters after receiving a call from Justice William Rose from the United Kingdom at his office here, Rais said to say that about Malaysia would be an extreme interpretation of the law.

"The (water) agreements were made was during a period where condition was different from the present, and as stated by Prime Minister (Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad) the water issue must be based on reality and the reality is that the price must be reviewed," he said.

Dr Mahathir had told reporters after a meeting with members of the International Advisory Panel of the Multimedia Super Corridor at Cyberview Lodge, Cyberjaya last month that it seemed Singapore did not want to accept the reality that the price of three sen per 1,000 gallons of water it was paying Malaysia now was too low.

The price was provided under the two agreements signed in 1961 and 1962, which will lapse in 2011 and 2061 respectively.

When asked why Malaysia did not review the water price in 1986 and 1987, the years when a revision was due, Rais said Singapore should not use it to penalise Malaysia because they had not seen the real situation.

"The real situation is that the provision of water is subjected to the source which is in Malaysia, and it is not like selling 'kacang goreng' (fried nuts) or wheat. It is the provision of a basic need of life, which is water," he said.

On his meeting with Rose, Rais said it was to discuss a training programme for Malaysian judges to further streamline the administration of cases in Malaysia.

"We have actually started a few exchange programmes where some of our judges had actually been to UK and placed in certain judicial institutions," he said.

-- BERNAMA

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