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Abdullah-Water

S'PORE MUST UNDERSTAND M'SIA'S WATER NEEDS, SAYS ABDULLAH

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 25 (Bernama) -- Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said today Singapore has to understand Malaysia's domestic water needs if they want the water supply issue to be resolved.

"They have to understand that Malaysia also needs water on our side. Water is important to Malaysia and particularly Johor," he told reporters after presenting prizes to winners of the Sako 2 Award for National Novel here.

He was asked by reporters on what Singapore could do to resolve the water supply issue as soon as possible.

Abdullah said Malaysia could not be just looking after Singapore's needs as the domestic requirements were also very important.

"This is a central issue and it has been subject to many discussions," he said.

"I always believe the water problem will be resolved," he said.

Abdullah said Malaysia would continue to talk and both sides should look at the matter constructively.

He said Malaysia had assured Singapore of the water supply but "the issue now is about the details like the price per litre, filtered and unfiltered water and other details.

"We're not going to allow Singaporeans to be deprived of water, they'll become thirsty and die because of that. We won't do that," he said.

Asked by a Singapore journalist whether Malaysia was expecting Singapore to pay more, Abdullah said: "We want to expect more. They expect to be less. There must be some price somewhere where the scale is agreed."

Asked whether there was any formula agreed upon during the meeting between Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Singapore Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew last year, Abdullah said he was not aware of it.

On Dr Mahathir's announcement in Melaka today that the government would launch a massive operation to curb the influx of illegal immigrants to the country and those without work permits would be deported in stages, he said the move was necessary as there were too many illegal immigrants in the country.

He said the authorities have started to plan for the operation to be carried out by the police.

-- BERNAMA

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