

Water ads achieved objective: Mustapa

SUN 17 JUL 2003

KUALA LUMPUR: The government's move to insert advertisements in newspapers to explain the "factual truths" in the water issue between Malaysia and Singapore has achieved its objective.

National Economic Action Council executive director Datuk Mustapa Mohamed said the last advertisement will be published on Sunday.

"We have eight advertisements altogether published in the local media and the last one will be on Sunday," he said after opening the 18th national economic briefing here.

The advertising blitz entered its fourth day yesterday.

Mustapa said the advertisements consisted of the factual truths, after the government carried out several researches.

"These are not just the truths but the factual truths," he said.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri

Abdullah Ahmad Badawi was reported as saying yesterday he was confident the people of both countries will understand the real situation following the advertisements put up by the Malaysian government.

On Monday, the advertisements made headlines in Singapore which described it as a tit-for-tat after the republic's Ministry of Information, Communication and Arts distributed booklets titled *Water Talks? Zf Only It Could*, to foreign missions in Singapore in March.

Singapore, meanwhile does not appear perturbed by the advertisements.

The Straits Times, in its article *Water ads: A surreal swash buckling*, published yesterday, said there is "something profoundly surreal" about the series of advertisements.

"It's not just the fact that an enormous sum of money - close to a million

ringgit in the case of AWSJ (Asian Wall Street Journal) - will be spent on these ads, or that Dow Jones, a publisher often at odds with the Malaysian government, will be laughing all the way to the bank," the paper reported.

"Indeed with three months to go before (Prime Minister Datuk Seri) Dr Mahathir hands over the premiership to Deputy PM Abdullah Badawi, it's not impossible to suggest that the current outburst is calculated to be a demonstration by the outgoing PM to the incoming PM of how Singapore should be handled, now and in the future," *The Straits Times* added.

