

# KL to soak up water depts' liabilities

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NILAI: The federal government will absorb all the liabilities of corporatised water works departments as well as that of state water works departments (JBA).

Works Minister Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu said yesterday the government will shoulder the liabilities after it takes control of water supply from all the states in the peninsula.

"Currently, the state JBAs are shouldering millions of ringgit in debts and losses incurred from work to repair pipes, build treatment plants, and curb water pilferage," he said after opening a charity golf tournament near here.

"When the running of water supply in all the peninsular states is

taken over by the federal government, it will absorb all the debts and liabilities of the state JBAs."

He said that in the case of state JBAs which have been corporatised, such as PUAS in Selangor, their debts would also be taken over by the federal government.

More than RM1 billion is being spent to upgrade pipes nationwide.

Samy Vellu said the chief ministers and mentris besar have agreed in principle to the take-over by the federal government.

However, taking over water supply operations from the states will involve amendments to the state enactments which would take years to complete, he said.

"When the necessary acts and

enactments are amended, then the takeover can proceed," Samy Vellu said.

Last Tuesday, the National Water Council meeting chaired by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad in Putrajaya had proposed that the federal government assume control of water supply from state JBAs, except those in Sabah and Sarawak.

In Putrajaya, Mahathir said the federal government's takeover will not affect the country's water agreements with Singapore.

He said Malaysia will continue to supply raw water to the island republic as stipulated in the two agreements signed by the two countries.