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Hadi-Water

T'GGANU FIRM IN DECISION NOT TO HAND OVER WATER MANAGEMENT - HADI

KUALA TERENGGANU, Aug 4 (Bernama) -- The Terengganu Government is firm in its decision not to hand over water management to the Federal Government although it may not receive any assistance from federal authorities, Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang said today.

He said the state government could manage the water supply on its own although there were some problems, but it could be resolved amicably.

"Settle the water dispute with Singapore first. This issue (water management) is only to cover up the weaknesses of the Federal Government over the water price issue with Singapore.

"The Federal Government has previously relaxed the rules to corporatise water management and we've implemented it, it's successful till now," he told reporters after opening a forum on the excellence of Muslim women, here.

Hadi, who is also acting PAS President, was asked to comment on the statement by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad that the people in Kelantan and Terengganu might not receive water supply if the two states refused to allow the Federal Government to manage water supply.

At present, Kelantan and Terengganu were the most problematic states in terms of water management, including failure to supply quality water, Dr Mahathir had said.

Last week, Works Minister Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu said all Menteris Besar and Chief Ministers had agreed to hand over water supply management to the Federal Government.

Elaborating further on the matter, Hadi said the Federal Government should not raise the loan issue as the country practised feudalism concept.

He said the people in Terengganu and Kelantan paid various taxes to the Federal Government and it was incumbent upon the Federal Government to help the state governments and the people in the two PAS-run states.

Earlier, in his speech, Hadi said the media played a role in compounding the social problems in society, including divorce, by blowing up sensational stories on the issue.

"If artistes or VIPs divorced, their stories are given prominence in the newspapers, while television aired dramas that have negative influences on the people. The media gave more importance to profits.

"The media should play a role towards creating a more harmonious Malaysian society. This is not done, but instead divorce through Short Messaging Service (SMS) is highlighted.

"Divorce in Islam in whatever form is immoral," he added.

In PENANG, Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon said representatives of Pas-led Kelantan and Terengganu Governments did not raise any serious objections against the Federal Government's proposed takeover of states' water supply operations.

He said he was aware that Kelantan and Terengganu were represented by their respective executive councillors and state secretaries at last week's meeting of the National Water Resources Council where the proposal was discussed.

"They were present but they did not raise any serious objections," he told reporters after launching the national-level special education games carnival.

Dr Koh was asked to comment on Hadi's statement that Terengganu disagreed with the proposed takeover.

He said the Penang Government agreed to the integrated approach for water management for the whole country.

However, the details had yet to be worked out as the Penang Water Authority Sdn Bhd had already been corporatised and listed on the Kuala Lumpur Stock Exchange (KLSE), he said.

"We also have the lowest water tariffs in the country. A lot of the details have to be worked out which can be quite complicated because of the difference in water tariffs and forms of management.

"The important thing is to agree in principle with the proposal and try to work it out rather than not to agree and not even looking at it," he added.

-- BERNAMA

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