

04 AUG 2003

Water-Kelantan

MTRK URGES KELANTAN GOV'T TO ACCEPT FEDERAL DECISION

KOTA BAHARU, Aug 4 (Bernama) -- The Kelantan People's Action Council (MTRK) has urged the state government to accept the federal government decision to take over the management of water supply in all states including Kelantan for the sake of the people.

MTRK secretary-general Datuk Ariffin Abdul Hamid said the federal government's intention should be appreciated and welcomed because the people of Kelantan had faced various problems including the shortage of clean water supply for the past 10 years.

"Water is fundamental in life and if there is constant breakdowns in supply and the water is dirty, our health may be affected," he told reporters, here today.

Yesterday, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said Kelantan and Terengganu, whose state governments had rejected the proposed take over of the water supply management in the states by the federal government, might not get clean water supply in future if they refused to cooperate.

Ariffin said the people of Kelantan must accept the fact that the state government could not afford to manage the supply of clean water as it lacked sufficient funds.

Meanwhile, Menteri Besar Datuk Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat said any proposal by the federal government to stop assistance to the state governments was contrary to the spirit of the federation.

He said the attitude of the federal government which refused to assist any state government including in the water supply problem was totally against the spirit of the country's federation.

Nik Aziz conceded that every state government must listen to the advice and instructions of the federal government, but he said that the federal government should also understand the situation at the state level.

He said the Kelantan government had spent about RM300 million out of the RM600 million loan from the federal government and so far, there had been an improvement in water supply to the people under Syarikat Air Kelantan Sdn Bhd -- the company responsible for water supply in the state for the past several years.

Nik Aziz said efforts to improve the quality of clean water supply to the people of Kelantan were being made continuously including the construction of more water treatment plants such as at Chica near Pasir Putih and in Machang.

-- BERNAMA

ZI RAR AO