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Mahathir-Supply

K'TAN, T'GANU MUST ACCEPT FACT THAT THEY CAN'T MANAGE WATER SUPPLY

PUTRAJAYA, Aug 3 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad tonight said he does not see how Kelantan and Terengganu can be excluded from accepting the federal government's decision to take over the management of water supply in the states.

The Prime Minister said this was because both states, which are under the opposition government, did not have sufficient funds and were in fact facing more problems than the other states.

"In Kelantan, for example, they can't supply treated water properly. The water appears grey and they always ask for loans and assistance from the federal government.

"The amount asked for is not small, (they) ask as much as RM600 million. This shows that they can't afford it. If we don't provide assistance, then the people of Kelantan may not get water for drinking," he said at a media conference after closing the Putrajaya Carnival 2003 here.

Terengganu Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang and Kelantan Menteri Besar Datuk Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat had expressed the stand of their respective governments not to accept the federal government decision.

Asked on the financial assistance given, Dr Mahathir said: "By right they should pay but they cannot expect to get more money from us.

"At the moment also they cannot supply the water. So if they ask for more money, we cannot give."

The Prime Minister was also asked what action would be taken by the federal government if its decision to take over the water supply was rejected at the Kelantan and Terengganu State Legislative Assemblies.

He replied: "We have to look at our Constitution, what are the powers of the federal government and that of the state governments.

"Of course, when we want to amend the Constitution involving the states, the respective states concerned must decide to support it," he said.

On Wednesday, Works Minister Datuk Seri S.Samy Vellu announced that the management of water supply in the states would be taken over by the federal government fully.

Following this, a special body would be created to manage water supply throughout the country.

Asked on the problem faced by the Election Commission with regard to voter registration in Putrajaya, Dr Mahathir said the residents could have moved to Putrajaya from other places.

"So, there are cases where they sometimes don't want to register (as voters) in Putrajaya. Like in my case, although I live in Putrajaya, I registered as a voter in Anak Bukit (in Kedah)," he said.

However, he was confident that the number of residents in Putrajaya, which now exceeds 10,000, would increase before the general election.

-- BERNAMA

MAM AO