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Ghani-Singapore

WATER PRICE NOTHING TO DO WITH SINGAPORE'S SOVEREIGNTY, SAYS MB

JOHOR BAHRU, Feb 1 (Bernama) -- The price of raw of water, supplied from Johor to Singapore, has nothing to do with the republic's sovereignty or principles of separation from Malaysia, said Menteri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman.

He said Singapore should be realistic by not associating the price of raw water issue with either the republic's separation from Malaysia or its sovereignty.

"We have never fixed the price of water (supplied to Singapore) at random and later forced Singapore to accept to undermine its sovereignty," he said after attending the Chinese New Year open house held by the Johor Baharu Chinese Chamber of Commerce here today.

He said it was wrong for the Singapore leaders to try to create confusion by associating the price of raw of water, supplied to the republic at three sen per 1,000 gallons and requested for review by Malaysia, with the country's sovereignty.

Abdul Ghani said this after he was asked to comment on the recent statement by Singapore Foreign Minister S. Jayakumar that if Malaysia increased the price of raw water supplied to Singapore, it would undermine the island nation's sovereignty.

"If Singapore is realistic in dealing with this (issue) by fixing a reasonable price, then it will facilitate towards achieving a solution," said the Menteri Besar.

Abdul Ghani said it was only appropriate if the price was increased to a more reasonable level like what had been emphasised by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad earlier that nothing which cost three sen in 1927 can be bought at the same price now.

On the existing relations between people on both sides of the causeway, he said it was not strained as Singaporeans were still coming to Johor during the Chinese New Year celebration and the Johor people still welcomed them as they usually do.

When asked to comment on "parachute candidates" for any elections in the state, Abdul Ghani who is the Johor Barisan Nasional (BN) chairman, said the Johor BN adopted an open approach on this issue.

He said the issue was nothing new in the state as several Johor MPs from Umno and MCA were not among the state-born.

"Eventhough the local candidates are more accepted by the voters, it does not mean that candidates from outside Johor are being totally rejected," he said.

However candidates standing for election in the state legislative assembly constituencies must have their respective addresses within the same constituencies.

-- BERNAMA

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