

22 JUN 2004
Syed Razak-Water
DISCUSSION ON WATER TO CONTINUE - SYED RAZAK

ALOR STAR, June 22 (Bernama) -- Kedah will continue discussions with Penang over the issue of payment for untreated water derived from Sungai Muda.

Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Syed Razak Syed Zain said the first round of meetings between the two states, headed by the state secretary, was held three years ago in Penang.

"The second round was to be held in Kedah, but was delayed due to a by-election for the Anak Bukit state assembly seat and the Pendang Parliamentary seat and further delayed by the general election," he said here today.

He said the Kedah state government had made a major sacrifice by allocating a 400,000 hectare water catchment area in Pedu to channel water to Penang through Sungai Muda.

"Water, land and religion are under the jurisdiction of the state. Sungai Muda belongs to the people of Kedah and the state. I am responsible to the people and it is only fair to seek payment," he said.

On Saturday, Penang Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon, commenting on the suggestion by former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad that Kedah should impose payment on water derived from Sungai Muda, said it was difficult to put a price as the river flowed downstream into Seberang Prai.

Dr Koh had also said though Penang had not paid Kedah, other forms of assistance had been provided to develop the economy and tourism in the state.

Syed Razak, however, refuted the claim from his counterpart and denied receiving any form of assistance from Penang to boost Kedah's economy.

"I cannot accept that statement. We have not received any help from Penang. Attracting investors to the state was our effort and they (investors) came here because land is cheap," he said.

The Menteri Besar said on the contrary, it was Kedah who provided information to their investors to use the various facilities available in Penang.

-- BERNAMA

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