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DPM: Kelantan, Terengganu must comply with water decision

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PUTRAJAYA, Sat. - Kelantan and Terengganu will have to comply with the National Water Council's decision to allow the Federal Government to take over the administration of water management in all States by year-end, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said today.

He said the two States had their representatives at the NWC meeting on July 30 and that they had agreed to the decision. "If they did not agree, there should be some record saying that they did not agree."

He said all the representatives gave their commitment at the meeting.

"The decision involves all States and there is no exception," he said after launching the two-day Putrajaya carnival today.

Kelantan has rejected the move and Terengganu will raise the matter at its next Executive Council meeting.

Works Minister Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu last week announced that the Government would take over the administration of water management in all States.

He had said the verbal agreement was reached at the NWC's meeting with Menteri Besar and Chief Ministers chaired by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad in Putrajaya on July 30.

Dr Mahathir proposed the move as some States were having financial problems managing the administration that included building water treatment plants and repairing pipes. Only four States were making minimal profits.

On the new ruling for visas imposed by United States embassies, Abdullah said he was puzzled.

"It will certainly delay the approval of visas. But we have no choice. If that is the procedure, then we have to follow it if we want to go to the US."

US senior adviser for Strategic Planning of the Visa Services Directorate Stephen A. Edson yesterday said in Washington that applicants of non-immigrant visas to the US, including Malaysians, would be required to personally appear before the US consular officer at the embassy. The ruling came into effect yesterday.

On the appointment of Umno pro-tem committee members after all the Umno divisional committees are dissolved, Abdullah said it was not an effort to sideline anyone.

"There may be new faces and old faces. I also believe there will be no infighting among the appointed members. Whoever is elected has to work together for the general election."

On today's carnival, he said he encouraged such events as they would provide "life" to Putrajaya.

He said there should be shopping complexes, restaurants and many other places of activities where people from Putrajaya, Kajang and Dengkil could enjoy.

Thousands attended the carnival with stalls selling various items, ranging from food to souvenirs. There was also a stage performance.