

31/07/2003

Federal say in water management

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KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. - The Federal Government will undertake the administration of water management in all States by year-end, Works Minister Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu said.

He said that the verbal agreement was reached during a meeting with Menteri Besar and Chief Ministers that was chaired by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad at National Water Council, Putrajaya, yesterday.

"The move was suggested by Dr Mahathir as some States were having financial problems managing the administration that included building water treatment plants and repairing pipes," Samy Vellu said.

He added that there were only four States that were making minimal profits from the distribution of water. The rest were losing.

"Though a verbal agreement has been achieved, several legal and constitutional implications need to be ironed out," Samy Vellu said after the ministry's post-Cabinet meeting here today.

"The Federal Government may undertake the management only after the respective State Assemblies gave their approvals, followed by the State Rulers."

"Then the existing laws have to be amended to suit the Federal Constitution and the Council of Rulers have to approve," he added.

Currently, water administration and management are handled by the respective State Governments.

On another issue, Samy Vellu said MIC had distributed seven UPSR examination revision books free to 522 Tamil schools nationwide.

He said that the move was to ensure that the 14,000 Tamil school Standard Six pupils who would be sitting the UPSR examination this year would produce better results.

He added that parents and teachers should ensure the pupils use the books.

"This is our pioneer project. If the pupils achieve our target, we would make the revision books a yearly contribution," he said.