

T'ganu keen on getting back oil royalty
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Terengganu Menteri Besar Ahmad Said will be meeting with Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi in two weeks time to discuss the return of oil royalty money to the state for oil derived there.

Ahmad said terengganu mb pc 230408 01Ahmad said the people of Terengganu wanted the royalty payment back, which was cancelled after PAS won the state in 1999.

In lieu of the oil royalty payment, the federal government gave out wang ehsan or goodwill funds through the state Umno leadership.

BN regained the state in 2004 but the goodwill payment continued to be paid through state Umno in place of the oil royalty.

Last week Ahmad said that it was time the oil royalty payment was continued. His call was supported by PAS' Youth wing yesterday.

The movement's leader Salahuddin Ayub said the oil royalty was the right of Terengganu residents in accordance with an agreement with the federal government in 1975.

Speaking to reporters today after holding the state exco meeting in Kuala Lumpur, Ahmad repeated his request for the oil money to be returned to the state.

"This request for the return of the royalty payment is made by the people of Terengganu," he said today.

Ahmad said that all these while the projects implemented in the state via the goodwill payment were done without prior knowledge of the state government.

As such, he said, some of these projects had no benefit for the people of Terengganu.

'Running out of oil'

"The goodwill money was used for road construction but this did not benefit the people," he added.

"This is because the state government had to bear the cost of maintaining these roads whereas the federal government made money from the road taxes."

"We are also worried we will run dry of oil. Petronas says the state has supply of oil for another 15 to 20 more years only."

He added that the oil money should not just be used for road constructions but also for investment purposes.

He also noted that the goodwill payment was also being used to fund the annual Monsoon Cup, although it was not profitable for the people of Terengganu.

However he said the event could not be stopped as it is contracted to be held for 10 years.

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