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PRIME NEWS

'Penang must pay for water'

SPAT BETWEEN ALLIES: Sale of raw water is normal, says Dr Mahathir

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FORMER prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said Penang should pay for raw water sourced from Kedah.

He said the sale of raw water was normal and this had been implemented by the Johor government, which charged Malacca for raw water it supplied to the state.

"I think it is about time Penang paid for raw water obtained from Kedah as it is not a rich state," he told reporters after attending a

"Meet the Former Prime Minister" programme here yesterday.

Dr Mahathir said Malacca paid 30 sen for every 1,000 gallons (3,785 litres) of raw water supplied from Sungai Muar in Johor.

He also said Johor had imposed a three sen charge on Singapore for the same amount of water from Sungai Skudai, Sungai Tebrau, Sungai Johor and Gunung Pulai.

Asked to comment on the Penang government's refusal to accept the proposal because both states shared a common river, Dr Mahathir said the water from the disputed rivers flowed from Kedah.

"The water of the rivers flows



Former prime minister **Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad** and his wife, **Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali**, visiting **Umno veteran Ahmad Mat**, 87, at **Kampung Pelangi** in **Sik** yesterday. *Bernama pic*

from Kedah. Just imagine what will happen if the Kedah government suddenly creates a diversion and stops the rivers from flowing to Penang," he said.

Tension emerged between Pasled Kedah and its Pakatan Rakyat counterpart in Penang after both parties refused to budge from their stance over the proposal.

Penang Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng claimed he was unaware of the proposal, which was announced by Kedah Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Azizan Abdul Razak during the state assembly sitting last month.

The spat between the two allies in the opposition bloc worsened after Kedah became adamant about

charging Penang for raw water and said it would exhaust all avenues, including seeking support from the Federal Government, to ensure the proposal would go through.

Meanwhile, state Water Supply and Water Resources Committee chairman Datuk Phahrolrazi Zawawi confirmed that the proposal was still on.

He said the state Economic Planning Unit had sent a letter to its counterpart in Penang asking for a date to discuss the proposal and was waiting for a response.

"We will explain our reasons to charge Penang for raw water drawn from Sungai Muda and Sungai Kulim in Kedah."