

Wee: S'pore water issue a legacy of Dr M

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THE unresolved issue of the price of water sold to Singapore was a legacy of Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, says Datuk Seri Dr Wee Ka Siong (BN-Ayer Hitam) (pic).



He said this as he reminded a Johor lawmaker, who raised the issue when debating Budget 2020 in Parliament yesterday.

Datuk Seri Dr Edmund Santhara (PH-Segamat) requested the government not to impose high water tariffs on Johor when the new rates were finalised.

"Johor is already paying the highest water tariff of almost RM1.10. If there is a hike, then at least make it on par with the other states."

Awang Hashim (PAS-Pendang) suggested for Johor to sell raw water to Singapore but not to buy treated water from the republic to save cost.

To this, Santhara said it was a good suggestion.

"Unfortunately, when we had the opportunity to rectify

the contract in the 1980s, it was not done. I don't understand why," he said.

Dr Wee interjected to remind Santhara that it was Dr Mahathir who decided not to raise the water tariff on the sale of water from Johor to Singapore.

"As far as I know, this was done in

1987 when YB Langkawi was the Prime Minister then.

"He decided not to raise the rates. So what are your views as the fourth Prime Minister is now the seventh Prime Minister?" Dr Wee asked.

In response, Santhara said things were different now as Dr Mahathir made the decision back then when he led the Barisan Nasional government.

"But now, he sits in a Pakatan Harapan Cabinet and is the Prime Minister and Pakatan chairman.

"The thinking now is to resolve the problem," he said.

Dr Wee then pointed out that the time to resolve the water agreement with Singapore has since passed.

Separately, Water, Land and

Natural Resources Minister Dr Xavier Jayakumar said the water tariff was expected to go up between seven and 70 sen per 1,000 litres once the new Tariff Setting Mechanism comes into effect next year.

"We have done research on three bands, in relation to the volume of household water usage.

"Those under Band 3 will pay more due to higher usage but most or about 60% fall under Band 1," he said, urging the public not to wash their cars daily to ensure lower monthly bills.

Dr Xavier said there would be some public backlash once the water tariff was raised.

"Many have no qualms paying RM30 to top up their cellphones but make a fuss when the water cost goes up by 30 sen," he said.