

Water pact formula drawn up

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JOHORE BARU, Fri. — Malaysia and Singapore have reached an understanding over the water agreement between the two countries, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The Prime Minister, who had private talks with Mr Lee Kuan Yew in Singapore yesterday, said the "formula" was fair to both countries.

He said a steering committee comprising Singaporean and Malaysian officials is working out the details.

"I believe the formula will lead to the development of dams and reservoirs, so that Singapore will get its request for more water and Johore will stand to gain from the move."

Dr Mahathir said Singapore had asked for an additional 2,250 million litres (500 million gallons) of water per day and that it was willing to sell some of the treated water to Johore in return.

"Singapore's request for more water will not affect water supply in Johore. If the calculations are correct, Johore will stand to gain by securing sufficient supplies of treated water from Singapore up to the year 2050," he added.

He said Malaysia could not stop supplying water to Singapore as this was provided for under the water pact be-

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tween the two countries signed in September 1961.

Certain groups had previously questioned the pact and wanted a review, claiming that its clauses favoured Singapore.

But Dr Mahathir said: "We can benefit from it... the agreement stipulates that

Singapore has the right to draw so much untreated water from Johore.

"Anything more will have to be under a separate set of rules. So it can be to Malaysia's benefit, particularly Johore's."

The Prime Minister said Singapore's request for more water could be worked out by way of a joint venture to harness the water source in south Johore. But Malaysia must stand to gain from the move, he stated.

Dr Mahathir said an accord had also been reached over gas supply to Singapore, adding that the steering committee was working out the details.

Dr Mahathir made a private visit to Singapore on Wednesday at the invitation of Mr Lee. He visited the Mass Rapid Transport (MRT) system and was briefed on the Singapore River clean-up operations.