

KL to follow-up on PM's talks with Goh

By Alex Choong

LANGKAWI, Wed. — Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the Government would follow-up on the bilateral talks he had with Singapore counterpart Goh Chok Tong on Saturday.

He said he had reported to the Cabinet today on his discussions with Goh on matters related to the Keretapi Tanah Melayu land in Tanjung Pagar, water supply to Singapore, Pulau Batu Putih and the Central Provident Fund.

Dr Mahathir was speaking to reporters after witnessing the signing of an agreement between Malaysian Jet Services and Dassault Falcon Jet Corporation at the Malaysian chalet at the Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace Exhibition.

Dr Mahathir had said in Singapore that his bilateral and multi-lateral talks with Goh, among others, had centred on Johor's water supply agreement with Singapore and plans by the republic to redevelop 32ha of prime land in Tanjung Pagar belonging to KTM Bhd.

Singapore has been buying untreated water from Malaysia at three sen per 4,540 litres under the Johor Water Supply Enactment signed in 1962.

But the agreement allows for a revision of the sale price after 20 years and this is now being negotiated by Johor.

Singapore is also negotiating with Malaysia on the redevelopment of the KTM land in Tanjung Pagar. The republic wants KTM to shift its existing station there to Bukit Timah, which is nearer the Woodlands immigration check-point.

But Malaysia has made it clear it would not vacate the land as there is no provision for this in the 1990 agreement signed by the two countries. Singapore, however, is still keen on acquiring and redeveloping the property.

As for Pulau Batu Putih, both countries had failed to reach a consensus at their meeting on June 16 on the terms of reference for a special agreement required by the International Court of Justice before it could hear their overlapping claims on the island.

The meeting was held following a decision by Dr Mahathir and Goh to refer the dispute to the International Court during their talks in Langkawi in September last year.

The two countries decided to refer the dispute for international arbitration after bilateral talks failed to resolve the issue.

The question of sovereignty over Pulau Batu Putih, an island situated 15km off the coast of Johor, was raised in 1989 when Singapore stopped Malaysian fishermen from approaching the island.

The decision of the Port of Singapore Authority to build a helipad on the island, on which the British built the Horsburg lighthouse in 1928, aggravated the problem.