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Dr M: We will not cut water supply to Singapore

JOHOR BARU, Tues. - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad tonight reiterated Malaysia's assurance that it will not cut water supply to Singapore.

He said, however, the terms and rate will need to be discussed when the time comes.

In the case of Singapore looking to Indonesia for its water supply in the future, the Prime Minister said: "It is their right."

The Prime Minister was asked by reporters on Malaysia's position with regards to it supplying water to Singapore and the republic's intention to source water from Indonesia after a dinner with Johor Umno leaders in Senai.

Malaysia supplies 1,527 billion litres of untreated water daily to Singapore at three sen per unit of 4,540 litres. However, Singapore sells back treated water to Johor at 50 (Singapore) cents per unit of 4,540 litres.

Malaysia has two water supply agreements with Singapore. The first signed in 1961 expires in 2011 while the second signed in 1962 expires in 2061.

Asked on the proposal by Umno Youth that the Government considers suspending all fresh bilateral dealings with Singapore until Prime Minister Goh Chok Thong states his Government's official position on contentious issues, Dr Mahathir said: "We can study."

Asked if Malaysia was now having new bilateral dealings with the republic, he said: "At the moment, no."

Dr Mahathir was also asked by reporters to comment on the possibility of Singapore reporting to the World Trade Organisation if Malaysia forced exporters not to use the Singapore port.

He said: "It is their right if they want to report. We can also report, but we must have the facts."

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