

08/06/1999

PM: Singapore will get only treated water after 2061

Patvinder Singh; Patrick Sennyah

KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. - Malaysia will supply Singapore with treated water after an agreement to supply raw water to the republic ends, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

He said Malaysia was still willing to supply water but on condition the country gained from it.

Dr Mahathir said at present Malaysia was selling raw water to Singapore at three sen per 1,000 gallons (3,785.3 litres) and was buying treated water from the island republic at 50 sen per 1,000 gallons.

"In fact, they are not paying for anything. They take the treated water, sell it to us, take the money and pay us. We don't complain but we say that by the year 2061 that supply of raw water must stop.

"From then on we will supply them with treated water. It is a fair deal," he said.

Dr Mahathir was speaking at a Press conference after opening the 46th PPP general assembly here today.

He had been asked if it was true that Malaysia had asked Singapore to look for an alternative water supply source.

Dr Mahathir had replied that it was not and that Malaysia was still negotiating with its neighbour.

He said the present agreement was drawn by the British and that it favoured Singapore at the expense of Johor.

"But we are now an independent country, you can't expect us to take our money, pay them so they can pay us three sen.

"You pay them 50 sen, they pay back three sen. This is a no-go thing," he said.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia did not wish to deny Singapore water but will supply treated water when the present agreement ends.

"It has been three sen for ages now because everytime we want to raise the three sen they will raise the cost of treated water," he said.

Asked about the Opposition wanting to be consulted on the appointment of the Election Commission chairman, Dr Mahathir said it was not within their purview and that the Government had been choosing the chairmen all this while although some of them did not seem to be favouring the Government.

"Although we have complained about the appointment of certain people who are responsible for registering voters, for example, the commission has not helped us in any way.

"And so we have lots of people who are registered where they are not staying," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the Government could not complain because when it did, the usual investigation had been done and everything was said to be proper.

"I am not accusing anybody but some of the people who are appointed by them to register voters are obviously one-sided," he said.

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