

'Reconsider water supply'

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Domestic needs come first, says Muhyiddin

KUALA LUMPUR, Tues: Malaysia will have to reconsider its supply of water to Singapore in view of increased domestic needs in Johor.

Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said today that Johor might not have sufficient water to spare for Singapore because of the rapid expansion in the state.

"The principle is Malaysia first, Johor first.

Even if there is any water to be spared, it must be on a commercial basis," he said to the press after a meeting with Singapore senior minister Lee Kuan Yew.

Muhyiddin, who is the former Johor Mentri Besar, said Johor and Malaysia have to think whether at that stage there will be enough water to spare Singapore or not.

"If we do not have enough water to spare how can we give it to you."

"Because the main water comes from Johor rivers, there may not be sufficient water in the next 20 to 30 years," he said.

Muhyiddin also said he was unsure how long the negotiation for a new water agreement will be concluded.

He said Singapore wanted to ensure that Malaysia would continue to supply water after the two agreements expire.

Singapore gets half of its daily water supply from

Johor and the two agreements expire in 2011 and 2061.

At present Johor sells 910 million litres of raw water daily to Singapore and buys 130 million litres of treated water in return.

Later today, Lee told a joint press conference that Singapore would get water supply from Malaysia until 2061 and beyond under an agreement reached in talks with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.