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'Malaysia losing money because of water price delay'

KUALA LUMPUR, Mon: Malaysia is losing money every day since Singapore delayed negotiations on, and refused to agree to, the proposed water price, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

"We've been charging them three sen per 1,000 gallons of raw water, and we know that Hong-kong buys its raw water from mainland China at RM8 per 1,000

gallons," he said.

"Obviously, we are being underpaid, and the longer the negotiations take, the more money we are going to lose.

"When Singapore delays the negotiations and refuses to accept our request, which is not RM8 but a reasonable figure, we lose money everyday."

It was reported today that Singapore has asked Malaysia to make

a stand on outstanding bilateral issues, including water supply and the Malaysian-owned railway land in the island state.

A Singapore Foreign Ministry spokesman said yesterday Singapore had written several times to Malaysia on the issues and is still awaiting a reply.

Mahathir said Singapore knows very well that the Malaysian government wants to hold a meeting

between the officials, who will deal with all matters in detail.

Asked to comment on views that Singapore is profiteering from the resale of water to Johor, he said since the treated water is sold at 50 sen per 1,000 gallons and the raw water is sold at three sen per 1,000 gallons, it shows that Singapore is making a profit.

However, the Singapore spokesman said yesterday it was a "mis-

representation of facts" as Singapore spent RM2.40 to treat every 1,000 gallons of water and sold it back at 50 sen to Johor, which charged consumers RM3.95 for the same amount.

Asked whether the latest development will sour relations between the two countries, Mahathir said: "I don't think so. Our relations can be okay, but these things must be settled."