

Malaysia
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ready to
discuss
package
of issues
with S'pore

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KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia is ready to meet Singapore to discuss the bilateral package of issues between the two countries and is now waiting for the island republic to inform Kuala Lumpur of its readiness.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had written a letter to Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew early last month outlining fresh proposals on the package, including the pricing of water supplied to Singapore.

It is understood that the Singapore Government had informed Malaysia that it was studying the proposal.

"Well, we are ready to meet the Singapore side and we have been waiting (for a reply) for the officials to meet.

"Malaysia has been ready to talk since December. So far there is no response," a source told *The Star* yesterday.

Dr Mahathir and his Singapore counterpart Goh C&k Tong agreed in 1998 that the issues include negotiations on a new water deal, the Customs, Immigration and Quarantine facilities in Singapore, redevelopment of KTM Bhd land, use of Malaysian air space by the Singapore air force and release of Central Provident Fund money belonging to Malaysians.

Talks have stalled for several years mainly because both sides had yet to reach a new price for water.

The existing water agreements expire in 2011 and 2061.

Singapore wrote to Malaysia on Dec 10 seeking clarification on, among other things, water supply and additional railway land which Malaysia wanted to include in the package if rail service, which currently ends in Singapore, stops in Johor.

The fresh proposals included new water pricing but Malaysia has declined to reveal the new rates.

Under the present agreements, Singapore pays three sen per 1,000 gallons of water.