

Singapore maintains position on water price

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SINGAPORE: The republic maintains that it is prepared to discuss a water price revision as part of the bilateral package of outstanding issues with Malaysia.

"Singapore's position that Malaysia did not have a legal basis for reviewing the price of water under the 1961 and 1962 agreements after a 15/16-year delay, has not changed," said Ong Keng

Yong, press secretary to Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong, yesterday.

He was responding to Malaysian Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar's statement on Tuesday that the Singapore premier has accepted that Malaysia has the right to review the price of water under the two agreements.

Ong said this legal point

was not discussed by both Goh and his counterpart Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad during their meeting in Putrajaya.

"However, Goh had told Mahathir that Singapore is prepared to discuss such a price revision as part of the bilateral package," he said.

Ong denied Syed Hamid's statement that the water issue is now decoupled from

the package.

He said Goh told Mahathir that all the issues, including Malaysia's proposed revision in the price of water Singapore currently buys, must be resolved as part of the package.

Both prime ministers agreed that the officials who will meet next week should try to resolve the issue as quickly as possible.