

Singapore to

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discuss water

issue separately

SINGAPORE, Tues. — Singapore has agreed to discuss water and other issues in the package of bilateral issues with Malaysia separately, a Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) spokesman said today.

“Now that Prime Minister (Datuk Seri Dr) Mahathir (Mohamad) insists on treating water separately and to discontinue the package, these trade-offs are no longer possible.

“Singapore will deal with water and the other issues individually and separately, on their stand-alone merits, no longer as a package,” the spokesman added in a statement.

The spokesman said this in response to media queries on Malaysian Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar's statement that Malaysia was “giving Singapore one more chance” to resolve the water issue at the two-day senior officials' meeting to be held in Johor beginning tomorrow.

The spokesman said Singapore Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong had on Oct 14 (yesterday) replied to Dr Mahathir's letter dated Oct 7 stating Malaysia's decision to discontinue the package approach.

Goh, in his reply, said that both Prime Ministers had all along agreed to proceed to trade off, in a package, the benefits to each other from the various items that is water, airspace, Points of Agreement (POA), Central Provident Fund (CPF), and the bridge to replace the Causeway.

Earlier today, Dr Mahathir told reporters in Kuala Lumpur that Malaysia had not ruled out taking the water price issue with Singapore to arbitration as one way to resolve it. — Bernama