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Goh-Water

S'PORE NOT AGAINST UPWARD REVISION OF RAW WATER PRICE FROM M'SIA

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 8 (Bernama) -- Singapore is not against an upward revision of the current price of raw water it buys from Malaysia at three sen per 1,000 gallons, its Prime Minister, Goh Chok Tong, said today.

However, he said, there must be a basis as to what the new price should be.

Goh said this was a matter for officials of both governments to discuss when they meet in Kuala Lumpur on Oct 16 and 17 before coming up with a price acceptable to both sides.

Foreign ministers and senior officials of Malaysia and Singapore will meet here in the middle of this month for their third round of bilateral talks to focus on one key issue -- water.

The second ministerial meeting between the two countries was held in Singapore last month and the first, in Kuala Lumpur.

Speaking at dialogue session with media fellows attending the East Asia Economic Summit organised by the World Economic Forum, here, Goh said he would encourage the officials to do their utmost to narrow the gap on the the price of water which Singapore is buying from Malaysia now and the price in future.

He said Malaysia and Singapore had two agreements signed in 1961 and 1962 which were up for revision.

Malaysia pays Singapore 50 sen per 1,000 gallons to buy back treated water from the republic.

Yesterday, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had said that the payment of three sen per 1,000 gallons was contained in an agreement drawn up by the British in 1927 when Singapore was a British colony and Johor, a British protectorate.

Goh said Singapore's stand was that they should look at the agreements and decide how they should be revised.

He described Singapore's relations with Malaysia as "good and cordial."

However, he admitted that there had been disputes between the two countries but these were inevitable between two close neighbours.

"We are at this moment discussing how to resolve our differences over several issues with Malaysia," he added.

-- BERNAMA

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