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Mahathir-Water

M'SIA WANTS TO SETTLE WATER ISSUE WITH S'PORE EARLY, SAYS DR M

BANGI, Jan 22 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today Malaysia wishes to settle the water supply issue with Singapore as soon as possible.

"However, there are some problems about reaching the price," he told reporters at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia's Career Day.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia could not agree to the price of 45 sen per 1,000 gallons (4,500 litres) sought by Singapore.

Hong Kong, for instance, pays RM8 per 1,000 gallons of water it gets from mainland China, he said.

The prime minister said officials were carrying out preliminary work on the water issue.

Yesterday, Dr Mahathir admitted that there was little progress on the water issue, adding that he was willing to "give and take" but not compromise.

Malaysia currently supplies raw water to Singapore at three sen per 1,000 gallons and buys treated water at 45 sen per 1,000 gallons from Singapore in return.

It has been reported that Johor plans to stop buying treated water from plants managed by Singapore's Public Utilities Board after this year.

At present, Johor supplies 910 million litres of water to Singapore daily and buys back 130 million litres of treated water.

Dr Mahathir also said that the Malaysian government was studying a proposal by Gerbang Perdana Sdn Bhd to build a bridge linking Malaysia and Singapore.

-- BERNAMA

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