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Why all these conflicting statements?

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PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad was quoted as saying that Singapore was changing its mind on the price revision in the water supply agreement with Malaysia (NST, Nov 2).

The Prime Minister should have realised that he was referring to the call for a price revision from Singapore Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew. On the other hand it was Singapore's Foreign Minister S. Jayakumar who was quoted as saying that Malaysia had lost the right to do so.

These were two different people talking and they are holding two different portfolios.

Such conflicting statements coming from the island republic are hardly surprising in the present circumstances.

Singapore is undergoing its most traumatic experience arising from its worst economic performance.

Singapore should not expect the water issue to improve its GDP performance. The late Indonesian President Sukarno launched Confrontation against Malaysia when the Indonesian economy was in ruins. It did not help at all.

When Lee met Dr Mahathir on the issue, NeWater had not been introduced in Singapore yet.

Now three months after the introduction, we have yet to know what side effects it would have on those consuming it. Could there be any or are we witnessing one?

Pertamina of Indonesia would be well advised to take heed of this Malaysian experience when it starts to supply gas to Singapore from its