

RTS TO PROCEED AT 36pc LOWER PRICE TAG

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RM3b project will reduce congestion at Causeway, but new bridge is best solution, says PM

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MALAYSIA will proceed with the Rapid Transit System (RTS) project linking Johor Baru and Singapore at a new cost of RM3.16 billion.

Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said following a review of the project, the cost had been reduced by 36 per cent (RM1.77 billion) from the initial RM4.93 billion.

“We have made a decision and will proceed with the RTS project. It will reduce the congestion at the Causeway.”

However, he said, the most efficient way to solve the conges-

tion was to build a new bridge.

“But we can’t build another one because Singapore refuses. I don’t know why.

“Johor has been very generous by selling raw water to them (Singapore) at 3 sen per 1,000 gallons. But when we want to build another bridge to solve the congestion, they refused.

“I don’t see how we can be so accommodating to Singapore, but they can’t do the same for us.”

On the water price issue, Dr Mahathir said he hoped to discuss it with Singapore soon.

“For now, we can’t do it because they have not set a date. We are losing millions of ringgit every day as long as the issue is not resolved.”

He was speaking after visiting the Sultan Iskandar Customs, Immigration and Quarantine Complex here.

Present were Menteri Besar Datuk Dr Sahrudin Jamal, Home Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, Finance Minister Lim Guan Eng, Economic Affairs Minister Datuk Seri Azmin Ali and Transport Minister Anthony Loke.

The bilateral agreement for the

RTS project was signed by former prime minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak and Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong in January last year.

In May, the Pakatan Harapan-led government requested that the project be suspended as it wanted more time to decide on whether to proceed with it or change the plan.

The six-month suspension was supposed to end on Sept 30, but was extended to Oct 31.

The RTS will link Bukit Chagar in Johor Baru and Woodlands in Singapore. The project was targeted for completion by 2024.

Loke said details of the project, including start and completion dates, would be outlined in an amended bilateral agreement to be signed early next year.

“We have submitted our new proposed changes to Singapore and they will need time to study them. The alignment of the project will remain the same. It will connect Bukit Chagar to Woodlands.”

He said both parties would also sign joint venture and concession agreements.