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Malaysia-Singapore

MALAYSIA, SINGAPORE CONCLUDE CLAIMS ON PULAU BATU PUTIH

KUALA LUMPUR, April 14 (Bernama) -- After two years, Malaysia and Singapore today concluded discussions to submit their overlapping claims on Pulau Batu Puteh to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in the Hague, Netherlands.

Both sides also agreed to include two other features, Middle Rocks and South Ledge, located near Pulau Batu Puteh in the subject for the adjudication by the ICJ, said a joint statement by the Foreign Ministry today.

The statement was issued after the third meeting between senior officials from both countries here.

Negotiations over the islet off Johor, otherwise called Pedra Branca by Singapore, have been protracted over the past two years but were restarted following talks between Malaysian Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his Singapore counterpart Goh Chok Tong during the latter's visit here in February.

"Malaysia and Singapore successfully completed their third and final meeting to discuss the submission of the case of Pedra Branca/Pulau Batu Puteh to the International Court of Justice," said the joint statement.

The statement also said that the meeting was held in the spirit of friendliness and close co-operation and "both sides are satisfied that the meeting has brought the dispute closer to a solution".

"Apart from the subject of the dispute, the Special Agreement provides a time frame with regards to the processes involved including the submission of written pleadings," it said.

The Special Agreement would be submitted to the two governments to be signed and ratified before forwarded to the ICJ.

The Malaysian delegation was led by Foreign Ministry secretary-general Datuk Abdul Kadir Mohamad while S.Tiwari, Senior State Counsel in the Attorney-General's chambers, headed the Singaporean delegation.

The success of today's meeting marked the first of two agreements expected to be signed between the two governments this month.

Malaysia and Singapore are expected to endorse a second agreement for Malaysia to continue to supply water to the island republic upon the expiry of two agreements in 2011 and 2061.

The two agreements are to be signed within 60 days from Feb 17 this year as agreed between Dr Mahathir and Goh. -- BERNAMA

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