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Syed Hamid-Lee

M'SIA,S'PORE DETERMINED TO RESOLVE OUTSTANDING ISSUES, SAYS FM

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 3 (Bernama) -- Talks between Malaysia and Singapore on resolving outstanding issues are progressing well as both countries are interested in their immediate settlement, the Malaysian Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said today.

He said talks on the outstanding issues were now more specific on the approach to achieve settlement, unlike before where both sides only discussed the broad terms of the solutions package.

"I am optimistic... because senior minister Lee Kuan Yew has a better impression of Malaysia, he has a better understanding and appreciation. Their sides came up with some proposals and our sides came up with some as well.

"We are interested to see all the outstanding issues between both countries are resolved immediately, " Syed Hamid told reporters after a luncheon with Lee and members of the Singapore delegation who are here for a four-day working visit.

Syed Hamid said while Lee's visit this time around would not resolve the outstanding issues, it would give the leaders of both countries the opportunity to review them.

"We know that the issues cannot be resolved at this meeting but at least it gives the leaders the opportunity to review all outstanding matters," Syed Hamid said asked about Lee's scheduled meeting with Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad at the Prime Minister's office in Putrajaya tomorrow.

Although no specific agenda has been fixed for tomorrow's meeting between Dr Mahathir and Lee, the outstanding matters may still be brought up for discussions, Syed Hamid indicated.

Lee last visited Malaysia in August last year during which he and Dr Mahathir discussed the package of bilateral issues that has on and off strained ties between the two countries.

The issues in the package are a new water supply agreement with Singapore, the relocation of the Malaysian Customs Centre from the Tanjung Pagar Railway Station, the development of Malaysia-owned railway land in Singapore and the withdrawal by Peninsular Malaysians of their contributions to Singapore's Central Provident Fund (CPF).

-- BERNAMA

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