

09 OCT 2001

Parliament-Singapore

MALAYSIA AND SINGAPORE WORK TO SETTLE PROBLEMS

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 9 (Bernama) -- Malaysia and Singapore are working to settle their mutual problems justly and equitably in a win-win situation, Deputy Foreign Minister Datuk Dr Leo Michael Toyad said today.

However, he said, it was too early for the two countries to sign an agreement because the meeting at the officers level would only be held shortly.

Replying to Jimmy Donald (BN-Sri Aman) in the Dewan Rakyat, he said the meeting between Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Singapore Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew last month had succeeded in narrowing the gap in the two countries' stand regarding the issues arising.

At that meeting, both parties only touched in principle on the issues arising and agreed that they be fine-tuned by officers from both countries, he said.

Toyad said the meeting also enabled the two countries to assess and review the issues in a comprehensive context by taking into account their respective interests while the officers meeting would work out a just and equitable solution.

He said that in view that the approach would be by way of a package deal, the issues must be settled in one go and there should be no more unresolved issues.

On Lee's statement that it would not be easy to deal with PAS, Toyad said the senior minister was only expressing his personal views and did not mean to interfere in Malaysia's domestic affairs.

"The statement must be seen in the context that Singapore wants a settlement as soon as possible so that the issues arising will not strain bilateral relations," he said.

-- BERNAMA

AKT MAI JK