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Rail station to move to Kranji

Kamarul Yunus in Singapore

SINGAPORE, Wed: Singapore has agreed in principle to Malaysia's request to move its railway station from Tanjung Pagar to Kranji in the republic instead of Bukit Timah or Woodlands as discussed under the points of agreement (POA) between the two countries.

However, its Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong said both countries need to discuss further details of the agreement.

"In principal, Singapore agreed to Malaysia's request but the details have yet to be agreed," he said at a joint press conference after meeting Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and the Malaysian delegation, here today.

In return, Goh said Singapore had requested Malaysia to build a tunnel linking Singapore's MRT system from Johor to Kranji, which is located at the north end of the island near Woodlands.

"This has been agreed to in principal during my meeting with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Moahamad last December.

"During the meeting, Dr Mahathir said Malaysia needed more time to resolve this as well as other issues under the POA. Abdullah agreed that these issues must be resolved and cannot go on," he said.

Goh did not dismiss the possibility of the POA being amended, adding that other outstanding bilateral issues will also be resolved.

Goh agreed with Abdullah that there is a genuine reason for the prolonged discussion on the outstanding issues between the two countries.

For instance, he said, he is sure that there is a genuine reason for Malaysia asking for more time in moving its railway station to Kranji.

Abdullah said it is not Malaysia's policy to deprive Singaporeans of water for consumption.

"What we need to look into is pricing and the source of supply. We need to study thoroughly before concluding any agreement," he said.

Abdullah, who arrived here today, is on a four-day working visit to the island republic. This is his first visit to Singapore since being appointed Deputy Prime Minister.

Both leaders were also asked on concrete proposals to cement bilateral relations, in which Abdullah said both countries agreed to improve contacts at all levels, including politicians, students and businessmen.

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