

# Negotiations with S'pore to start on July 1

STAR 19 MAY 2002

■ By MERGAWATI ZULFAKAR

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia and Singapore will start negotiations on the package of outstanding bilateral issues on July 1 and 2 in Kuala Lumpur, Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said yesterday.

Responding to a report in the *Singapore Straits Times*, that the talks between him and his Singapore counterpart, S. Jayakumar, would be held on the dates mentioned, he hoped the issues would be resolved at the meeting.

Asked whether two days were sufficient to agree on the issues, Syed Hamid said: "We hope they will be resolved in the two days.

Otherwise, we will have to meet again.

"The general outline (of the package) has been agreed but details like the pricing of water need further discussion," he said.

Among the package of issues agreed upon by leaders of the two countries in 1998 are the supply of water by Malaysia to Singapore, customs, immigration and quarantine facilities in Singapore, redevelopment of KTM Berhad land in the republic, withdrawal of contributions by Malaysians in Singapore's Central Provident Fund and use of Malaysian airspace by the Singapore air force.

Following the agreement between the leaders at the sidelines of the Asean

Summit in Hanoi in 1998, senior officials began negotiations, but the talks were stalled after three meetings in May 1999.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had written a letter to Singapore in March outlining fresh proposals on the package including the price of water which had been the main source of haggling between the countries.

Officials were happy the new round of negotiations were finally taking off.

Syed Hamid will lead the Malaysian delegation which will include senior officials from the Johor government, KTM Berhad, the Attorney General's Chamber and the Treasury.