

# Adopt open mind, Singapore told

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**KUALA LUMPUR, Fri.** — Malaysia today expressed hope that Singapore will adopt an open mind to reaching consensus on the water supply issue at bilateral talks next month.

Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said Malaysia did not want to be continuously hampered and "haunted" by the water issue.

"If Singapore adopts an open mind and wants to achieve a consensus, we can look forward to our future bilateral relations and not turn back," he said on the sidelines of the 56th Umno General Assembly at Putra World Trade Centre here.

Syed Hamid, who will head the Malaysian delegation at the talks, was confident that an agreement

would be reached on the water price formula at the meetings of the Foreign Ministers of the two countries on July 1 and 2.

Kuala Lumpur is expected to propose a formula to avert a dispute in future on water pricing and focus on other issues lumped together under a package agreed upon by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Singapore Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew.

"I think if we can clinch a deal on water, all other issues will fall into place... water is the core issue."

Syed Hamid said he would inform his Singaporean counterpart at the meetings why and how Malaysia arrived at the formula.

"We'll see how we can work out

something agreeable for both sides. We believe both countries can work out some details," he said.

He said the republic could be assured that whatever price offered by Malaysia would reflect the market rate.

"We have worked on the type of water to be supplied to another country and how much it would cost. We want a price review, which should have been done in 1986/87," he said.

Singapore buys raw water from Johor at 3 sen per 4,500 litres.

The republic had suggested the price be raised to 45 sen per 4,500 litres, but Dr Mahathir, who is also Finance Minister, disagreed. — ~~Bernama~~