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Syed Hamid-Singapore

MALAYSIA AWAITING SINGAPORE'S RESPONSE TO FRESH PROPOSAL

PUTRAJAYA, April 9 (Bernama) -- Malaysia is still awaiting Singapore's reply to its fresh proposal on an agreed package of outstanding issues both countries are currently negotiating on, Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said today.

"We have submitted (the new proposal) and Singapore has asked for time to respond," he told reporters after meeting Dr Tatsuo Arima, a Special Envoy of Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi.

Syed Hamid said that Malaysia's proposal was contained in a letter submitted last month by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to Singapore's Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew.

The unresolved issues include water supply, customs, immigration and quarantine facilities in Singapore, redevelopment of Malayan Railway land and the use of Malaysian airspace by the Singapore Air Force.

Last week, Singapore's Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong said that his government would reply this week to Malaysia's latest proposal on the negotiated package.

The package was reached between Goh and Dr Mahathir in December 1998 but negotiations have stalled over the contentious issue of the price of water supplied by Malaysia to the republic under an agreement to be renewed by 2061.

Syed Hamid said that since Malaysia had submitted the new proposal, the ball was now in Singapore's court.

He said that once Singapore has replied to the proposal and "everything has been cleared", discussion at the official and ministerial level would resume to resolve the outstanding issues.

Syed Hamid also said that he could not divulge the negotiated terms as it would be counter-productive to the ongoing negotiations.

"These are negotiations that have to be done quietly," he added.

-- BERNAMA

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