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Seeking a formula with Singapore

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JOHOR BARU, Sun. - The next round of negotiations between Malaysia and Singapore will try to find a formula that can avoid future disputes between them.

Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said the Government was also optimistic about settling outstanding issues with the republic at the negotiations in Kuala Lumpur on July 1 and 2.

He said the two Governments had exchanged their versions of formulae to pre-empt future disputes and would discuss a final draft in Kuala Lumpur.

"We are hopeful that an agreement could be reached on a formula to avoid future controversies and making our relations smoother.

"The negotiation will also concentrate on finding a total package to settle all outstanding issues between the two countries," he said after attending the Johor Umno Convention here today.

He said even if the negotiations did not result in a final settlement, there were good signs that both Governments would succeed in achieving it at the following round of talks to be held at a later date.

The two countries had in September agreed to come up with a total package to settle outstanding issues following a meeting between Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Singapore Senior Minister Lee Kwan Yew in Kuala Lumpur.

Asked about water supply to the republic by Johor, Syed Hamid said the matter would be included in the package based on proposals by both sides.

"I can't disclose for now the proposals which have been submitted (by both sides) but there are indications that we can come up with an agreement."

He said the Johor Government had been consulted by Wisma Putra during the drafting of the proposal for the new price of water supplied to Singapore.

Singapore had in January proposed to buy raw water from Johor at 45 sen per 1,000 gallons, but this had not been agreed upon by the Government. The republic now pays three sen for the same amount.

Also, the package will include the development of land belonging to Keretapi Tanah Malaysia Bhd in Singapore, the status of Malaysia's Customs, Immigration and Quarantine check-point at Tanjung Pagar and the use of Malaysian airspace by the Singapore Air Force.

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