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Syed Hamid-Water

M'SIA APPOINTS LAWYER TO ARBITRATE IN WATER ISSUE - SYED HAMID

KOTA TINGGI, Aug 2 (Bernama) -- Malaysia wants arbitration to resolve quickly the price issue for the raw water sold to Singapore so that the problem will not drag on to the detriment of Malaysia, Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said today.

He said all the processes to bring the case for arbitration would be done in accordance with established procedures.

"We've appointed our lawyer to carry out the task of tabling this case. We've to follow one by one the specified process," he told reporters after launching a health camp in Sedili, near here.

Syed Hamid, who is also Kota Tinggi Member of Parliament, said this when asked to comment on the statement by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad yesterday that the door for negotiations to decide on the water price was closed and that the issue needs to resolve through arbitration.

Syed Hamid said arbitration to resolve the dispute over the water price is provided for in the water agreements signed by Malaysia and Singapore in 1961 and 1962.

He said the arbitration would be done under the Johor Arbitration Act, which was also a federal law.

Syed Hamid said how long the arbitration would take depended on whether it was taken to international level or within Malaysia.

"Because the laws adopted are our laws. Maybe the proceedings will be done in Malaysia," he said, adding that there were certain processes and procedures that need to be adhered to.

On the effects of the land reclamation carried out by Singapore at its territorial waters that affected Malaysia, Syed Hamid said Malaysia would take action through the legal process if a settlement cannot be reached via negotiations.

He said Kuala Lumpur had submitted documents and evidence which showed the republic's reclamation works had an adverse impact on Malaysia.

"Before, when we talk about the impact of the reclamation work, they (Singapore) asked us to show proof and we have provided the proof.

"Singapore has responded, they want to have discussions, they are satisfied with our submission," he said.

Syed Hamid said Malaysia was prepared to discuss but if the discussions did not result in something beneficial to protect the country's interests, then Malaysia would take appropriate action.

It is understood that findings from the studies carried out by the various agencies showed the reclamation work had affected Malaysia from the hydrology, environmental and fisheries aspects.

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