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PM: Singapore testing our patience with baseless accusations

RESOLVING DISPUTES

PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mahathir Mohamad took a swipe at Singapore during his tabling of Budget 2004, saying that the country was testing Malaysia's patience with baseless accusations.

He said Malaysia would not do the same, but would subscribe to the principle of good neighbourliness.

Both countries have several unresolved issues that have been on the table for a number of years now. They include the water deal, the Customs, Immigration and Quarantine Complex, Central Provident Fund withdrawals for Malaysians who used to work in Singapore, as well the KTM Bhd land in the city state.

While not naming names, Dr Mahathir said when two parties were unable to resolve dispute through negotiations, there was a need for a third party to arbitrate.

"We are willing to seek arbitration. Confrontation and war are not our way to resolve disputes.

"Threatening and demeaning others are also not our way to resolve disputes.

"We do not give baseless excuses neither do we manipulate facts," he said.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia hoped that its proposal for arbitration would be accepted as soon as possible.

He added that regional co-operations must be based on mutual benefit and respect as well as equal rights and democracy.

"No one should be selfish and pressure their neighbours. Agreements must not be biased.

"Shortfalls and inequities among neighbours must be addressed as best as possible."