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Be pragmatic, honest in ties with Malaysia, Singapore told

KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. - Singapore should be pragmatic and honest in its bilateral relations with Malaysia as it can ill afford to disregard its historical and cultural links with this country, said DAP deputy chairman

Karpal Singh.

"Singapore should realise that its strategic importance, at the expense of Malaysia, has contributed to its success as an international hub of economic activity in the region, which it tapped to its advantage after its separation from Malaysia," Karpal said in a statement today.

"All Thailand has to do is create a 'Panama Canal' in the Isthmus of Kra to completely immobilise Singapore and render it an entity of no consequence or import.

"If that happens, and the reality of it is in the offing as feasibility studies for the project are under way, Singapore will have to depend on Malaysia for its survival."

He was commenting on a report quoting Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad as saying that the island republic's actions were hurting bilateral ties between it and Malaysia.

Karpal also criticised Singapore for refusing Malaysia's right to a water supply price review, despite there being a written agreement stating that Malaysia possessed that right after 25 years.

"It is ridiculous for Singapore to contend that as the 25-year time frame has passed, the written agreement is no longer enforceable. Singapore should not display arrogance. It is in its long-term interests to be sincere with Malaysia across the board. Singapore should not forget its roots."

On another matter, Karpal said Pas should not attempt to destroy the basic structure of the Federal Constitution with its intention to transform Malaysia into an Islamic state, if it comes into power.

"Pas has to accept Malaysia is a Federal entity. It is illogical for Pas acting president Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang to say Pas, after coming into power, would first implement Islamic laws in States under its control.

"States of Malaysia cannot contravene constitutional provisions which constitute the country as a secular state with Islam as its official religion."