

# 'Negotiations unlikely to resume'

NST - 17/4/2006

**SINGAPORE:** Malaysia and Singapore are unlikely to return to negotiations on the bridge to replace the Causeway, Foreign Minister George Yeo said.

"The Malaysians have made it quite clear that negotiations are terminated and they have now said they will redevelop Johor with a ramp from the Causeway leading to the new Customs, immigration and quarantine (CIQ) terminal," Yeo said in a Channel News Asia (CNA) report.

"I don't think we are talking about a return to negotiations now.

"I also don't think we should have unrealistic expectations," he added.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi announced the cancellation of the project on Wednesday and

called off all negotiations with Singapore with respect to the bridge.

Prior to the announcement, Singapore and Malaysia were close to reaching a deal in which Singapore had demanded that Malaysia sell sand for its reclamation works and Singapore jet fighters be allowed to use its airspace.

CNA reported that although "surprised and disappointed" with the decision, Yeo said from Singapore's perspective, the 82-year-old Causeway was a perfectly good structure.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak, had said recently that with the decision, it was back to the status quo as far as the Causeway was concerned.

Nevertheless, Najib had hoped that Singapore would realise that the bridge was a

good thing for both countries.

Meanwhile in Kuala Lumpur, Works Minister Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu said yesterday, part of the new CIQ complex in Johor Baru has to be demolished to make way for a road to connect the complex with the Causeway.

He said the ministry's engineers sent to Johor to identify the route for the "very straight connection" from the CIQ complex to the Causeway had come up with the suggestion in their report to him yesterday.

"The only problem we face now is that the present CIQ complex is obstructing the construction of the proposed road," he said after officiating at a seminar at the Sri Murugan Centre (a centre of education excellence for the Indian community), here. — Bernama