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Acting PM on ties with Singapore

KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. - Acting Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said today Malaysia would maintain co-operation and good neighbourliness with Singapore.

He believed this was also the position of the Singapore Government although relations between the two countries soured when the republic's Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew made some disparaging remarks about Johor in an affidavit where he described the State as "notorious for shootings, muggings and car-jackings".

Lee apologised unreservedly for this statement on March 13.

"I hope all parties will take into consideration the long-term interests of relations between the two countries," he said after delivering a keynote address at the Muhammad Iqbal and the Asian Renaissance conference.

Anwar was asked to comment on The Straits Times Singapore report on Monday that Malaysia's crime rate had "shot up and surpassed that of Singapore's", according to the just-released 1997 edition of the World Competitiveness Yearbook. The half-page article was entitled Malaysia's crime rate higher than Singapore's.

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