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Cabinet-Singapore

CABINET DECIDES TO ACCEPT LEE'S APOLOGY

KUALA LUMPUR, March 19 (Bernama) -- The Cabinet today accepted Singapore Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew's apology and retraction of his disparaging remarks on Johor which caused a diplomatic furore between Malaysia and Singapore.

Foreign Minister Datuk Abdullah Ahmad Badawi is expected to hold a news conference at Wisma Putra this afternoon to reveal the full decision of the Cabinet, said a Cabinet source.

Lee had described Johor as a place "notorious for shootings, muggings, and car jackings" in a sworn affidavit filed in a Singapore High Court in his defamation suit against Singapore opposition leader Tang Liang Hong who fled to Johor after allegedly receiving death threats.

Lee and his son, Lee Hsien Loong, who is Deputy Prime Minister, are the plaintiffs in the suit.

The affidavit was made known by Tang in Johor Baharu last Tuesday and it prompted an outcry here and government and opposition leaders alike joined the government to demand for an apology and retraction.

Lee issued an unreserved apology two days later through a statement by his Press Secretary. On Monday, he followed up with a personal statement in which he said he had instructed his legal counsel to seek the court's permission to delete the offending sentences.

Yesterday, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad deferred comment on Lee's overtures and said the matter would be discussed by the Cabinet today. --

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