

27 MAR 1997

Singapore-Statement

NO DECISION TO COOL OFF TIES WITH SINGAPORE

KUALA LUMPUR, March 27 (Bernama) -- The Cabinet did not reach any decision to cool off ties with Singapore, acting Foreign Minister Datuk Abang Abu Bakar said today.

He however confirmed that the Cabinet, at its weekly meeting chaired by Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim yesterday, discussed recent developments related to Malaysia-Singapore ties.

"I have to make it clear that what was highlighted in most of the local newspapers today is not very accurate," said Abang Abu Bakar, who is Minister in the Prime Minister's Department, in a statement issued by his office here.

"What was meant is that the government is studying the implications of the episode on bilateral ties with Singapore following the statement by Singapore Senior Minister Encik Lee Kuan Yew on Johor and the reaction of the Singapore government over his statement," he said.

Today's newspaper reports quoted several ministers as saying that the Cabinet yesterday decided to freeze fresh bilateral dealings with Singapore in the wake of recent developments following Lee's derogatory statements about Johor.

Foreign Minister Datuk Abdullah Ahmad Badawi is in Tokyo as a member of an official entourage accompanying Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on a four-day official visit.

Meanwhile, Singapore Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong said that he wants to take some time to understand the latest Malaysian Cabinet reaction before giving further comments. -- BERNAMA

TM RM