

S'pore PM: Good ties with M'sia but some issues left to successor to settle

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Bernama

Outgoing Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong said the republic's relations with neighbouring Malaysia have been "generally good" during his time, but there are still some issues for his successor to address and work on.

Lee in an interview with local media ahead of the leadership transition on May 15, said during his 20 years as prime minister, he made progress on several issues with different counterparts from Malaysia, including the Pedra Branca (Pulau Batu Puteh) and the Malayan Railway land.

"For example, with Abdullah (Ahmad) Badawi, he was PM when the Pedra Branca judgment at the ICJ (International Court of Justice) was published.

"And we discussed it, I talked to him, and we decided, we would both accept this and now we should move on and talk about the next stage," he said in the interview today.

The transcript of the interview was shared on the Prime Minister's Office (PMO)

website.

Lee, who became Singapore's third prime minister in 2004, has worked with a long list of Malaysian prime ministers - starting with Abdullah, Najib Abdul Razak, Dr Mahathir Mohamad, Muhyiddin Yassin, Ismail Sabri Yaakob and Anwar Ibrahim.

The Singapore head of government mentioned that with his current counterpart, Anwar, the two sides have been discussing significant cooperation, including the Rapid Transit System Link (RTS Link) that will connect Johor with Singapore.

"We are talking about other issues, can be cooperative but also sensitive. Airspace, the maritime boundaries..., water - these are things which need to be discussed. We have not settled them. So, there is work to be done by my successor," he said.

Lee emphasised that ties with neighbouring countries like Malaysia will always involve "complicated relationships" due to the potential for differing perspectives or points of contention.

"I think we both know that, and both try our best not to collide because we can do many things together," he added.

Lee will relinquish his office on May 15 to give way to his successor Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Lawrence Wong - who is set to be sworn in as Singapore's fourth prime minister on the same date.

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