

'OUTSTANDING ISSUES TO BE RESOLVED'

Anwar, Hsien Loong discuss maritime limitations, water pact, airspace at leaders' retreat

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MALAYSIA and Singapore yesterday discussed outstanding bilateral issues, including maritime limitations, water pact and airspace between both countries.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim and his Singaporean counterpart, Lee Hsien Loong, said this in a joint press conference, adding that these were all important issues, which would be considered holistically and constructively within the broader context of the relationship between both countries.

Anwar said Malaysia would continue to honour its commitment to supply water to Singapore.

He said both countries would jointly work on ensuring Sungai Johor was able to cater to the needs of the state and supply water to Singapore.

"We should also look at the possibility of Singapore participating in a joint effort in terms of studies, which can be conducted immediately, and in the management of Sungai Johor, particularly with the state of Johor."

Anwar is on a two-day working visit to the republic to mark the 10th Malaysia-Singapore Leaders' Retreat beginning yesterday.

He said Malaysia and Singapore had a strong relationship and due to the interdependence of both countries, its leaders must look at the benefits it could channel to the people.

"The people will obtain benefits if some of the outstanding issues are resolved."

Lee said both countries were committed to resolving the outstanding bilateral issues.

"Importantly, it (the issues) will not be allowed to affect this relationship or detract from the many positive areas of the cooperation between us.

"We are confident both countries can work out mutually ben-



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim with his Singapore counterpart Lee Hsien Loong. Anwar is on a two-day working visit to the republic to mark the 10th Malaysia-Singapore Leaders' Retreat.

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eficial ways forward on all of these issues," he said.

Both the leaders agreed to reconvene Singapore's Sustainability and Environment Ministry and Malaysia's Natural Resources, Environment and Climate Change Ministry Joint Technical Committee to resume discussions on measures to safeguard water quality, as well as boost the yield of Sungai Johor, to ensure its sustainable supply as required by the 1962 Johor River Water Agreement.

The leaders also agreed that both countries would resume discussions on the prices of raw and treated water, without prejudice to each other's long-declared positions on the right to review the prices under the agreement.

The leaders also encouraged the water authorities to maintain their excellent working relationship and looked forward to more areas of collaboration between the two countries.

Meanwhile, Lee said Malaysia and Singapore would continue to boost their ties on renewable energy.

He said both countries were moving towards a low carbon and sustainable future and were pursuing cross-border electricity trading, which would be a win-win partnership for both nations.

"The renewable energy can potentially come from the penin-

sula as well as from Sabah and Sarawak," he said.

Anwar and Lee also touched on ways to alleviate congestion at the land checkpoints of both countries.

Lee said the country's Immigration and Checkpoints Authority (ICA) had introduced initiatives to make cross-border travel smooth and more efficient while maintaining border security.

"We have also started to redevelop the Woodlands checkpoint to boost its capacity and meet the expected long-term growth in traffic.

"I'm glad that (Anwar) welcomes and supports Singapore's efforts," he said.

Apart from the Johor Baru-Singapore Rapid Transit System (RTS) Link, Lee said Singapore wanted to make full use of the Causeway.

He noted that Malaysia had put in considerable efforts to improve the traffic flow from the Johor side, and acknowledged the hands-on effort by Johor Menteri Besar Datuk Onn Hafiz Ghazi.

» See next page

Page 1 pic: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim meeting his Singapore counterpart, Lee Hsien Loong, in the republic yesterday.