

# Kuan Yew's statement wrong, says Keng Yaik

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**KUALA LUMPUR:** From one LKY to another: The statement on Malaysian Chinese was wrong and uncalled for.

Gerakan president Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik, the country's veteran ethnic Chinese politician, said Lee Kuan Yew, Singapore's founding father, had put things out of context by stating that Malaysian Chinese were being marginalised.

Dr Lim, who is also Minister for Energy, Water and Communications, said Lee, the republic's Minister Mentor, should realise that the two countries were different.

"We have a vast hinterland of rural areas that are fortunately or unfortunately inhabited by Bumiputeras. In any developed country, there is always a problem between the urban and rural, so if you don't go and fill up the rural

area then there is discontent," he said after the launch of Wawasan Open University at Menara PGRM yesterday.

"So, what does Singapore know? It is a little city and it's all urban areas, so he (Lee) can talk about competition, the best, and all this in an urban area but what about the rural areas? He doesn't have to worry about that.

"His perspective is all wrong. The Chinese here will not follow and listen to what he says."

Dr Lim later loudly added that Lee's statement was uncalled for.

It was reported that Lee told a forum in Singapore last week that the attitudes of Malaysia and Indonesia were shaped by the way these countries treated their ethnic Chinese minorities.

Lee was quoted as saying: "Our neighbours both have problems with their Chinese. They are successful. They are hardworking and therefore they are systematically marginalised."

Gerakan deputy president and Penang Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon said Lee did not understand and appreciate the challenges in leading and administering a country that was bigger, more complicated and diverse than Singapore.

"In Malaysia, there are many races, religions and communities. There are areas where development is rapid and there are rural areas which are less developed, such as in Sabah and Sarawak, and backward due to the lack of transport and communication."

Koh said Lee's statement that Malaysian Chinese were "complacent" was not true as the Chinese had actively raised issues through the media here.

In **Kemaman**, former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said Singapore should look at how the Malays in the republic were being marginalised before criticising Malaysia's treatment of its ethnic Chinese.

"We can also ask what is the position of Malays in Singapore? Why don't the Malays there hold high positions in the armed forces? They have been officially marginalised to the point they do not have any status."

"We should have an independent investigation on why the Malays are left behind in Singapore. It is not because they are lacking compared to the Malays in Malaysia but because they are pressured, marginalised and oppressed. That is the kind of government founded on the views of Lee Kuan Yew," he said.

Dr Mahathir told Lee not to feel smug about what he had said.

"You should just guard your own rice bowl. You are not that clever. In a small group, perhaps you seem clever. But when he goes to China, the Chinese there don't want to listen to him. The Chinese in China don't think much of him and it is a fact that he is marginalised by Chinese in the world."