

# PM to receive Kuan Yew's reply today

The NST - 2/10/2006

**PUTRAJAYA:** The letter by Singapore's Minister Mentor Lee Kuan Yew to Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi over his recent remarks about the Chinese being systematically marginalised in Malaysia is expected to be delivered today.

Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said the letter was likely to be brought to Wisma Putra, after which it would be handed over to the Prime Minister.

"The ministry is just the conduit, I have no idea what the contents of Lee's letter are and I don't want to speculate," Syed Hamid said yesterday.

"I definitely won't be reading it since it is addressed to the Prime Minister. He will decide whether to make it public and how we should respond."

Lee wrote a reply to Abdullah, who had sought clarification on his comments that Chinese in Malaysia were marginalised and had become compliant.

A statement from Lee's Press secretary said his letter was currently with the Singapore High Commission in Kuala Lumpur and was ready to be conveyed to Abdullah.

Syed Hamid said the Prime Minister did not merely ask for a

clarification from Lee.

"He also expressed his feelings. The PM said Lee's statement was uncalled for and he expressed his unhappiness.

"But he asked for a clarification because he feels we must get to the bottom of things, of why such an uncalled for statement was made."

Asked if the government had planned possible responses depending on the contents of Lee's letter, Syed Hamid said to wait until Abdullah had read it.

"We will continue to defend our position and policies but, at the same time, we should not anticipate something we don't know anything of yet."

He added that Malaysia had never exploited the issue of Malays being sidelined in Singapore and is, therefore, offended with the allegation by Lee.

"What we don't like about Lee's allegation is that there is no truth in this statement," said Syed Hamid, who last week called for

Lee to apologise.

"If you look at the position of Malays there (in Singapore) and the position of Chinese here, you will see two different stories."

Syed Hamid also said Malaysia always tried to maintain good relations with the republic and would not allow ties to be affected by Lee's racial remarks, which were made at an international forum recently.

In addition to saying that Malaysian Chinese were marginalised, Lee commented that Singapore's Malay-majority neighbours, Malaysia and Indonesia, wanted the republic to be "compliant" like the Chinese in their countries.

Saying that this episode was yet another hiccup in Malaysia-Singapore ties, Syed Hamid added: "It is not always easy dealing with Singapore as we have different ways of looking at things.

"But certainly, our ties are not affected by one single event or issue."