

PM sends Singapore letter on LKY remarks

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PUTRAJAYA: Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi has sent a letter to the Singapore government seeking an explanation over recent remarks by Lee Kuan Yew.

Lee, Minister Mentor in the Singapore Cabinet, had said the Chinese in Malaysia were being marginalised.

Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said the Cabinet was informed yesterday that the letter has been despatched.

"We expect Singapore to say sorry for Lee's remarks," he said.

He added that if Singapore continued to come up with baseless remarks, it would be difficult to maintain cordial relations.

Syed Hamid said that Lee, as the former Prime Minister of the republic, should have known better than to utter such remarks as it also went against Asean's non-interference policy.

"I believe Singapore's motive is to make Malaysia look bad to foreign investors but they won't succeed because the world can see that we Malaysians always stand together as one nation," he said.

Abdullah said on Monday that he wanted Lee to explain himself as his comments could cause racial tension.

Lee told a forum in Singapore on Sept 15 that the city-state's neighbouring countries, Malaysia and Indonesia, "have problems with the Chinese. They are successful, they are hardworking, and therefore, they are systematically marginalised".

He also said the two countries "want Singapore, to put it simply, to be like their Chinese — compliant".

Abdullah had said Lee's remarks were not welcomed and the republic's founding father had appeared to show he had no qualms about making such a highly-charged statement.

The Umno supreme council meeting today will discuss the forms of action to be taken against Singapore following the remarks.

Umno information chief Jan Sri Muhammad Muhammad Taib said the matter would be raised following immense pressure from the grassroots for stern action to be taken.

In Jakarta, Indonesia summoned Singapore's ambassador to explain Lee's remarks.

Director of the Indonesian foreign ministry's East Asian and Pacific Affairs division, Yuri Thamrin, described Lee's comments as "inaccurate" and required explanation.