

Cabinet backs PM's decision

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PUTRAJAYA: The Cabinet has backed the Prime Minister's decision to reject Lee Kuan Yew's remarks that the Chinese community in Malaysia is marginalised.

At its weekly meeting yesterday, the Cabinet felt that Lee's reply to Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi was just an explanation and not intended to be an apology.

However, the Government would not pursue the matter as the Cabinet felt that the Singapore Minister Mentor "was set in his views," Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said.

Lee struck raw nerves in Malaysia and Indonesia after he told an international forum that Singapore's neighbours had problems with their successful Chinese and systematically marginalising them.

"The Cabinet discussed the Government's position and we listened to the explanation given to the Prime Minister. He also explained to us what he had said at the press conference yesterday.

"What the Prime Minister said is the Government's position," Syed Hamid told *The Star*.

Abdullah on Tuesday gave an icy response to Lee's letter explaining why he made the remarks at the forum on the sidelines of the recent International Monetary Fund and World Bank meetings in the island republic.

While taking note of his explanation, the Prime Minister had told Lee not to repeat such statements.

Syed Hamid said the Government hoped Lee would not cause more "discomfort" to Abdullah.