

Najib heartened MCA and Gerakan rebutted Lee's claims

PUTRAJAYA: Datuk Sea Najib Tun Razak is "heartened": that MCA and Gerakan have explained the actual situation of the Chinese in Malaysia.

The Deputy Prime Minister said their statements had rebutted the claim by Singapore's Minister Mentor Lee Kuan Yew that Malaysian Chinese were being marginalised.

"I am heartened by the fact that our partners in Barisan, like the MCA and Gerakan presidents, have issued statements to, debunk whatever Lee had said to clarify the actual position in Malaysia," said Najib.

He added that Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi would be sending Lee a letter seeking clarification over his statement.

On Sept 15, Reuters quoted Lee as saying it was vital for the predominantly-ethnic-Chinese state to stand up to its bigger, majority-Muslim neighbours, Indonesia and Malaysia.

Lee had said Singapore's neighbours had problems with their Chinese communities be-

cause they were successful and hardworking and "therefore, they are systematically marginalised."

Speaking to reporters after chairing the 55th National Council for Local Government meeting' here: yesterday, Najib said Malaysia could not cancel

all its investments in Singapore as suggested by Johor Umno recently.

He said such moves would only send an incorrect and in appropriate message to Singapore, adding that Malaysia needed foreign direct investments.

However, the country had to ensure that foreign investments were not detrimental to national interests or national security, he added.

"Leave this matter to the Government to weigh and decide on a case-by-case basis," he said.

Johor Umno information chief Senator Dr Mohd Puad Zarkashi had suggested that projects "that benefited Singapore more such as the high-speed train project be shelved. He also urged the Government

not to give in to the island republic when planning the development of southern Johor.

In a press statement yesterday, Umno Youth chief Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Tun Hussein said Lees should be more careful when issuing statements that could jeopardise Singapore's relationship with Malaysia.

Hishammuddin said that while it was a norm for Lee to criticise Malaysia to strengthen his position and the People's Action Party in Singapore, he should stop making such comments which could jeopardise the country's racial harmony.

"His statement is untrue. When he was Singapore's Prime Minister, he closed down all Chinese schools. Here, the Government still allows Chinese schools, even private ones," he said.

Meanwhile, deputy MCA Youth chief Datuk Ling Hee Leong said Lee should not interfere in Malaysia's policies.

It was up to the Government if it wanted Lee to apologise for his comments, he said.