

Diplomat told to explain Kuan Yew's statements

KUALA LUMPUR: The Singapore High Commissioner has been told by the Malaysian Government to explain the statement made by the republic's Minister Mentor Lee Kuan Yew.

Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said High Commissioner T. Jesudasan, who was summoned by the Malaysian Government on Wednesday, met Wisma Putra secretary-general Datuk Rastam Mohd Isa at Wisma Putra yesterday.

"We have given our views to him and how we feel about it so we will wait for his response and decide what action we should take," he told reporters after attending the Umno supreme council meeting at the PWTC.

To a question, Syed Hamid said Lee should apologise for making the statement because what he said was beyond fair comment, describing something that was not true,

"That statement is tantamount to instigation and he should apologise to maintain the 'supposedly' friendly (relations between) neighbouring countries. But whatever it is we will wait and see," he added.

Lee told a forum in Singapore last week that it was vital for the Chinese-majority state to stand up to its Muslim-dominated neighbours, Malaysia and Indonesia, adding that their attitude towards Singapore had been shaped by the way the countries treated their own ethnic Chinese minorities.

"Our neighbours both have problems with their Chinese. They are successful. They are hardworking and, therefore, they are systematically marginalised," Lee reportedly said.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, who was asked to comment on the same issue after chairing the council meeting, said he had written a letter to Lee expressing his displeasure and that he was waiting for a reply.