

Lee's comments have not hurt ties with S'pore

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By Mergawati Zulfaqar
and Izatun Shari
newsdesk@thestar.com.my

PUTRAJAYA: Lee Kuan Yew's remarks on Chinese in Malaysia being marginalised is not affecting bilateral ties between the two countries at the moment, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said.

"Apart from this issue today, (relations) are still the same. I do not see any other effect at the moment. This is the only problem that we are facing now," Abdullah said when asked about the state of bilateral relations with Singapore following Minister Mentor Lee's remarks at an International forum that Singapore's neighbours had problems with their successful Chinese and systematically marginalised them.

Abdullah refused to answer any questions relating to Lee's reply to his letter seeking an explanation for the remarks.

Lee's reply elicited icy response from Abdullah.

The Prime Minister said the Cabinet on Wednesday backed his stance.

"I am not making anymore statements. You can't control what people want to say or what not to say," he told reporters after chairing the National Implementation Task Force meeting at the Prime Minister's office here yesterday.

Abdullah also dismissed a question that he would be calling for a snap general election this year.

"Why should I? You give me a reason why I should do it?" he said.

"Why should I seek another big mandate? The mandate that I have is a very big mandate, I still have time to deliver what I promised the people."

There has been speculation that the Prime Minister would call for an early general election following his announcement that the Umno polls scheduled for next year would be deferred until after the general election.

In Kota Baru, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said Malaysia does not consider Lee's apology to be sincere as he only said sorry on the basis that his remarks had caused an undesirable effect to bilateral relations.