

**Guan Eng: Hassan Marican's Singapore jobs 'sad day for Malaysia'**  
**The Malaysian Insider**  
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**By Clara Chooi**

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 16 — Lim Guan Eng chastised the Najib administration today for failing to keep Tan Sri Hassan Marican within its ranks, saying the former Petronas CEO's latest appointment in Singapore showed Malaysia's failure to plug its talent leak.

The Penang chief minister referred to Hassan as a rare talent and expressed sadness that the latter has been widely appreciated abroad and among big multinational corporations "but not at home".

"This is extremely sad, especially when Tan Sri Hassan is widely credited as the man who turned Petronas into the leading international oil and gas company that it is today," Lim (picture) said in a statement.

The Malaysian Insider yesterday cited a report by news portal Energy Asia revealing that Hassan is set to become chairman of Singapore Power Limited (SP) in June, succeeding Ng Kee Choe who will retire on June 12.

Hassan, who left the national oil company at the beginning of 2010 allegedly due to friction with the Najib administration, has been accepting several director positions with several foreign firms in the energy sector.

Among them are Singapore government-linked companies including SembCorp Industries Limited, SembCorp Marine Limited and Singapore Power, which he joined on February 15, 2011. He is also a director at Sarawak Energy Berhad and US oil and gas giant ConocoPhillips.

Hassan, 58, was part of the board that had appeared to have clashed with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak back in late 2009 over the appointment of a former senior aide as a Petronas director despite the prime minister having absolute powers in board appointments.

He was widely credited with turning Petronas into the only other state-run major international player in the oil and gas space apart from Norway's Statoil.

The former Petronas chief from 1995 stepped down on February 2010 after 15 years with the company and was appointed a director with Sembcorp Industries by June.

Hassan's flurry of overseas appointments also come at a time when Malaysia is grappling with a chronic brain drain that threatens to derail its developed country ambitions.

Lim reminded the Najib administration today of last year's warning from World Bank senior economist Philip Schellekens who said that Malaysia's brain-drain situation was likely to intensify, further eroding the country's already narrow skills base.

In his report, Schelleken had said that the number of skilled Malaysian currently residing

abroad had tripled over the last two decades.

"Now, Tan Sri Hassan has joined this growing list of nearly two million Malaysians who have left since Merdeka to live and work overseas.

"Talent such as Tan Sri Hassan Marican does not come by every day, and our government must take immediate measures to plug this leak in order to retain such talent or risk losing him and many more like him to overseas countries," said Lim.

He pointed out that if an "iconic corporate leader" like Hassan could be forced to leave Malaysian shores to seek recognition, this shows the government's plan to attract and retain local talent had failed.

"Clearly, so long as political know-who supersedes technical know-how, negotiated deals are preferred to open tenders and there is neither full accountability nor transparency, Malaysia is fighting a losing battle to stem the brain drain," he said.

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