

MM Lee says S'pore and Malaysia will benefit from closer connectivity

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SINGAPORE : Minister Mentor Lee Kuan Yew has said Singapore and Malaysia will benefit from closer connectivity and collaboration.

In fact, he believes Malaysia will stand to gain even more than Singapore in the long run.

Mr Lee made this point while elaborating on a comment he had made at an Institute of Policy Studies conference on Friday morning.

At that conference, Mr Lee was asked whether Singapore needs to have a hinterland, which is Malaysia, in order to grow into a global city.

Later Mr Lee told reporters on the sidelines that he wants Malaysian leaders to know that Singapore is ready to work with them to grow together.

And Malaysia should view Singapore in the spirit of cooperation and acceptance instead of competition and antipathy.

Citing Malaysian Prime Minister Abdullah Badawi's proposal of the Iskandar Development Region, or IDR, as a move in the right direction, Mr Lee said Singapore will do what it can to make the IDR succeed.

In this way, both countries can get maximum value out of the cooperation.

Another win-win possibility is faster rail and air travel between Singapore and Malaysia.

Although a previous proposal for a fast rail system between them has yet to materialise, Mr Lee said Singapore welcomes it. Malaysia too, he said, must believe it would definitely be a win-win situation.

In the immediate phase of closer connectivity, Mr Lee said Singapore will gain a little more because the city state is more connected to the outside world.

But in the long term, Malaysia will make the bigger gain because of its larger capital mass and bigger human resource pool. - CNA/ch