

## **Singapore should embrace increasing diversity as strength: Ho Kwon Ping**

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SINGAPORE - Singapore's sense of nationhood and unity has never been stronger than in the past weeks when hundreds of thousands of people came together to mourn the late Mr Lee Kuan Yew, said businessman Ho Kwon Ping on Thursday night.

In the next 50 years after Mr Lee, however, the country will be increasingly diverse, he added.

Singapore's challenge is to embrace this diversity as a strength and an integral part of itself, said Mr Ho in his fifth and final lecture as the Institute of Policy Studies' S R Nathan Fellow.

The lecture was held at the National University of Singapore's University Cultural Centre and attended by 560 people including students and civil servants.

In his 50-minute speech, Mr Ho examined how this openness and acceptance of Singaporeans who may be different from the mainstream can be a defining characteristic of Singapore's identity.

He noted that Singapore is ethno-culturally more similar to New York City, where culturally distinct neighbourhoods coexist cheek by jowl, than to the homogeneous cities of Tokyo or Shanghai.

"New Yorkers, for all their amazing diversity, all love their city. Like New Yorkers, Singaporeans must also embrace each other as individuals and not as categories," said Mr Ho.

At the end of the lecture, IPS director Janadas Devan announced the next SR Nathan Fellow will be ambassador-at-large Bilahari Kausikan, 60.

Details of Mr Kausikan's lectures will be given in August. The veteran diplomat will research public policy and governance issues.

Mr Ho's lectures will be compiled into a book and published by IPS later this year.