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Title : Singapore's aim to be world class has exceeded past standards: Kishore
By :
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SINGAPORE: Singapore as a garden city, a water city and a place where the East meets West.

These are three areas which a leading academic believes will give the Singapore national brand global recognition.

Professor Kishore Mahbubani, Dean of the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy made these points at a lecture organised by the Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCCI) on Wednesday.

Singapore must develop greater self-confidence in its own judgement, argued the country's well-known critic and former ambassador to the United Nations.

And he finds it puzzling that Singapore is still aspiring to be world class when, in many areas, it has exceeded world-class standards.

He said: "In the past, it was good for Singapore to copy the best practices of others. But today, at Singapore's stage of development, it has really got to think twice before copying from others.

"Today, many western cities, including London, believe every good city must have a ferris wheel to show the tourists. So Singapore decides it must have a ferris wheel. Do we really have to copy others?"

Even though Singapore has attained world-class standards in several areas, there is always the word of caution not to become complacent.

That is because the world is always facing new challenges and Singapore and Singaporeans must always continue to adapt to these challenges to ensure that the national flag is always flying high internationally.

And Professor Kishore believes Singapore's neighbours will benefit by engaging the republic.

He said: "One of Singapore's greatest challenges is to demonstrate to its neighbours that the old image of Singapore as being a parasite of the region is wrong and that Singapore actually adds value to the region and doesn't subtract value.

"If Singapore is removed from the map of Southeast Asia, the impact will not be felt just on Singapore, it will be felt by the whole region."

That the Malaysian government has asked Singapore to participate in the Iskandar Development Region is a very positive sign, said Professor Kishore, as it indicates Singapore can contribute to its success.

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