

## Lee: Retirement means death

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SINGAPORE:

Retiring to take it easy is a sure route to death, Singapore's 84-year-old founding father Lee Kuan Yew was quoted as saying yesterday. Lee, who remains active despite his advanced years, told a conference that statistics show that people tend to die shortly after retiring, and that the most important lesson he has learned is that we all need stimuli.

"If you believe that at 55, you're retiring, you're going to read books, play golf and drink wine, then I think you're done for," he said in comments published by The Straits Times.

Lee retired as prime minister in 1990, but remains in the cabinet as minister mentor and is also chairman of the Government of Singapore Investment Corporation.

He is a frequent speaker in Singapore and regularly conducts diplomatic missions abroad.

"I don't much like travel, but I travel very frequently despite the jet lag, because I get to meet people of great interest to me.

"It is the stimuli, it is the constant interaction with people across the world that keeps me aware and alive to what's going on and what we can do to adjust to this different world."

Lee added that he asks people who want to retire at age 62, "You really want to die quickly?"

He said his advice is: "Keep yourself interested, have a challenge."

Lee was also quoted as saying that in his younger days he smoked, had a big belly, and "was really fond of drinking beer".

He said he enjoyed golf, but later found it took too long, so he took up running instead.

In his early 70s, Lee had a stent installed in one of his arteries, he was quoted as telling the conference on Sunday after he made a whirlwind trip to visit the critically ill former Indonesian president Suharto in Jakarta. -- AFP