

Singapore's road to independence

May 28, 1958

After about two years of talks, the State of Singapore Act is passed in Britain to provide for self-government and Singapore citizenship.



May 30, 1959

The People's Action Party (PAP), in the opposition for the past four years, wins 43 out of 51 seats at the Legislative Assembly general election to be the first fully elected, post-colonial government.



June 1, 1959

Governor William Goode asks Mr Lee Kuan Yew to form the government. Mr Lee repeats his party's condition that the British release eight detained associates: Lim Chin Siong, Fong Swee Suan, Devan Nair, S. Woodhull, J. Puthucheary, Chan Chiaw Thor, Chan Chong Kin and Chen Say Jame. The British agree to free the eight three days later.

June 3, 1959

At one minute past midnight, the Governor proclaims Singapore a self-governing state. At 8.30am, he takes office as Yang di-Pertuan Negara, or Head of State. The PAP holds a mass rally at the Padang in the evening.

June 4, 1959

The PAP issues a statement signed by six of the detainees, including hardliner Lim Chin Siong, saying they support the PAP leadership's non-communist road.



June 5, 1959

Swearing-in of the Cabinet, including Mr Lee as Singapore's first Prime Minister.



Photo of a painting by Lai Kui Fang

Dec 3, 1959

Mr Yusof Ishak is sworn in as the first Malayan-born Yang di-Pertuan Negara, replacing Sir William Goode. When Singapore achieves independence on Aug 9, 1965 as a sovereign state, Mr Yusof becomes the President.



July 20, 1961

PAP leaders win a motion of confidence in the Government by one vote. The 13 pro-communist assemblymen who abstained or voted against the Government are expelled. They form the Barisan Sosialis.



Sept 1, 1962

In a referendum, 71 per cent vote for merger with Malaysia.

Aug 31, 1963



• The inauguration of Malaysia is initially slated for Aug 31, 1963, but this is postponed by about two weeks to Sept 16 to give the United Nations more time to determine whether people in the Borneo territories of Sabah and Sarawak are agreeable to being part of Malaysia.

• On Aug 31, 1963, Mr Lee declares Singapore's independence from British rule ahead of the formation of Malaysia as part of his push for Singapore to become part of the Federation of Malaysia. On the steps of City Hall that day (Aug 31, 1963), Mr Lee declares: "We have the will and the wherewithal to be a nation in our own right. That is the right that we the people of Singapore today proclaim." He also says: "This proclamation today is an assertion of our right to freedom. Our act follows the traditions of the great anti-colonial revolutions in Asia." He adds: "On the 16th we go on with Malaysia and we will survive, and prosper and flourish."

Sept 16, 1963

Singapore becomes a state in the Federation of Malaysia. A general election five days later sees the PAP winning 37 seats, to Barisan's 13.

Aug 9, 1965

Singapore becomes independent after separating from Malaysia.

