

SINGAPORE

Situated at the tip of the Malay Peninsula, the island of Singapore and 54 adjacent islets constitute the Republic of Singapore and encompass a total land area of 243.4 square miles. The country's population is estimated to be 2.3 million and is predominantly Chinese (76%), with Malays, Indians and a variety of other ethnic groups making up the balance.

Singapore has been an independent republic since its separation from Malaysia in 1965. The government is a parliamentary democracy with full adult suffrage. The Head of State, President Sheares, died on May 12, 1981, and the Speaker of Parliament, Dr. Yeoh Gim Seng, was appointed Acting President until a new President can be elected by Parliament. A replacement is likely to be named within the next month or so. Executive power rests with the Prime Minister (Lee Kuan Yew) and his Cabinet, drawn from the Legislature in which the multi-racial People's Action Party (PAP) holds all 75 seats. Singapore's emergence in the 1960s and 1970s as the dynamic trading, financial, manufacturing and distributing centre for Southeast Asia has been primarily the result of the PAP's social engineering and economic policies under the leadership of the Prime Minister.

Domestic Political Situation

Since the rise to power of the People's Action Party in the 1959 general election, the PAP has dominated Singapore's Parliament, and its leader, Lee Kuan Yew, has served as Prime Minister. Each subsequent general election (1963, 1967, 1972 and 1977) has given the ruling government a fresh mandate. In the most recent national election held December 23, 1980, Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew's People's Action Party made a clean sweep of the polls for the fourth time.

The present Cabinet is composed predominantly of senior members of long standing. The Prime Minister is actively aware of the need to seek new leadership talent among the younger technocrats so that qualified leaders will be ready when the inevitable generational change occurs. He has therefore brought a number of younger people into the Cabinet.

Domestic Economic Situation

Singapore has no natural resources but has developed on the basis of an industrious labour force, a deep water harbour, and a vital geographic location. Government objectives therefore, are to ensure Singapore's economic development as a regional service and diversified manufacturing centre. In recent years, the economy has grown by 7 to 9% per annum and per capita Gross National Product ranks after Japan among Asian countries.