

SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT PRESS STATEMENT

MC.JUL.44/64(PM)

TEXT OF BROADCAST BY THE PRIME MINISTER,MR. LEE KUAN YEW, OVER RADIO AND TV SINGAPURA TONIGHT,SUNDAY, JULY, 26TH 1964.

Since midnight yesterday there have been no further incidents. Order has been restored, and sanity is returning. Now comes the long and delicate process of getting people to resume the even tenor of their lives.

Tomorrow the curfew will be lifted from 5.30 in the morning to 12 noon and again from 2.30 p.m. to 6 p.m. Everybody can get on with their work.

Hawkers who have been badly hit can resume making a living. The curfew from noon to 2.30 p.m. although inconvenient is necessary so as to prevent mobs from gathering and going on the rampage.

Meanwhile secondary problems have arisen over the prices and supplies of foodstuffs. With the closing of the causeway vegetables have stopped coming from Johore. There were temporary difficulties in distributing supplies of rice, salt, sugar and other basic commodities, and in the short time for business when

the curfew was lifted prices have tended to go up. Worse, in some areas shopkeepers have refused to extend credit to Malay customers, and some hawkers have refused to sell at all. These are very human failings, as one reacts to fear and bitterness. But these failings will widen the rift and extend the damage that the riots have already done.

I have discussed these matters with the combined Chambers of Commerce yesterday, in particular with the Chinese Chamber. They have taken immediate steps to ensure that prices will remain as they were before and credit and help is extended to all regardless of race. Furthermore, convoys are meeting at the causeway to collect vegetables and other foodstuffs from Malaya, and also to send Singapore eggs into Malaya.

In the meantime, in all the areas where there was tension, goodwill committees are springing up to help restore liaison and confidence between neighbouring villages and homes. The Citizens Consultative Committees, together with village ketuas and kampong penghulus, are doing a good job in easing the tension that fear has caused between friendly neighbours.

But we have to proceed carefully with these goodwill committees. For example, when a committee was set up for the Kampong Kembangan area,

because a few extremists had got into this committee, at its first meeting the members of the committee from Kampong Chai Chee were greatly alarmed. Instead of talking goodwill and peace, these extremists exploited the ad hoc goodwill committee as a forum to express extravagant sentiments to press for certain demands.

So a new one without destructive and extremist elements will now have to be formed.

We must not assume that those who are out to create mischief only a few days ago, have suddenly been overcome by remorse and are now filled with the milk of human kindness. Care and caution must be exercised in deciding who can be relied upon to help spread confidence, goodwill and amity.

If we keep up the progress we have made in the last two days, conditions should return to normal before the end of the week. We would not have made this progress if there had not been a real desire among our various communities to live together in peace and harmony.

We must never let last week's events recur. Squash all talk of communal hatred or revenge. Let us instead get on with our work in peace and amity.

26th July, 1964

(Time issued: 2150 hours)

National Archives of Singapore