

# Kuan Yew saddened by Dr M-Anwar split

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**KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs:** Singapore Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew today expressed sadness over the falling out between Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir and his former deputy as both men had been hurt badly by the episode.

"All this is just damaging to both of them. It's sad," he said at a press conference at the end of the four-day visit.

Describing the Anwar saga as an "unmitigated disaster", Lee said Mahathir is paying a heavy price for a number of mistakes in the handling of the case.

"I feel more sorry for Mahathir than for Anwar, although they are both affected by this situation. I think he (Mahathir) made several errors of judgement in this case.

"I had asked him in Davos (shortly after the arrest) why Anwar was arrested under the Internal Security Act. How could he be a national security threat when until four weeks ago he was deputy

for many years."

"I was habbergasted when he told me that he did not know Anwar was going to be arrested under the ISA, which he said was the police prerogative," Lee said.

He said he told Mahathir it should have been a straightforward criminal charge, but instead "the police chief arrested him under the ISA and the next disaster was the blue (black) eye".

Lee also expressed his sympathy for Anwar who he said had many things going for him and was set to take over as prime minister.

The Singapore leader also tackled various questions on the rise of PAS, and whether Umno could win back lost ground.

He said he was "bewildered" that a demonstration of the Grik arms heists had been necessary to disprove opposition claims that the government had staged it.

"I just don't understand why there is this questioning of statements by the govern-

ment. I find that a little perplexing. Surely no government in this world will go out and stage a seizure of-arms and recover those arms at the cost of two officers being killed and mutilated cruelly," he said, adding he was told it had to be done to convince the public.

Lee said he gathered from his meetings that there was a lot of cynicism and scepticism about things.

"As one very incisive lady journalist put it to me, people don't accept things at face value, which is a bewildering position for me. I'm perplexed," he said.

Asked by a BBC journalist whether the cynicism and scepticism was due to a lack of credibility in the government, Lee said: "I do not want to be used as a sounding board or as a reflector for your views. If you want to put that over BBC as your views, I will listen to it and learn from it."

On whether Umno can repair the damage, Lee said:

"If they take the right step and are able to inject the original ideals which Umno had fought for in the early days.

"They should get younger Malays interested in the party's struggles, untainted with money politics, to draw an agenda for the younger generation."

Lee said he now understood why Mahathir had accused the younger generation of being ungrateful, because they were taking for granted everything that they have.

Asked how Singapore will be affected if PAS assumed power here, Lee said it will depend on what kind of PAS it would be then.

"It would have to be flexible, more knowledgeable and able to convince the non-Muslims to support it. If you get such a PAS, then maybe it's not the end of the world. But I think I'll sleep better knowing that it's an Umno government which is in power, something that I've been familiar with since the '40s," he said.