

Chronology of Key Events Leading to the Formation of Malaysia

1961

May Malayan Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman makes public announcement in Singapore, alluding to the possibility of a federation comprising Malaya, Singapore, North Borneo, Sarawak, and possibly Brunei.

Jun Lord Selkirk, British Commissioner General for Southeast Asia, holds discussion with British representatives of Singapore, Sarawak, North Borneo and the Federation of Malaya on the concept of Malaysia.

Jun–Jul Selkirk discusses “Grand Design” with British Cabinet, Prime Minister and Defence Chiefs of Staff.

Jul Leaders of Malaya, Singapore, North Borneo, Sarawak and Brunei gather in Singapore for Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Regional Meeting. Malaysia Solidarity Consultative Committee is formed.

People’s Action Party splits; formation of Barisan Sosialis.

Aug–Sep Singapore and Malaya arrive at broad agreement for merger.

Nov Tunku and British Prime Minister, Harold Macmillan, hold talks in London. An Anglo-Malayan joint statement is subsequently issued, indicating British Government agreement to the formation of a Federation of Malaysia.

Tunku and Singapore Prime Minister, Lee Kuan Yew, agree on form of merger. The Agreement is recorded in the form of a White Paper.¹

1962

Jan Singapore Legislative Assembly votes in favour of merger.

Appointment of Cobbold Commission to ascertain the views of the people of North Borneo and Sarawak on joining the Federation of Malaysia.

Feb Malaysia Solidarity Consultative Commission issues memorandum supporting Malaysia, and indicating some general conditions for the federation.

Feb–April Cobbold Commission tours Sarawak and Sabah.

Mar Singapore Legislative Assembly approves National Referendum Bill.

Jun Cobbold submits report to British and Malayan prime ministers.

Jul Tunku, Razak and Malayan Prime Minister, Tan Siew Sin, conduct further discussions with British officials in London. British Prime Minister agrees to raise a bill authorizing the creation of Malaysia in parliament.

Lee joins meeting in London; raises citizenship issue with Tunku.

Aug A.M. Azahari's Partai Rakyat wins Brunei elections.

Sept Singapore holds Referendum on the merger with Malaya.

North Borneo and Sarawak legislatures give in-principle approval to Malaysia.

Dec Outbreak of Brunei Revolt.

1963

- Jan Indonesia declares Confrontation against Malaysia.
- Feb Operation Cold Store, leading to arrests of communists and pro-communist supporters in Singapore.
- Lord Landsdowne's Inter-Governmental Committee issues report.
- Feb–Jul Protracted negotiations between Lee Kuan Yew and Tunku to decide on the financial arrangements by which Singapore would join Malaysia.
- Jul Malaysia Agreement signed, Brunei sits out.
- Jul–Aug Manila Summit involving the leaders of Malaya, Indonesia and Philippines.
- Aug Federal Parliament enacts legislation for Malaysia.
- UN Mission to ascertain wishes of Borneo people on joining Malaysia.
- Malaysia Day postponed.
- Singapore unilaterally declares Singapore's independence.
- September Publication of Report of UN Mission.
- Inauguration of Malaysia.

NOTE

- 1 *Memorandum Setting Out Heads of Agreement for a Merger between the Federation of Malaya and Singapore* (Cmd 33) (Singapore, 1961).

