

Lee Kuan Yew: I've no wish to change S'pore

BY REICO WONG

FORMER Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew said he was "first time lucky" in taking Singapore to where it is today.

But he stressed that it is the job of the younger generation to steer the country forward.

"When you are 88, there are very few new things you can undertake and yet have the hope of having enough energy and time to see it through," he said.

"I have no burning ambition to change the world. I don't think I have the time or energy to do that, or to change Singapore."

Mr Lee was speaking at the closing of the sixth annual Russia-Singapore Business Forum held at Marina Bay Sands.

The three-day conference involved more than 600 delegates from the two countries as well as other parts of Asia.

When asked if there was anything he would have done differently, Mr Lee said: "I wouldn't like to retrace my life. I could not have done better."

On the current state of politics in Singapore, Mr Lee said the People's Action Party's loss

of the Aljunied GRC in the recent General Election was "not a disaster".

"It's just a change in the mood of the people," he said.

"Unless the competition is positive, I don't think the trend will continue. It all depends on how the opposition behaves, and how the government reacts. It's not a given deal."

Mr Lee also fielded questions about the financial turmoil in America and Europe. He said the two giants cannot direct their economies from the centre like Singapore because of their sheer size and the momentum.

He noted that most Americans and Europeans are still leading comfortable lives, and they do not welcome suggestions that would cause drastic changes to their lives and livelihoods.

"But if this 'piling on debt and living beyond their means' goes on, then their moods will change and then the leaders will be able to take action.

"Leaders cannot move out of step with their people, unless you want to be Stalin, and (for that) you will have to kill a lot of people," he quipped.

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