

Election campaign heats up in Singapore

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With the paperwork and scrutiny process completed, candidates vying for all the 89 seats in 29 electoral divisions come polling day on Sept 11, have kicked off the election campaign in their respective wards.

The candidates are visiting different localities in a bid to win the favour of individuals and social groups they believe can play a role in their success.

The ruling People's Action Party (PAP) is contesting in the 2015 general election (GE), described as the most intense since the republic's independence, against eight opposition parties, namely the Workers Party (WP), Singapore People's Party (SPP), Singapore Democratic Party (SDP), National Solidarity Party (NSP), Singapore Democratic Alliance (SDA), Reform Party (RP), Singaporeans First (SF) and People's Power Party (PPP).

Last night, PAP held its first rally of the 2015 GE at Delta Hockey Pitch, Tiong Bahru Road, for the Radin Mas electoral division.

PAP is the incumbent in that constituency.

Party secretary-general Lee Hsien Loong, who is well-versed in Malay, Mandarin and English, stole the limelight at the first rally yesterday, when in his speech he stressed on integrity and that those with flaws should not be in politics.

Lee, who is prime minister, is leading a six-member team to contest the Ang Mo Kio group representation constituency (GRC) against the Reform Party at the polls.

Lee said: "If your heart is wrong, it cannot be trained.

"In politics, a heart has to be right. Your character is crucial. You must be honest, you must have integrity, you must want to serve, you must care for people. You cannot be selfish, you cannot afford to just cover up... and taichi - 'okay, tomorrow I'll solve tomorrow's problem'."

Touching on how PAP recruited its candidates, Lee said the party did not just read their CVs but also, to assess their "heart", the party talked to their friends and colleagues, and got feedback from the ground.

Pledging that PAP would give Singaporeans the best team it could, Lee said: "We will fight for you, we will act for you, we will work for you."

The WP also had its first rally with various issues raised such as foreign workers, cost of living and introduction of minimum wage.

Hottest was the party's defence of the Aljunied-Hougang-Punggol East Town Council (AHPETC) issue, where WP had been questioned over its management of the the council's accounts and the collection of service and conservancy charges.

The WP is the incumbent for the Hougang single member constituency.

'A ghost from the past'

Quashing the AHPETC issue, speakers at the rally including Png Eng Huat (candidate for the Hougang SMC) claimed it was used as a political tool by the ruling government to fix the party.

Png said the "PAP government is not a government of the future but a ghost from the past".

He said the fact that AHPETC managed its financial turnaround signalled the WP's ability to run a town council.

Png accused the PAP of spending more time trying to fix the opposition than fixing the trains and hospital bed shortage.

- Bernama

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