

**Singapore PM Says By-election Should Not Distract Focus On National Priorities**  
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**By Tengku Noor Shamsiah Tengku Abdullah**

SINGAPORE, May 9 (Bernama) -- Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Lee says the Hougang by-election would not distract the country from focusing on its national priorities and building an inclusive Singapore.

In a statement posted in his Facebook, the prime minister said: "Although the Constitution does not require me to call a by-election within any fixed timeframe, I said in Parliament that I intended to call a by-election in Hougang.

"This morning I advised the President (Tony Tan Keng Yam) to issue the Writ of Election," he said adding that the President had issued the Writ of Election for the Hougang Constituency and the Nomination Day for the by-election would be May 16.

The Serangoon Junior College had been identified as the nomination centre and if more than one candidate was nominated, the Returning Officer would declare May 26 as Polling Day.

Lee said in January this year, news surfaced of personal indiscretions by Yaw Shin Leong, the Workers' Party (WP) Member of Parliament for the Hougang constituency.

He added that the WP first kept totally silent, then supported Yaw, and then three weeks later suddenly expelled him from the party and until now, has not given Singaporeans a full and proper account of what happened, or why it acted in that manner.

Yaw himself had said nothing, either to explain or to apologize for his behaviour, and has reportedly left the country, thus letting down all those who voted for him and as a result of Yaw's expulsion from the WP, the Hougang constituency seat fell vacant.

Lee said the by-election would give Hougang residents a chance to elect a new MP to serve them.

"I encourage Hougang voters to use this opportunity wisely, to elect the best candidate with commitment and integrity: someone they can rely upon to express their hopes and concerns, address their needs, and make a real difference to their lives," he added.

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