

The young 'will have opportunities'

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Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong had a message for young Singaporeans worried they may not enjoy the same opportunities their parents had. "We are creating these opportunities for you," said Mr Lee, who was speaking at yesterday's release of the People's Action Party (PAP) election manifesto.

"The young will have the opportunity to study, the young will have the opportunity to find their jobs, and the young will have the opportunity – having gotten a job – to keep on upgrading year by year," he said. "And we can hold our own against the competition and earn a living for ourselves."

On education, Mr Lee said more university and polytechnic places have been added and more pathways opened up. The Singapore Institute of Technology, for instance, will have a new campus in Punggol but it does not stop there. New and exciting jobs are being created as well, added Mr Lee.

SkillsFuture is another key initia-

tive which will ensure workers, young or old, have the chance to upgrade and move up the job ladder at any stage in their career.

Singapore has, with its 50th birthday this year, reached a turning point, Mr Lee noted.

The country's pioneer generation is fading; Singapore's founding prime minister Lee Kuan Yew himself died this March at age 91.

Meanwhile, those born after World War II, and who lived through the turbulent years before Singapore's independence and then embarked on the entire SG50 journey, are now a minority.

Mr Lee said that those born after independence make up the majority of voters now. And they come armed with different life experiences as well as higher expectations of a First World country. This means "good jobs, good homes and a good future", he added.

While Mr Lee and his team have been listening to the needs of Singaporeans and worked with them, he said: "We have much more to be done and much more that we can do together."

Even as he sought to give young voters assurances about their future, he also highlighted that his team is responsible for policies and initiatives put in place that benefit Singaporeans. The country, he added, had arrived at SG50 "because of good leadership".

"Some people say we're already an advanced country... so we don't need to work so hard to find the best possible leaders... because our system can run itself," said Mr Lee.

But he asked: "Really? Our social policies and schemes, could we have done all of them without Tharman (Shanmugaratnam), without (Gan) Kim Yong, without Heng Swee Keat, without Grace Fu or Chan Chun Sing putting them together? They just happened?"

"Our housing – record BTOs, our plans for Punggol, for the new towns – would they happen without Khaw Boon Wan? A safe and secure Singapore – would that happen without Teo Chee Hean, Ng Eng Hen, Shanmugam, Tharman? So you need the team to make it happen."

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