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Celebrating and Growing with the Nation
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Corrections in November 2014 issue
The article “WW must be platform for Singapore women” on page 38 and 39 was extracted from a speech made by Dr Seet Ai Mee. She did not write the article. The quote at the end of the article asking citizens to vote for the “PAP as the only party with the idealism, the honesty and the ability to carry out its election programme for Singapore” was wrongly attributed to Dr Seet. They were made by the late Kwa Geok Choo.

Please send feedback, suggestions and comments to paphq@pap.org.sg.
PAP’s vision is the best for Singapore, and convince your families and friends about it, says party Secretary-General Lee Hsien Loong.
Comrade Lee Hsien Loong issued a rallying call to over 6,000 PAP members during the 33rd Party Conference held at the Singapore Expo on December 7, when he called on them to “fight for what we believe in.”

“We depend on you to keep us close to the ground,” he said. “We depend on you to speak up for our party, we depend on you to win the hearts and minds of Singaporeans... Go out, talk to your families, friends, colleagues, residents, convince them that PAP’s vision is best for Singapore,” said Mr Lee, who is the party Secretary-General.

Part of the impetus for his rallying call was because this would be the last party conference before the next general election. “The next general election will be about who forms the government, not how many seats the opposition gets,” said Mr Lee, who also spoke in Malay and Mandarin.

“For every seat, every GRC and SMC, will be a national contest and not a local one.”

In a pre-rally warm-up, attendees bounced giant balls as a group above their heads, without letting them touch the ground. “Don’t drop the ball,” reminded emcees Daryl David and Tin Pei Ling.

Mr Lee said: “The next GE will be about whether we continue to have a First World government, not about the so-called First World Parliament,” in a reference to the Workers’ Party rhetoric made at the last election about a First World Parliament.

As Mr Lee put it, the opposition likes to say “do more” without elaborating how; the opposition says “give more” without explaining where the money will come from; and the opposition claims that they serve as a check so that the PAP will work harder.

Said Mr Lee: “If everyone accepts what they say, we will only have politicians checking each other, and we will have a gridlock like in other countries. For every checker, there will be one less doer... then it will be checkmate for Singapore.”

The PAP conference and rally was the capstone event for the party’s 60th anniversary celebrations – which included a book launch and a Party Awards dinner – during which Mr Lee pointed out how the party has “always been on the side” of Singaporeans, even from the British colonial times.

Moving forward, PAP is changing itself to stay relevant. PAP cadres approved amendments to Article II of the Party Constitution, to sharpen the party’s objectives and vision in its new way forward. The constitution was last amended in 1982.

The party has also strategically shifted its approach to greater engagement with people and communities, including through social media, and strengthened social safety nets for lower-income Singaporeans. “The PAP has adapted to the times, while staying true to our promise to improve the lives of Singaporeans,” said Mr Lee.

Ultimately, the PAP envisions Singapore as a nation of opportunity. Creating “good and fulfilling jobs” for Singaporeans and emphasising the importance of education will mean opportunities for all and not just a privileged few.

“We must now step up our efforts to engage these Party Seniors. They can show younger comrades how to connect and bond with residents, they can advise new members how to balance party work with career and family life.”

- Dr Kee Wei Heong, PAPSG

“Singapore will be a place where our children can dream big, achieve their aspirations and live well in Singapore,” he said.

It will be a fair and just society. This, he said, has become challenging due to global competition, an ageing population and income inequality.

But the PAP continues to help Singaporeans level up through schemes such as ComCare which provides financial assistance to the low-income and the Silver Support Scheme which gives low-income workers a basic sum every month to help them in their old age.

It will also be a democracy of deeds, a society in which people help themselves and solve problems together.

“People cannot leave everything to the government. They must take the initiative, organise themselves, pass the hat around, get things done,” said Mr Lee.

To realise these visions, the PAP will remain a national party for all Singaporeans, a responsible party which delivers on its promises and a party with courage and conviction.

Said Mr Lee: “We will be courageous to stand up to defend our ideas, to do the right thing for Singaporeans.”

Leadership renewal is key to long-term sustainability.

During the conference, about 2,000 party cadres voted in members of the Central Executive Committee (CEC), PAP’s highest decision-making body, for a two-year term.

The PAP has already started work on refreshing its ranks.

Said Mr Lee: “We already have identified many promising candidates, including a few potential office holders. Some are from the private sector, some from the public sector, and quite a number of grassroots activists.

“Well before the end of next term, we will have a younger, passionate and capable team, ready to take over the reins.”
Behind the stage during the PAP rally, William Chow, 42, clung on to his walkie talkie, for the IT manager and YP exco member was in charge of the day’s programme.

From ensuring that a platform was pushed in place for female speakers – so they appear to be of about the same height as the men, to cueing the music and playing three videos about the PAP at the right moments of the programme, he made sure everything ran like clockwork.

Earlier on that Dec 7 morning, his colleague Larry Chua, 38, busied himself with transport arrangements for over 6,000 participants who came by car and chartered buses.

“We looked into details like how many seconds each bus can wait in the bus bay, whether the walk to the hall would be too long and tiring for the elderly pioneers, and we had to ensure that we didn’t inconvenience other members of the public who were at the Singapore Expo,” said Mr Chua, a general manager in an electrical contracting firm.

YP volunteers like Mr Chow and Mr Chua have worked behind the scenes since March where they ironed out details of the massive event via monthly meetings, Whatsapp chats and e-mails.

“I am very privileged and honoured to have helped in organising this,” said Mr Chow, a PAP member since 2011.

Added Mr Chua: “The fact that we all worked together to realise an event which we ourselves enjoyed was what gave me the greatest sense of accomplishment.”

“Behind the scenes of the Rally

As we move forward in the next 60 years... individuals, family, community and government have to raise awareness and instil correct values that would withstand the test of time, encourage social justice, reward the deserving and jointly bring about the appropriate norms that define Singapore which we all call ‘Home’.”

- Ms Cheryl Chan, PAP Women’s Wing

“The PAP started with a group of young men and women with impossible dreams and big ideas. Today, there are many of us in the Young PAP and we are calling for action. The journey is not going to be easy as you will be criticised online and offline. But each one of us has a chance to serve and to provide for those we love for the next 50 years and beyond.”

- Ms Cynthia Mark, Young PAP

“Family” photo with party Secretary-General Lee Hsien Loong.
The People’s Action Party Central Executive Committee (CEC) comprises 18 members. 12 were elected and two co-opted at the 33rd Ordinary Party Conference on Dec 7, 2014. Four more members were co-opted subsequently.

**Chairman:** Khaw Boon Wan

**Vice-Chairman:** Yaacob Ibrahim

**Secretary-General:** Lee Hsien Loong

1st **Assistant Secretary-General:** Teo Chee Hean

2nd **Assistant Secretary-General:** Tharman Shanmugaratnam

**Treasurer:** Lim Swee Say

**Assistant Treasurer:** K. Shanmugam

**Organising Secretary:** Gan Kim Yong

Ng Eng Hen *

Chan Chun Sing (YP Chair)

**Members:**

Grace Fu (WW Chair)

Heng Swee Keat

Tan Chuan-Jin

Halimah Yacob **(PAPSG Chair)**

Lawrence Wong**

Liang Eng Hwa

Masagos Zulkifli *

Baey Yam Keng *

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* Co-opted on Dec 7, 2014

# Co-opted on Jan 5, 2015

= Co-opted on Jan 23, 2015

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Party chairman Khaw Boon Wan announced at the PAP60 Dinner and Awards ceremony that the Central Executive Committee has accepted the proposal from PAPSG to accord life membership to selected long-time activists.

In November last year, the PAP Seniors Group, or PAPSG, led by Comrade Halimah Yacob proposed that the party recognises the contributions of long serving members by according them PAP Life Membership.

To qualify, the member must be at least 65 years old and has served the Party for at least 25 years.

“Although a small gesture, it shows that the party values the contribution of our loyal members and recognises their continued importance as local community leaders,” said Comrade Khaw when he made the announcement.
12月7日在新加坡博览中心举行的第33届干部大会上，李显龙秘书长号召6000多名人民行动党党员们奋力备战，激励他们“为我们的信念而奋斗”。

李秘书长说：“行动党要你们贴近基层，”并指出：“我们也需要你们为行动党发声，为我们赢得民心……跨步出去，去跟你的家人、朋友、同事和居民交流，说服他们行动党的愿景最符合新加坡的利益。”

他也说：“下一届大选将是一场攸关谁组成政府而不是反对党拿下多少议席的选举。”

“每个议席的竞选，无论集选区或单选区，都是在全国的层面竞选，不是地方的层面。每个议席的选战都是一场大选，不是补选。”

李秘书长更针对工人党在上一届大选呼吁迈向第一世界国会的竞选口号指出：“下一届大选关系到我们能否继续拥有第一世界政府，而不是所谓的第一世界国。”

他说，反对党爱说“多做一点”，却说不出该怎么做，会说“多给一点”，却无法说明资源要从哪里来，并声称他们能形成制衡力量，以让行动党更加卖力。

他说：“倘若所有人都接受他们的说法，那我们就只有相互制衡的政客，并像其他国家一样陷入僵局。多一个制衡的人，就意味少一个做事情的人……新加坡这盘棋最终会落得将死的局面。”

“我们勇于捍卫我们的理念，为新加坡人做该做的事。”

放眼未来，行动党将顺势自我更新，与时并进。党员们通过了修订党章第二条的动议，以阐明行动党迈向未来的目标和愿景。行动党上一次修改党章是在1982年。

此外，行动党已战略性调整其做法，通过社交媒体等方式加强与民众及社群的互动，并巩固保护低收入新加坡人的社会安全网。

行动党的最终目标是让新加坡成为一个机遇处处的国家。

李秘书长说：“新加坡会是一个能让我们的儿女编织伟大梦想，实现理想和过好日子的地方。”

新加坡也会是一个公平和公正的社会。他指出，全球竞争、人口老化和收入不均的趋势让这样的目标具有挑战性。

然而，行动党继续通过社区关怀基金和乐龄辅助计划等项目帮助新加坡人提升自己。

新加坡也会建立一个讲求实干的民主社会，而这样的社会鼓励人民发挥自助精神，共同解决问题。

李秘书说：“人民不能把所有的事情都交到政府的手上，他们必须采取主动，自动自发组织起来，集思广益，把事情办好。”

为了实现这样的愿景，行动党要继续做一个照顾全民利益的政党，一个有作为的政党，一个有能力和坚定信念的政党。

李秘书长说：“我们勇于捍卫我们的理念，为新加坡人做该做的事。”

更新领导层对政党的永续性十分关键。

为此，行动党已着手培养新的领导班子。

李秘书长说：“我们已发掘了许多有潜力的候选人，当中有一些有潜力担任政治职务。有些人来自私人企业，有些来自政府机构，也有好一些是基层党员。”

“在下一个任期结束之前，我们将有一个更年轻、充满热忱和能干的团队准备好接棒。”
Seruan PAP

Komrad Lee Hsien Loong menyeru kepada lebih 6,000 anggota PAP semasa Persidangan Parti ke-33 yang diadakan di Singapore Expo pada 7 Disember lalu, agar "mereka berjuang untuk sesuatu yang mereka percaianp.


Kata Encik Lee: "Jika semua orang menerima apa yang mereka katakana, kita akan hanya mempunyai ahli politik yang saling memeriksa satu sama lain, dan kita akan terdepan dengan satu ketengangan dan tidak dapat bergerak seperti dihada-negara-negara lain. Untuk setiap pemeriksa, akan terdapat kekurangan seseorang yang bekerja... ini akan menyebabkan Singapura menghadapi kematul.

Melangkah ke depan, PAP akan membuat perubahan untuk kekal relevan. Kader PAP telah meluluskan pindaan kepada Artikel II yang termuat dalam Perlembagaan Parti, untuk mempertajam lagi matlamat dan pencapaian dalam barisan pucuk pimpinan. Parti juga telah membuat perubahan dalam pendekatan mereka agar ia dapat berhubun- gan dengan lebih baik dengan orang ramai dan masyarakat, termasuk menerusi media sosial, dan memperkukuhkan jaringan keselamatan sosial untuk warga Singapura yang bergaji kecil.

Akhirnya, PAP menggalakkan Singapura sebagai sebuah negara yang menyediakan pelbagai peluang.

செய்திகள்: சுண்டிதேர்வுகள் அமைப்பாக

சுருக்கம்: சுண்டிதேர்வுகள் அமைப்பாக 7ம் செய்தியில் பல முக்கியமான நோக்குகள் பல்வேறு அளவுகளில் குறிப்பிட்டு, பல கருத்துக்காரர்களின் குறிப்பிட்டு. சுருக்கம்: சுண்டிதேர்வுகள் அமைப்பாக 7ம் செய்தியில் பல முக்கியமான நோக்குகள் பல்வேறு அளவுகளில் குறிப்பிட்டு, பல்வேறு சுண்டிதேர்வுகளின் குறிப்பிட்டு.

"சுருக்கம்: சுண்டிதேர்வுகள் அமைப்பாக 7ம் செய்தியில் பல முக்கியமான நோக்குகள் பல்வேறு அளவுகளில் குறிப்பிட்டு, பல்வேறு சுண்டிதேர்வுகளின் குறிப்பிட்டு. சுருக்கம்: சுண்டிதேர்வுகள் அமைப்பாக 7ம் செய்தியில் பல முக்கியமான நோக்குகள் பல்வேறு அளவுகளில் குறிப்பிட்டு, பல்வேறு சுண்டிதேர்வுகளின் குறிப்பிட்டு."
A total of 390 activists from various branches were honoured for their dedicated and loyal service to the party at the PAP60 Dinner and Awards Ceremony held on Nov 22, 2014 at the Singapore Expo. Petir speaks to some of the big winners to find out what continues to keep them motivated and inspired all these years.

Dedication and loyalty honoured

FOR the past 20 years and counting, Allan Ang has been constantly thinking how to improve the lives of Paya Lebar residents. Be it bringing in new blood to beef up the ranks or thinking of innovative ways to reach out to the seniors, the 45-year-old branch secretary believes that there is never a day off when it comes to serving the people.

The father-of-four, with a fifth child on the way, has championed a number of key initiatives. Among them is a new programme to help elderly residents with their transport costs when they go for their medical appointments. The Silver Support Scheme involves taxi drivers and ambulance services to ferry seniors to hospitals or clinics at a subsidised $5 per trip.

Mr Ang is also active when it comes to beefing up the membership. In 2013, the branch received a bumper crop of 70 new members as the activists reached out to more people from temples and voluntary welfare organisations, many of whom are younger residents in their 20s and 30s.

Perhaps his greatest challenge these days is the fact that Paya Lebar is now part of a GRC run by the opposition. Mr Ang says that his branch is working doubly hard to ensure the party’s activities are visible and recognised by the residents, such as by conducting more frequent block visits to better reach out to the community.

Winning the Commendation Medal has motivated him to do even more for the party and for Singapore. Says Mr Ang: “Our founders, the pioneer generation, have done so much to make this country into what it is today. It is our responsibility to carry on that good work for the next generation.”

LEFT TO RIGHT PAP’s honour roll: Png Wee Chor, Shanmugam s/o Velayuthan, Allan Ang Pong Tian, Ng Hock Lye, Betty Kwek Soh Cheng.

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LEFT TO RIGHT PAP’s honour roll: Png Wee Chor, Shanmugam s/o Velayuthan, Allan Ang Pong Tian, Ng Hock Lye, Betty Kwek Soh Cheng.

The secret to balancing party activities and some semblance of a healthy social life is to have a supportive spouse and children, says Betty Kwek matter-of-factly.

The mother of three boys juggles her full-time bank manager job with her grassroots and party activities. “I’m fortunate that my children are now grown up, so I have more time for branch events. It helps that my husband also does the household work, and is supportive of my party work,” says the deputy chairman at Kreta Ayer-Kim Seng branch.

Nothing gives Ms Kwek, 61, greater satisfaction than knowing that she has done her part to improve the lives of the residents in her constituency.

“We do our best to write to the authorities on their behalf. Usually it’s either to help secure a rental flat or with their financial difficulties. Whenever we are successful, they usually come back and thank us. That gives us that extra motivation to carry on each and
every week,” she says.

A party member for 22 years, Ms Kwek also holds a number of key appointments at several grassroots organisations, and was previously the District Representative for the PAP Women’s Wing.

She hopes to see more women join the party, although she admits that it is far from easy.

“The younger women in society, for instance, put their careers and families first, and it is understandable. But we do see many more female volunteers coming to our meet-the-people session every week and that is encouraging. We need all the help we can get to reach out to every segment of the constituency in the best possible way,” she says.

“The entire family obviously feels very proud by the party’s efforts to acknowledge my husband’s achievements. We were all very emotional and touched when we first heard the news. It’s not easy to be awarded the Commendation Medal, and I know my husband would have been very happy and honoured. While he was always busy at one branch function after another during all his 38 years of service, he would still put the family first.”

- Madam Tan Ah Chang, 60, wife of the late Aw Leng Hwee, who received the Commendation Medal (Posthumous). Aw Leng Hwee, 61, a former secretary at Kampong Kembangan and Tampines West branch, passed away in February 2014, about two months before nominations for the awards began.

“I cried when I heard that I was getting this prestigious award. I’ve been with the party for 52 years now, and I couldn’t have done it without the support of my wife and children, and all the staff in the HQ and at Marine Parade GRC. I’ve been at the Geylang Serai branch since day one and I’m pleased to have done my small part in transforming the community into what it is today.”

- Mr Shanmugam s/o Velayuthan, 80, recipient of the Dedicated Service Star Medal. He was a Gold Award winner in 1988 and has actively participated in every general election in Singapore.

“This award is truly my life’s greatest achievement. I’ve been with the PAP nearly all my life, joining when I was just a teenager and I’ve never looked back. I am proud of the party’s achievements, and I will continue to contribute so long as I am fit and healthy.”

- Mr Png Wee Chor, 74, recipient of the Dedicated Service Star Medal. He has served for 56 years and still attends the meet-the-people sessions at Kampong Chai Chee branch every Monday despite his extensive business travel schedule.

The Chua Chu Kang Citizens’ Consultative Committee chairman, who already has the Public Service Medal and the Public Service Star awards to his name, has also been patron of a Marine Parade grassroots organisation since 1982.

He is known for his generosity, often making donations to the community and the less-fortunate and spearheading fund-raising activities at both the branch and GRC level.

“I only have a Secondary Four education, but I have been fortunate enough to do well in life. I believe in giving back to society and I help contribute and raise funds for good causes such as building new community centres,” says the father-of-three.

“We tap on our business networks and friends and invite them to give what they can. We are inspired by our advisor, (Health Minister) Gan Kim Yong, who’s been very supportive of our initiatives over the years,” he adds.

What other recipients say about their awards
With Compliments from

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Let’s celebrate

Some 2,500 party activists attended the PAP60 party awards ceremony and dinner held on Nov 22 at the Singapore Expo. Petir captures some of the happy moments here.

Happy Birthday, PAP!
Party leaders blowing out a giant birthday cake for PAP’s 60th birthday.

Women activists
Key members of WW exco pose for a photo with Secretary-General Lee Hsien Loong.

Party colours
A sea of white, red and blue filled the function room as activists wearing white-on-white waved red and blue balloons in the air.

Thank you, activists
Comrades, young and old, were feted for their tireless contributions in serving the people at the PAP60 dinner.

Forward Together. A Brighter Tomorrow.
Some sponsored a meal, some gave food hampers and goodie bags. Still others cleaned and refurbished the homes of needy residents. Activists from various branches across Singapore late last year busied themselves by giving back to the community as part of the PAP60 celebrations.

Mountbatten branch
When: Oct 18
Where: Open space outside PAP Mountbatten branch
What: Lunch concert

About 130 needy families comprising 200 residents were treated to a lunch concert. For good measure, they were each given a goodie pack to bring home.

Kolam Ayer branch
When: Oct 4
Where: Block 64, Kallang Bahu
What: Members’ night with residents

Some 180 needy residents as well as kindergarten pupils and their families enjoyed a buffet dinner with 60 branch activists. Branch chairman Yaacob Ibrahim also gave out NTUC vouchers and food hampers.
Boon Lay, Clementi and Telok Blangah branches
When: Oct 25
Where: Various venues in West Coast GRC
What: Spring cleaning and distribution of goodie bags

Activists cleaned and cleared out old furniture for needy families in the area. Goodie bags were also given to the families during the PAP’s season of showing care for the community.

Taman Jurong branch
When: Oct 19
Where: IMM Level 3, Garden Plaza
What: Reading, learning and enrichment for kindergarten pupils

Children starting Primary One in 2015 were given timely presents in the form of stationery, books and gifts at this enrichment event. Sand art and balloon sculpting were also part of the event. Branch chairman Tharman Shanmugaratnam read stories to some of the children who attended the event.

Sembawang, Marsiling, Woodlands, Admiralty, Woodgrove branches
When: Oct 26
Where: Block 3 and 4 at Marsiling Drive
What: Refurbishing work at rental blocks

Branch activists identified 10 rental units to undergo refurbishing work. They helped residents fix their flats and donated some household appliances.
On behalf of Himawari Pte Ltd.,
I would like to wish my fellow comrades a happy
50th Anniversary of Singapore’s Independence!

With best regards,
Andrew Tay Teng Yew, S.B.St.J
Owner and Director

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Buona Vista, Queenstown, Tanglin-Cairnhill, Tanjong Pagar-Tiong Bahru, Kreta Ayer-Kim Seng and Radin Mas branches

When: Nov 25
Where: Tanjong Pagar GRC
What: Carnival with residents

The Young PAP members in Tanjong Pagar organised a carnival where there were stage performances and 12 game booths for residents to celebrate PAP’s 60th anniversary with their MPs. Over 1,000 residents attended the event and they each went home with a PAP care pack, comprising packet drinks, instant noodles, canned food, a copy of Petir, Tanjong Pagar GRC contact card and more.

Bedok branch

When: Nov 29
Where: Pulau Ubin
What: Excursion

Some 30 PAP activists, together with 80 residents, went on an outing to Pulau Ubin to learn more about Singapore’s history and the environment.

Pasir Ris East, Pasir Ris West, Punggol Central, Punggol South, Punggol North and Punggol West branches

When: November
Where: Pasir Ris-Punggol GRC
What: Distribution of home appliances

Branches in Pasir Ris-Punggol GRC gave 200 sets of home appliances, comprising a tower fan, a toaster, an oven, a kettle, a rice cooker and an iron to needy residents.
Nuts and bolts of PAP60 celebrations

Much research and planning went into last year’s PAP60 celebrations. Petir takes you behind the scenes on what went into the major events’ smooth execution.

1 PAP60 commemorative event at Victoria Concert Hall on Nov 7, 2014

Research started a good six months beforehand to evoke the look-and-feel of the founding event 60 years ago at the then Victoria Memorial Hall.

Nothing was overlooked, to allow pioneer members to relive the event of Nov 1954, right down to the old microphone which founding Secretary-General Lee Kuan Yew spoke from. And somewhat appropriately, it was PAP pioneer Siang Kok Leong, who joined the party on its founding, who tracked down the microphone.

Photographs were enlarged as photo backdrops to show the “then” and “now” look of the venue, now called Victoria Concert Hall (VCH). Research was also done on food and beverage, music and venue décor to align with the nostalgia theme.

2 Giant mock-up of PAP60 Forward Together anniversary book

A giant mock-up of the book was on VCH’s stage on Nov 7, 2014, to mark its official launch. How did the giant book, at 2,200 mm (width) x 1,600 mm (height) x 600 mm (diameter), achieve its mobility on the stage? Wheels, of course.

The mock book was made of plywood. Much thought went into the production of the pages to ensure their flipping was smooth and soft – like the real, smaller sized hard copy.

The mock book’s pictures were selected to depict the rallies and the mode of engagement with the community in the early years and now.

3 PAP60 party awards ceremony and dinner

Usually held at an auditorium, last year’s Nov 22 party awards ceremony was conducted at the Singapore Expo to accommodate the larger turnout. The usual number of attendees was about 1,800, compared to the 2,500 people for the 60th anniversary’s awards ceremony.

FACTS AND FIGURES

About 120 Women’s Wing volunteers helped with the organisation

They were responsible for a number of tasks such as:

- ushering different groups of attendees
- food and logistics
- registration and programme

4 Party conference and PAP60 rally at Singapore Expo on Dec 7, 2014

Preparations began as early as a year ago, with all 87 branches committed to mobilising their members to attend. In all, about 6,000 members attended.

About 100 YP members were involved with the organisation. They were responsible for the programme, speech, stage design and set up, security, general ushering, food, logistics and transport.

Indeed, the YP also came up with the pre-rally warm-up of having participants bounce polka-dotted balls above their heads. The giant balls were in the party colours of white, red and blue. Each of the balls measured 1.5 m in diameter and weighed about 1.5 kg.
HQ exco stint an eye-opener

Petir talks to two HQ exco district representatives who have just completed their two-year term on what impressed them the most during their time on the committee.

Enriched and empowered
Benjamin Chua, 26, Yew Tee branch exco, branch YP chair, PPF exco, member since 2008.

1. What do you like most about your work as a district representative in the HQ exco?
   I’m deeply honoured to have had the opportunity to serve in the HQ exco. This was one of the biggest opportunities I had in my life — to be able to serve alongside the mayors and ministers in the HQ exco.

   Discussion on national trending issues was what I liked the most. They were engaging as the exco takes ground feedback very seriously on where PAP has done well and more importantly, what the party needed improvements on. The exco would also ensure that there were sufficient checks and balances that the feedback provided was accurate and reflected actual ground sensing.

2. How does this role differ from your role at your branch?
   Our work at the branch is operational in nature. We work hard in our constituency to help the residents on a case by case basis; to ensure that our ground initiatives will help fill any gaps that they may be in.

   Feedback received is also geared to the local context, taking into account our local demographics. At the HQ, I experienced things on a macro level, where we get to understand the needs and gaps of each district as well as the general sentiments of the majority so that specific directions can be planned to move Singapore ahead together.

3. Any memorable happenings/incidents in your two-year stint? Can you elaborate and in what way did it leave a deep impression on you?
   The first meeting was the most memorable.

   I recall being asked by DPM Tharman to comment on some of the trending issues. The mayors and ministers took the first step to engage us (the district representatives) to voice out our opinions and I am appreciative that they take what we say seriously into consideration for their decisions. It left such a deep impression as they made us feel part of the team and that our ground feedback as district representatives was sincerely valued.

4. Use three adjectives to describe your experience serving on the HQ exco?
   Engaging, enriching, empowering.

   Engaging as the HQ exco members actively engaged us in their discussion to ensure that the ground sentiment and feedback were accurately reflected.

   Enriching as this was a big opportunity where I picked up lifelong skills on how national leaders make decisions.

   Empowering as I felt that the district representatives were given the opportunity to voice out and work directly with our country’s leaders.

4. You described your role at the HQ exco as FUN. What aspect of it was fun?
   During lunch, we sometimes discuss hot button issues and otherwise, we have casual conversations, crack jokes and catch up with both fellow HQ district reps and the party members. I’ve made some good friends and it is an experience I can’t get anywhere else.

5. What are your key takeaways after two years on the committee?
   A lot of consideration and deliberation go into trying to make sense of pertinent issues and how the PAP can approach them, and the exco meetings have shown me that finding one good way to approach an issue is challenging and sometimes, people forget that.
PM's New Year Message

“We have come thus far because the government and people have worked hand-in-hand. We will succeed if we unite our strengths and abilities. Let us not wait for others to do everything for us. Let us each do our part and give it all that we can. Let us come together to take Singapore to greater heights. Then, we can achieve greater assurance, create more opportunities, and build a better home for all.”

Petir takes a look back at the top 12 government policies and initiatives that were introduced in 2014 to benefit Singaporeans

**01 Pioneer Generation Package**
- $8 billion fund established to honour and thank Singapore’s pioneers
- Benefits 450,000 Singaporeans aged at least 16 years old in 1965
- Helps them with their healthcare costs for life
- Annual Medisave top-ups of $200-$800, subsidies for MediShield premiums
- All pioneers also covered under Community Health Assist Scheme

**02 MediShield Life**
- All Singaporeans receive coverage, including the very elderly and those with pre-existing illnesses, for life
- Premiums to be affordable and can be fully paid from Medisave
- Coverage for hospitalisation, surgery and eligible outpatient treatments to be significantly expanded
- Implementation at end 2015

**03 Central Provident Fund**
- Advisory Panel to submit review findings on how to enhance the CPF system to government by Feb 2015
- Minimum Sum to go up to $161,000 in July 2015, up from the current $155,000
- CPF contribution rates to go up by 1 percentage point from 2015
- Older Singaporeans who do not qualify for Pioneer Generation Package to get five years of annual CPF Medisave top-ups

**04 Raising Retirement Age**
- From Jan 1, 2015, eligible public servants can be re-employed after they turn 65, up to the age of 67
- Ongoing push by NTUC to raise official re-employment age to 67

**05 ASPIRE (Applied Study in Polytechnics and ITE Review)**
- Push towards greater emphasis on skills and job performance
- Advocated guidance and various pathways for Polytechnic and ITE students to enhance their skills and qualifications
**SkillsFuture Council**
- Chaired by DPM Tharman Shanmugaratnam
- Develop an integrated system comprising education, training and career progression for all Singaporeans
- Promote industry support for workers to advance, based on skills
- Foster a culture of lifelong learning

**Smart Nation**
- Smart Nation Office set up, chaired by Vivian Balakrishnan, Minister for the Environment and Water Resources
- Enable safer, cleaner and greener urban living
- More transport options, better care for the elderly at home
- More responsive public services, opportunities for citizen engagement
- Provide every home with access to higher-speed fibre broadband

**Transport**
- More buses on the road under the $1 billion Bus Service Enhancement Programme
- Two new MRT lines – Thomson Line and Eastern Region Line – announced
- Platforms at 32 MRT stations to have free wi-fi service in 2015

**Housing**
- 28,000 families collected keys to new HDB flats in 2014; another 26,000 will do so in 2015
- Lease Buyback scheme extended to 4-room flats, benefits more than 75% of elderly households
- First BTO projects in Tampines North, Bidadari and Punggol Northshore on the way

**Healthcare**
- Ng Teng Fong General Hospital to open in mid-2015
- Changi General Hospital-St Andrew’s Community Hospital Integrated Building to open progressively from Dec 2014 to first half of 2015

**Social Services**
- 24 Social Service Offices up and running by mid-2015, offering more coordinated social services
- Collectively, they will form a network within 2 km of where 95% of needy residents live or work

**Municipal Services Office**
- Set up in October 2014 to improve government’s coordination and delivery of municipal services
- Involves eight government agencies: AVA, PUB, NParks, HDB, LTA, Singapore Police Force, People’s Association and National Environment Agency
Serving and caring in Aljunied

To a man (and woman), all five branch chairmen of Aljunied GRC are determined to wrest it back from the opposition. They tell Petir what motivates them to venture into Aljunied.

1 Victor Lye, 52
Chairman of Bedok Reservoir-Punggol branch

- Family: Married to a junior college teacher. Has four children: two twin sons aged 14, two daughters aged 6 and 5
- Joined PAP: 2001
- Became branch chairman: 2012
- Hobbies: Hockey

2 K. Muralidharan Pillai, 47
Chairman of Paya Lebar branch

- Family: Married to a junior college teacher. Has four children: twin sons aged 14, two daughters aged 6 and 5
- Joined PAP: 2001
- Became branch chairman: 2012
- Hobbies: Cycling, entrepreneurship

3 Chan Hui Yuh, 38
Chairman of Serangoon branch

- Family: Married with two children
- Became branch chairman: 2014
- Hobbies: Reading, playing the piano, cooking and sports

4 Chua Eng Leong, 43
Chairman of Eunos branch

- Family: Married with two sons aged 13 and 8
- Became branch chairman: 2013
- Hobbies: Soccer and cooking

5 Mohamad Kahar Abu Hassan, 46
Chairman of Kaki Bukit branch

- Family: Married
- Joined the PAP: 1995
- Became branch chairman: 2014
- Hobbies: Running and reading
V
tor Lye, chairman of the Bedok Reservoir-Punggol branch of Aljunied GRC, has not always agreed with the ruling People’s Action Party (PAP).

In fact, at some points, such as during the 1997 financial crisis, he doubted that the party cared enough for Singaporeans.

However, he is convinced that Aljunied GRC would be better off with the PAP running it and is determined to win the GRC back for the party at the next general elections.

Mr Lye, 52, the chief executive officer of an insurance company, revealed that he had a chance to enter politics in the mid-1990s, but declined to run.

To the Workers’ Party, Mr Lye stayed on.

Mr Lye has been volunteering at Aljunied since 1999 and even though the PAP lost the GRC in 2011 to the Workers’ Party, Mr Lye stayed on.

“I couldn’t turn my back when George Yeo lost,” said Mr Green, who is the tallest and the biggest of the five chairmen.

He added: “To me, being an MP is not about a job. It’s about helping people and wanting to serve for the good of society.”

After the 1997 financial crisis, Mr Lye decided to “go to the ground” and do grassroots work.

And while he did not always agree with the PAP then, he joined former Foreign Affairs Minister George Yeo in Aljunied GRC, as he “wanted to do grassroots work.”

“He was a good man and I felt he had a very open mind,” said Mr Lye. “I was not keen to join the PAP, I was only keen to help but because there was no other mechanism to help at that time, I decided to join the party.”

Mr Lye has been volunteering at Aljunied since 1999 and even though the PAP lost the GRC in 2011 to the Workers’ Party, Mr Lye stayed on.

“I couldn’t turn my back when George Yeo lost,” he said. “At least I can say I never left and I didn’t quit.”

He added: “We are here because we believe we can make a difference. Within the PAP, there must be more people who are there not because they can win an election, but because they can serve the people well.”

It was also their desire to help Singapore that prompted the other four branch chairmen under Aljunied GRC to accept the posts.

Taking on Aljunied to serve the people

For Mr Chua, who is the tallest and the biggest of the five chairmen, jokingly added: “If people must have someone who is the heavyweight in the team, then it’s clearly me!”

Mr Lye’s fear is that the “vocal minority” who speak up against the PAP may cause the “silent majority” to swing to the opposition.

“It’d be a sad, sad day for Singapore if we allow politics to turn into a sport. Politics is not a sport and we are not here as sportsmen. We have to win the people’s trust...we have to fight for every vote.”

Mr K. Muralidharan Pillai, chairman of Paya Lebar branch, added: “If a voter feels that the PAP is not listening to their concerns, then he should vote against us.

“but they should not vote against the PAP just to goad the government into making populist decisions. That would spell doom for us all.”

A team that cares

In PAP wards, every GRC is helmed by a Cabinet Minister.

This is not the case in Aljunied GRC, where former Foreign Affairs Minister George Yeo had to step down after losing the 2011 general elections.

Eunos branch chairman Chua Eng Leong, said of the five current branch chairmen: “We are five ordinary people. But if we can make the difference, can touch lives on the ground, I think that’s better than having a heavyweight sent in just for the elections.”

Bedok Reservoir-Punggol branch chairman Victor Lye added: “The definition of a heavyweight has changed. Now, it’s more about who cares for you and who knows the ground.”

All five chairmen said that the Workers’ Party, which runs Aljunied GRC now, will probably try to sell the line that the PAP does not care for the people of Aljunied if the party does not field a minister to helm the team.

Mr Mohamad Kahar Abu Hassan, chairman of the Kaki Bukit branch, said that in a GRC, what’s more important is that the team members have different attributes so that they bring different skills to the table.

“We are a team and we all have different strengths which help the team function well together and effectively,” he said. “That is most important.”

Mr Chua, who is the tallest and the biggest of the five chairmen, jokingly added: “If people must have someone who is the heavyweight in the team, then it’s clearly me!”

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January 2015
1. How did you become involved with the PAP?

I joined the PAP in 2011, and served with the Woodgrove branch family. Initially I provided legal advice to residents at meet-the-people sessions. I have also held grassroots appointments and will be looking to drive a policy forum initiative where we communicate policies to residents in Woodgrove.

2. Why did you decide to contest the chairman’s position in the PPF Council?

I was in the last council and felt that there was more that I could contribute.

I decided to volunteer for the chairman’s position as I was inspired by the passion and “big hearts” of the other council members who are keen to work collectively so that PPF could contribute more to party and nation.

3. What do you intend to achieve in your two-year term as chairman of the PPF Council?

Our Council aims to become a more helpful tool for the party and the nation. We will do this by increasing awareness of the PPF, both within the party as well as externally.

By increasing awareness within the party, we hope to continue to attract intelligent and committed activists looking for avenues of contribution. These are activists who have an appreciation of how PPF could amplify the voices of the rank and file activists, provide members for various GPC resource panels and create a deeper understanding about the rationale behind certain policies.

As for increasing awareness outside of the party, we plan to issue a position paper. The paper’s topic will be arrived at by consensus based on activist feedback. It will demonstrate the healthy level of dialogue within the party and outreach to all strata within the party when considering national issues.

4. How do you view the effectiveness of the PPF as the think-tank arm of the party? How could it possibly improve on it?

The PPF seeks to bridge the gap between activists and policy makers. We feel this gap has narrowed, with PPF contributing to it. The proposal to amend the party constitution at the last Party Convention in 2013 is an example of PPF’s contributions to reflect activists’ concerns. The proposed amendments were subsequently approved by the PAP cadres at the Party Conference held late last year.

In terms of increasing effectiveness, we are restructuring the PPF Council to more clearly delineate tasks and appoint co-chairs for each task. Examples of tasks are preparation of the position paper, organisation of the next Party Convention, and dialogues.

5. How important is it for the party to have rank and file members involved in formulating policy recommendations?

As a party, we serve the country and its people and the best way to serve is to listen to their needs and concerns. Rank and file members help provide these perspectives. They are the bedrock of the party and when these activists speak from the heart, it is very important that policy makers listen.

6. What are your immediate plans for the first half of 2015?

We are looking to initiate dialogues to garner feedback from rank and file members to produce the position paper mentioned earlier.

As 2015 falls within the 10th anniversary of PPF’s formation, we will have a celebration and also introduce our own PPF logo.

The PPF Council urges activists who have not attended any dialogues in the past to attend dialogues organised by the PPF and contribute their voice so we can better reflect our party’s and country’s rich diversity.
She looks after one of the largest constituencies, with about 60,000 residents. Now in her second term as MP, she is even more familiar with the issues and goes into detailed analysis of them, similar to her training as a medical doctor to diagnose her patients’ problems.

The 48-year-old doctor describes her constituency as “one big family” where community leaders and grassroots and activists organise outreach activities to bond with each other. The aim is to uplift people’s lives and the environment they live in.

Her ground work is helped by her proficiency in Mandarin, earning her praises from formal Mandarin speakers. With over 100 clan associations, temples, religious and other civic organisations in Geylang Serai, she often delivers speeches in different languages at functions to connect with people.

TOPICS DISCUSSED

1. **Complex and colourful**
   Geylang Serai is a very complex, yet colourful constituency. Managing it requires a deep understanding of the ground. There are HDB estates which are not just in one main area, but located across several areas – Ubi, Eunos, Haig Road, Joo Seng and each one is unique.

   Then there are the private estates such as Tai Keng Gardens, with over 1,000 landed properties. As well as Geylang’s Lorong 23 to 42.

   I cannot take a solution that I use in one HDB or private estate to solve a similar problem in another HDB/private estate, so it is crucial to know the issues, characteristics of the people and area.

2. **Walking in others’ shoes**
   An example of handling issues in detail and understanding ground sentiments is the feedback that coffee shops have been putting tables and chairs on pavements which blocked pedestrians’ walkways, making them walk on the roads. We have to find innovative ways to handle this, especially when agencies cannot come up with sustainable and good solutions.

   We are going to do a walk through with someone sitting in a wheelchair as well as a group of elderly residents, the neighbourhood committee and with a Land Transport Authority officer. In this way, we can see where the barriers are and rectify it soon, especially when it involves safety and security issues.

3. **When professional and community work blend**
   The combination of being a doctor and an MP is synergistic as a lot of decisions I make are influenced by my medical background. For example, we talk about evidence-based medicine – I apply this to community issues and teach my volunteers about evidence-based practices like taking notes, photographs and interviewing stakeholders for first hand views.

   My long hours and shift work as an emergency medicine and trauma specialist does not hinder my work as an MP because when I work in the evenings, I get to do my community rounds in the mornings. This can indeed give a different perspective of the place or the issues.

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