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SINGAPORE NEWS

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GE: MM Lee cautions Aljunied voters of consequences of voting in opposition

By S Ramesh/May Wong | Posted: 29 April 2011 20:33 hrs

SINGAPORE: Minister Mentor Lee Kuan Yew has urged the voters of Aljunied GRC to exercise their vote carefully in the 7 May General Election.

This is because a wrong choice would mean they lose a strong team of office holders and ground parliamentarians. Mr Lee was speaking to the media after a visit to Tampines Central on Friday night.

Mr Lee's visit there was to support Mr Heng Swee Keat, PAP's new candidate in the Tampines GRC slate.

Mr Heng was once Minister Mentor Lee's principal private secretary during his career in the civil service. His last post before leaving for politics was as the managing director of the Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS).

Mr Lee said: "He is the man who saw Singapore through the financial crisis and we recovered faster than other countries, but he's a potential Minister for Finance or Minister for Trade and Industry and we've got to have people like that in reserve."

So Mr Lee's advice to all voters and in particular those in Aljunied GRC is to look at the track record of the candidates and the programmes they have for the constituency.

"During election time, all claims are made recklessly, but they are simplistic. Election rallies' slogans sell," he warned.

The Minister Mentor urged Aljunied GRC's voters to compare the property prices of their GRC with those in the neighbouring Hougang division, an opposition stronghold.

He said they would realise the prices are not the same. "You have the wrong government, you have your property prices go right down," he said.

Minister Mentor Lee went on to say: "If you are in Aljunied, ask yourself: do you want one MP, one non-constituency MP, one celebrity, two unknowns, to look after you? Or, have two ministers, one Speaker of Parliament, one very good ground worker (Ong Ye Kung) and Cynthia Phua to look after the place?"

"What will happen to your property values and your own comfort, the drains and mosquitoes and so on in the five years? You have this celebrity, he has been away 30 years, he comes back, how does he connect with us?"

"It may well happen. If they win, in which case, the people of Aljunied live with the results. The only way people learn is when they have to pay a price."

Mr Lee was also unfazed by the large crowds at the opposition rallies, as he feels that does not translate into the final results on Polling Day.

Mr Lee also provided data to counter opposition's claims that foreigners in Singapore were taking away jobs from Singaporeans.

He said total employment in Singapore rose by 786,000 between 2006 and last year. That's a cumulative increase of 34 percent.

Last year alone, 115,900 jobs were added, with half going to Singaporeans.

Preliminary estimates also show that total employment grew by 23,700 in the first three months of this year.

Mr Lee pointed out that the Singapore government has no reason to look after the interest of foreigners.

He added that the PAP government has created more jobs than Singaporeans can fill.

He said no country has done that except Singapore.

Mr Lee also released data stating that the overall unemployment rate was 2.2 percent last year.

The resident jobless rate was 3.1 percent, the second lowest over the period of 2000 and 2010.

Mr Lee added that foreigners are brought into Singapore to attract investments, in turn creating even more jobs for locals.

Some examples include how the equipment supplying company, Applied Materials, employs over 500 staff, and 85 percent of them are Singaporeans.

And based on a construction manpower study done last year, which surveyed 1,000 contracting firms, two-thirds of professional, managerial, executive and technical positions are held by Singaporeans.



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MM Lee Kuan Yew

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