

NO LOVE
for Love Thy
Neighbour

■ LIFE! PAGE D6



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■ PRIME, PAGE A3



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PHOTO: AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

GADDAFI KILLED

The self-proclaimed "King of Kings of Africa", Colonel Muammar Gaddafi is seen in video footage lying dead, his head bloodied, and stripped to the waist. Col Gaddafi, who ruled Libya as a dictator for 42 years until he was ousted in August by rebels, was killed yesterday after forces of the National Transitional Council overwhelmed his home town, Sirte, the last major bastion of resistance, two months after the fall of his regime.

■ PRIME PAGE A8, WORLD PAGE B13

PM's goal: No one gets left behind

■ BY JANICE HENG

IN HIS first appearance before the new Parliament elected in the watershed May general election, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong pledged to make maintaining social mobility a top priority of his new government.

A society "in which no one is left behind" was his objective, he declared, and one made particularly urgent by an apparent trend of rising social stratification.

Speaking for more than an hour before an attentive House, PM Lee set out what was needed to realise the vision of a better life for all - a vision first painted in President Tony Tan Keng Yam's address at the opening of Parliament last week.

This, he indicated, would be "the next chapter" in the ongoing Singapore Story.

One requirement was an inclusive society in which everyone benefits from progress, "has a say, a stake and a sense of belonging", and aspires to do better.

He placed this at the top of his list of three requirements, the other two being a vibrant economy and constructive politics.

The challenge to creating an inclusive society is income inequality, now "starker than before", and the accompanying social stratification in which, as he noted, "the children of successful people are doing better, the children of less successful people are doing less well".

"Fewer children from lower-income families are rising to the top of the heap," he observed.

Citing his own encounters at the Meet-the-People Sessions that he holds in Ang Mo Kio GRC, where he is MP, he described residents who were "desperate, anxious, and worried about themselves".

Key themes of Singapore's next chapter

1 An inclusive society

"If you are talented, hardworking, with drive and determination, however poor your background, there must be no financial or social impediment for you to move."

2 A vibrant economy

"You need a vibrant economy to create jobs, raise wages, generate confidence in a brighter future. If the economy is slow, it's very hard to be optimistic, to find new opportunities and to have a zest for a tomorrow."

3 Constructive politics

"We have to take a much more open approach to government and to governance, the way we organise ourselves, the way we conduct our affairs... We need to engage citizens more in decisions affecting them, across a wide range."

"But we worry more for their children," he said. "Because when they have no home, no place to go, studying in the void deck, how do you go from that to the kid dreaming in a lab to be the next Nobel Prize winner?"

"It's a big gap. It exists in Singapore, sharper than before."

This was a sharp contrast to a generation ago, when people were poor but many of their children went to university and became professionals.

PM Lee told the House that after the general election, he tasked Mr Tharman Shanmugaratnam, who is now Deputy Prime Minister as well as Manpower Minister, to do a comprehensive and multi-ministry review of social issues and social policies.

One result of the review was the prioritisation of social mobility.

"The first priority is to strive to maintain social mobility, to create the best opportunities for our people to progress, and to encourage people to make maximum efforts for themselves."

Singapore's prosperity was based on self-reliance, and that remains the right direction, he added.

That is why the Government has put a major emphasis on education and training, from focusing on good-quality, affordable preschool education to enhancing access to higher education.

But institutions alone do not suffice. Though institutions may be in place, a "social gap" between different strata of society will be very damaging, he said. "So we must keep our society open, egalitarian, informal."

▶▶ CONTINUED ON PAGE A6

Govt pledges to be more open

■ BY ELGIN TOH

PRIME Minister Lee Hsien Loong yesterday sought to temper the confrontational tone of "new normal" politics with a sense of cooperation and compromise.

In his first parliamentary speech of the new term, he called on politicians and ordinary Singaporeans to build a constructive

brand of politics that "puts Singapore first".

Leading by example, he pledged that the Government will be more open - sharing more information with citizens and providing more room for civic society to blossom.

He welcomed the speeches by Workers' Party MPs over the last three days in which they promised

to play the role of a "constructive and responsible" opposition.

"We'll hold them to their word," he said.

He also called on all Singaporeans to embrace the spirit of compromise and avoid gridlock, as the Singapore democracy matured.

"When you say a democracy is maturing, it's not just the Government taking an attitude or your in-

stitutions being right. It's also how the people relate to one another, relate to the Government, relate to the community," he said.

"We need to work harder to build consensus, to compromise, to give and take for the common good."

▶▶ CONTINUED ON PAGE A6

INSIDE 148 PAGES IN SEVEN PARTS



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Hiring rules rile MNCs

MULTINATIONALS are finding it so hard to find skilled staff in the light of the new rules on hiring foreign workers that some may scale back their operations here. The Singapore International Chamber of Commerce has called for a review of the policies.

■ PRIME PAGE A4

Flood Bangkok to save it

THAILAND has ordered floodgates which kept rising waters out of the capital opened, conceding that it will have to flood parts of Bangkok to prevent more widespread damage as massive volumes of water are building up north of the capital.

■ PRIME PAGE A8

Game on, everyone!

VIRTUALLY every weekend from March to September next year will be chock-full of athletic contests - part of major grassroots efforts that have been termed the Community Games and Singapore National Games.

■ PRIME PAGE A10

Ads to get early vetting

ADVERTISING watchdog Advertising Standards Authority of Singapore is not going to wait for complaints before it acts. It will work more closely with various agencies to vet advertisements before the public gets to see them.

■ HOME PAGE C4

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