

# ‘I will do my utmost to keep the system clean,’ says PM Lee

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Integrity and incorruptibility are fundamental to Singapore and the foundation on which a clean and effective government is run, said Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong.

These ideals, which include justice and equality, and a clean government, are not just abstract aspirations but a compass to guide every decision in government, he said at the National Day Rally 2023 on Sunday. “They guide every deci-

sion we make, they give purpose and meaning to our nation-building, they make Singapore stand tall amongst the nations of the world,” PM Lee said.

He recalled a speech that his father – the late Mr Lee Kuan Yew – made in Parliament on his 90th birthday in 2013 to politicians from the People’s Action Party and the opposition. “Frail and ill, Mr Lee said just a few words. He spoke only about one thing. He reminded us Singapore must always remain clean and incorruptible, and ministers and MPs have to set the exam-

ple. Otherwise, he said, we are finished,” PM Lee said.

He added: “I will never forget those brief words. For the sake of the country, I will do all I can to keep faith with Mr Lee’s hope.”

“No matter the price; no matter the embarrassment or political cost – I will do my utmost to keep the system clean,” said PM Lee. “Every generation of PAP leaders must stand by this.”

His remarks come in the wake of public scrutiny following the investigation into Transport Minister S. Iswaran, and the resignation of

former Speaker of Parliament Tan Chuan-Jin and former MP Cheng Li Hui over an extramarital affair.

PM Lee said in his Mandarin speech: “Recent events involving political figures have made some Singaporeans uneasy. They wonder if there is something wrong with our system.”

“No system is perfect,” he said. “Whether these events would be a blow to Singapore depends on how we respond.”

PM Lee called for a renewal of commitment to the values championed by the nation’s founding fa-

thers, ahead of his late father’s 100th birth anniversary on Sept 16. The values are justice and equality, religious freedom and racial harmony, a commitment to excellence, a fair system of meritocracy and a clean government.

“It is timely to reflect upon the values and ideals championed by Mr Lee and the founding fathers, and for us to renew our commitment to these enduring values and ideals,” said PM Lee.

These ideals have built a society where the people and the authorities can trust each other and have

seen Singapore through ups and downs over the past 58 years, including the Covid-19 pandemic.

“The pandemic could well have been a real nightmare... Our people came through safe and sound; our economy revived in good shape; and our society has grown more united, not less,” he added. “We owe this to our collective efforts, and our strong mutual trust, which we must strengthen and deepen to secure a bright future for Singapore.”

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