



THE PALM

E-Newsletter – March 2020 Issue

5 NEW FACES

Progress Singapore Party recently announced that we co-opted five new CEC members. Read full story on our [website](#).

BUDGET RESPONSE

Singapore's economy may shrink by 0.5% in 2020 and the government has responded with a whopping 10.9B budget deficit. Amid trade headwinds, the budget falls short in several areas. Read our [full report](#).



Mrs. Cecilia Tan gracing our New Year Celebrations held at Ban Heng Restaurant, on the 17th Jan 2020.

WELCOME NOTE

Welcome to the inaugural issue of The Palm, Progress Singapore Party's internal newsletter. In this issue you'll find stories about what's happening at PSP, our party ideology and philosophy and some insights about our upcoming events. Trust that you'll enjoy this issue.



SINGAPORE DESERVES BETTER!

With hands on our hearts, we bring to you the universal truth on what affects all Singaporeans, from the very young to the rich, the aged and the feeble. We are all afflicted by the ever-increasing costs of living. It is an issue. It is a concern. It is a menace.

PAP's patchwork of policy responses does not address the elephant in the room i.e. the high cost of living. And it is not something that we can wish away either.

All of us at PSP have stepped forward to do our part in ensuring that our people deserve better. A better education, a better government and a good quality of life. In this issue, we have two articles; one on Doc's vision for Singapore and another, an interview with Andrew Ng, a newly minted CEC member on what's lacking in Singapore despite all our material successes. Turn the page and be inspired.

OR WE CAN SIMPLY KEEP SLAPPING THE DRIVER, BUT WHAT'S THE FUN IN THAT?



By TOH HAN SHIH, CONTRIBUTOR

Dr Tan Cheng Bock hopes the Progress Singapore Party (PSP) will become the government of Singapore in future, and he is recruiting people for that purpose.

Dr Tan, the founding Secretary-General of this alternative party, said he is preparing a team, and “that team will take over the running of the country I hope one day.”

He did not explicitly say when he envisages the PSP taking over the government from the People’s Action Party (PAP), which has governed Singapore since 1959.

“The whole political climate is also changing, so I need good, strong people to come on board to help me to set up a very strong team,” Dr Tan said during a press conference at the official launch of the PSP headquarters in Bukit Timah Shopping Centre on January 27.

The headquarters “signifies we are a very serious player. We are not just coming here just to fight one general election,” said Dr Tan, a former PAP member of parliament.

Although the PSP is less than one year old, it already has over 1,000 members, making it the biggest opposition party in Singapore.

“I worry that some of them may be still thinking the party belongs to Tan Cheng Bock. It is not my interest or even

Singapore’s interest to only concentrate on me,” Dr Tan said.

A political party is an institution, and good people are needed to form the institution, he added. “I can be the mentor which is exactly what I am doing.”

In particular, he expressed the hope that more young people will join the PSP. “I find that so many of the young chaps are still not ready to come forward. I hope they will come,” Dr Tan observed.

“I hope to encourage younger Singaporeans not to be so fearful. We don’t want people to say, ‘You all are kiasu people’. I think all these words, kiasu, kiasi, let’s forget about it, don’t use these words,” Dr Tan said.

Kiasu and Kiasi are Singapore slang for excessive caution.

Many young Singaporeans are reluctant to talk about politics, Dr Tan noted. He wants more young people to have a greater understanding of politics, because politics affects their everyday lives. If a young Singaporean is not interested in politics until he or she starts working and realises it is difficult to cover expenses with his or her pay packet, “it is a bit late,” Dr Tan pointed out.

“Singapore is actually basically a good place. We want to tweak it and make it better for everybody. Political parties must be more compassionate, must be more human,” Dr Tan said.

Dr Tan prefers a form of opposition politics that is not aggressively confrontational.

“I would like to move away from that angle (if you are not with me, you are against me). We may have difference in opinions but never mind,” he said, adding that debates can produce the best outcome.

There is no reason why the PSP shouldn’t cooperate with other opposition parties, Dr Tan added.

THE LONG SHOT



Photo Above: Mr. Andrew Ng, CEC Member

By KUMARAN PILLAI

I recently caught up with Andrew Ng at Bukit Green of Singapore Island Country Club. The self-taught golfer has an official handicap of one and is confident that he can take on most of us on the golf course.

But I was more impressed with his Popiah making skills. The way he rolls it up is a little sloppy, but he makes up for it in the taste department. It's a real treat, indeed.

And here, he is going to leave you with some food for thought. I spoke to him at length about his ideas, philosophy and why he joined politics. His spiel on these make it an interesting read and you'll soon realize that he is no ordinary Joe, or should I say, Andrew.

It turns out that Andrew likes to take the long shots in life, and now he is dabbling into politics.

Andrew, thank you for the beer. Now, tell me about your early childhood

I am a product of Singapore's education system, rising through the ranks with very little guidance through a tried and tested route of being a good academic performer – a scholar. And by some fortune and mistakes, I ended up in a SAP program in Chinese High.

Growing up in Singapore, what were your political persuasions back then?

Growing up, I was very apolitical. Most of the time we are too worried about academic performance and getting caught up in the rat race. Singapore was very stable for so many years, and we took it for granted. We've enjoyed economic success and a lot of students were also very focused on their studies, so there was very little thought given to politics.

After my studies, I ended up working in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which was a quite an eye-opener - It's not your traditional civil service job, where you do the same thing day-in-day-out. I had to react to a lot of things that develop around the world. So, it was challenging, and I had to be very spontaneous and think on my feet. I was in the policy planning and analysis directorate and was basically covering more management of bilateral relations between Singapore and Indonesia.

What kind of tone or persona should PSP be adopting?

PSP is led by Dr. Tan and for many years he has been part of the establishment, yet he was different in his own way; because he had his own convictions and he was prepared to speak out and not just toe the line - we draw our inspiration from him. This is where PSP is coming from - not criticizing for the sake of criticizing but trying to make it a little bit better and more compelling. We have come to that stage where we have the kind of maturity and ability to engage in a reasonable and productive conversation

What are the main issues, in your opinion, we should be championing?

The way I see it, Singapore is a country with lots of conflict and contradictions. We are setting records in so many fields but perhaps the greatest measure which is relevant to people's lives is quality of life. And as much as we succeed economically and have tremendous and enviable success globally, I'm sad to say the quality of life in Singapore, for a lot of families, is not up to scratch.

There are some, of course, who have enjoyed the benefits of economic success disproportionately, and for them, I'm sure they have nothing to complain about. But unfortunately, a lot of others do not enjoy the same level of security and contentment. And I think this is one thing which we need to emphasize - that we must become more humane and we must look at people truly as citizens. In other words, the country must value its people above all

else. Having the title of being number one is meaningless if we don't value our people above all.

Can you elaborate a bit more about quality of life, is that like, a more well-rounded life?

Where it manifests in Singapore is that everybody is just so preoccupied with their own existence that the community spirit, what we consider as the kampung spirit is lost. The fact that we walk past each other every day and we've forgotten to say, *good morning* or *hello*. Do we really need to run things like the Courtesy Campaign? I mean, I would have thought that "please" and "thank you" are just a mandatory part of everybody's existence, but it seems to have disappeared.

I find it particularly troubling in our education system. Because we have a system that creates what I call *Singapore Smut*. And I can say that a lot of students have a miserable existence. That's what I mean by quality of life. Going to school from Monday to Friday, CCA and homework until the wee hours of the morning - that is not an existence.

What does education offer? What are we supposed to do with it? We're supposed to create people with intellect, imagination, and character. We are good at creating intellect. But in terms of imagination and character, I would think a B-minus or a C plus at best.

But, of course, for intellect, we are A++. So, I think in terms of measuring quality of life, yes, it's going to be very difficult. But we would like to see some of these indicators and some of you can just ask a person along the street, are you happy with your life? And hopefully seven or nine or whatever number out of ten, would say *yes*. And that's the measure of quality of life. I'm afraid the number is much smaller.

And why? Because everybody is just so preoccupied with getting to the next traffic light quick. And in all of this, we have just lost the plot, and we have forgotten to smell the roses along the way.

Disclaimer by Andrew Ng

I'd like to emphasize that a lot of these are just my own views, my own perspectives. And they are, of course, subject to change and discussion. But you know, it's just one man's view of the world.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Welcome Tea Party

We are having our next tea party on the 14th of March at Party HQ.

Training for Counting Agent and Polling Agent

20th March 2020, 7pm to 10pm

21st March 2020, 1pm – 4pm

27th March 2020, 7pm to 10pm

Orientation Classes

7:30pm 09th Mar 2020 (Mon)

<https://t.me/joinchat/ILLAexZnHMLS5U6tYLvi7g>

7.30pm 23rd Mar 2020 (Mon)

<https://t.me/joinchat/ILLAexPQqKHkStXhd3oOeA>

DO YOU HAVE A STORY TO SHARE?

Please get in touch with

Kumaran Pillai, Head, Communications

kumaran_pillai@hotmail.com

Jonathan Tee, Co-Head, Members Management

Jonteekl74@gmail.com

Joseph Wong, Co-Head, Members Management

josephwongcf@gmail.com

CONTACT

PROGRESS SINGAPORE PARTY

Bukit Timah Shopping Centre #14-04

Singapore 588179

contact@psp.org.sg

TEL: 6767 1138