

## **S'pore to hold election on May 7**

### **Timing of election 'not surprising'**

**Lei Jiahui**

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The countdown has begun to Polling Day of Singapore's 14th General Election (GE), to be held on May 7.

The date was announced shortly after President S R Nathan proclaimed the dissolution of Singapore's 11th Parliament yesterday afternoon.

The dissolution was made on the advice of Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong.

Nomination Day has been set for next Wednesday.

A statement from the Singapore Government said that Mr Lee had appointed Mr Yam Ah Mee, chief executive director of the People's Association, as the Returning Officer, who declared May 7 as Polling Day. The date, which falls on a Saturday, has been declared a public holiday.

Nine nomination centres, to be housed in various primary and secondary schools as well as a junior college, will be set up islandwide – the same number as in the previous GE.

All candidates standing for election are to submit their nomination papers between 11am and noon on Nomination Day.

The election deposit for each candidate is \$16,000, an increase over the \$13,500 required in the previous election. The new sum is 8 per cent of the total allowances payable to a Member of Parliament in the preceding year, rounded to the nearest \$500.

Some 2.35 million voters are eligible to vote on Polling Day. This is an increase from the 2.1 million at the last election. More than one in four voters are aged 21 to 34. Of these, an estimated 200,000 are first-time voters.

Twenty-seven constituencies have been carved out following changes to electoral boundaries in this GE – 12 single-member constituencies (SMCs) and 15 group representation constituencies (GRCs) – with a total of 87 seats to be contested.

This is up from the 84 seats in the 2006 election, which featured nine SMCs and 14 GRCs.

The upcoming GE has been dubbed a "social-media election" due to more concessions being given to the use of new-media platforms for political campaigning.

Dr Gillian Koh, a senior research fellow at the Institute of Policy Studies, said the dates are not surprising, given the recent flurry of political activities, such as the rolling out of new candidates by the People's Action Party (PAP).

Noting that the timing of this election is almost the same as the last one in 2006, she said: "The main milestones have been tell-tale signs that the election would be held within the next few weeks."