

Reflections from the Centenary: The Legacy of LKY and Singapore's Future

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One can't but leave the Institute of Policy Studies Lee Kuan Yew's 100th birth anniversary event feeling turbo charged-up and optimistic about the country's future.

I rushed back from Sydney on Sunday after visiting my daughter and made my way to Sands Convention Centre the next day for the much-anticipated bicentennial event.

The patriarchal leader who passed away eight years ago left behind a legacy of massive international success and global recognition.

Speaker after speaker spoke of the leader's achievements though it's surprising that you don't see any photos of him flashed across the massive hall.

LKY has passed on strict orders not to remember him by way of any monument or celebrations and I am glad that so far his wishes were respected in yesterday's event.

The high-key anniversary event brought forth a host of world-class speakers like former Australian Prime Minister Dr Kelvin Rudd, Ms Jessica Tan Group Executive Director Ping Ann, Professor Wu Weiping Professor of Urban Planning at Columbia University and of course Mr Piyush Gupta Group CEO DBS Bank.

The main event must be the CNN host Dr Fareed Zakaria interview of DPM Lawrence Wong which will be aired over the American network channel.

One key take-away of the event while we are still basking in the aftermath glory of LKY's success is that we must not rest on our laurels.

Nation comes and nation goes so the city state must not think that it has made it and stop making progress through well-intentioned changes however incremental it is.

A participant probably field the most relevant pointed question for the day during Q & A by asking what are some of LKY's sacred cows that need to be slain.

As we are still struggling to come to terms with the recent scandals that engulfed the country, we are wise to ask ourselves as Singaporeans whether a change in leadership is necessary to enable us to forge further ahead.

More than 20% of our local workforce still earns S\$2000/month and below and there is no minimum wage legislation to protect the vulnerable ones.

We may also have the world's oldest workforce as the high cost of life compels those in their 70s and 80s to continue working in low-paying menial jobs.

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