

Political analysts weigh in on potential PMs

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FINANCE MINISTER HENG SWEE KEAT

Since entering politics in 2011, Mr Heng has had together a comprehensive portfolio by taking the lead in ministries and national committees.

He was previously education minister.

Noting Mr Heng's former role in the civil service, Singapore Management University Associate Professor Eugene Tan said: "He knows intimately the ins and outs of the Government."

But he and Dr Gillian Koh, deputy director for research at the Institute of Policy Studies, also note Mr Heng's health as a concern following his stroke in May last year.

But Prof Tan said this has not diminished Mr Heng's visibility as a potential prime minister.

"Generally he is well-liked and is seen very much as a safe pair of hands," he added.

MINISTER IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE CHAN CHUN SING

Mr Chan's "interesting set of portfolios" has given him a good feel of the ground, said Prof Tan, who highlighted his time as National Trades Union Congress secretary-general, and the People's Association deputy chairman. He also used to be minister for social and family development.

Prof Tan said: "I think the tenor of society has changed, there is a sense the fourth-generation prime minister needs to have a good sense of the vulnerable segments of society."

Dr Koh said Mr Chan's exposure to other institutions, such as serving as labour chief and the PAP party whip, gives him exposure that makes his case to become prime minister compelling.

Both experts pointed out Mr Chan's involvement with Singapore-China relations.

EDUCATION MINISTER (HIGHER EDUCATION AND SKILLS)

ONG YE KUNG Dr Koh and Prof Tan agreed that Mr Ong's leadership in the SkillsFuture initiative is a telling sign of his ability.

"SkillsFuture is a big-bang initiative," said Dr Koh, who felt that Mr Ong has gained a lot of exposure from his efforts to promote lifelong learning.

Mr Ong might have entered politics relatively late (he first assumed office in 2015), but Prof Tan sees his current portfolios of Education and Defence as significant because they form about 40 per cent of the Government's budget.