

# They shake hands, then sparks fly

## SDP files objection against PAP candidate

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IT HAS been a roller coaster of emotions at the upper-class constituency of Holland-Bukit Timah. The four-member GRC was expected to offer little drama, not having been contested since it was drawn up in 2001.

But over the last week, it appeared the People's Action Party (PAP) and Singapore Democratic Party (SDP) were building up to a bitter fight.

It started with SDP saying it would target the PAP team leader – Dr Vivian Balakrishnan – over the Youth Olympic Games, which ended with a bill three times it had originally been budgeted for.

As the Minister for Community Development, Youth and Sports, Dr Balakrishnan is responsible for the event.

Then came revelations of a recently uploaded YouTube video entitled Gay Agenda, with the PAP team asking: What was the SDP position on the issue?

SDP cried foul and called it smear tactics.

Was it unfair to question the SDP motivation?

Dr Gillian Koh, a senior research fellow at The Institute of Policy Studies, doesn't think so.

She said: "The question posed by the PAP team is not just a fair question, but a good question. The media and members of the public and the different parties most certainly have a right to ask every single candidate if he has a special area of interest."

### Nomination Centre

But it looked like it would all be water under the bridge at the Nomination Centre at Greenridge Secondary School yesterday morning.

The SDP team was the first to arrive at about 10.30am. When asked how he would respond when he sees Dr Balakrishnan, SDP's GRC leader Vincent Wijesingha said: "I will embrace him like a brother. We are gentlemen."

He did not, but they shook hands.

Instead, SDP's Dr Ang Yong Guan embraced Dr Balakrishnan before they went in separately to the school hall to file their papers.

But sparks soon flew.

The SDP team filed an objection when they found out that PAP's candidate Sim Ann was listed as "unemployed" in her nomination papers.

As Ms Sim is still in the civil service, serving notice, she should be disqualified, they argued.

They added that this was a "misrepresentation".

Their objections were rejected.



Minutes later, the Returning Officer said that she had considered both of SDP's objections and had decided to overrule them.

So is Ms Sim still with the civil service?

At a PAP press conference later, Ms Sim said that she had tendered her resignation on March 18 and her last day was April 3.

She added that she had to pay a financial penalty for leaving the civil service before the stipulated notice period for resignation.

The Public Service Division also confirmed she was no longer in the civil service in a press statement released yesterday afternoon.

When told this, SDP candidate Michelle Lee from the Holland-Bukit Timah team said: "I am glad that's clarified."

She added the party is not going to pursue the matter.

And at the PAP's Holland-Bukit Timah GRC press conference, Dr Balakrishnan said there was no need to discuss the YouTube video.

He said: "I don't need to go any further with that..."

SDP chief Dr Chee Soon Juan responded later: "We take Dr Balakrishnan at his word...and we're glad he's not taking it up."

Dr Chee made that remark during SDP's unveiling of their manifesto yesterday, which includes tackling the cost of living, the issue of foreign workers and rising HDB prices.

TNP PICTURE:  
GAVIN FOO

**SDP V PAP:**  
SDP's GRC leader Dr Vincent Wijesingha meets PAP's Ms Sim Ann.

## HOLLAND-BUKIT TIMAH GRC

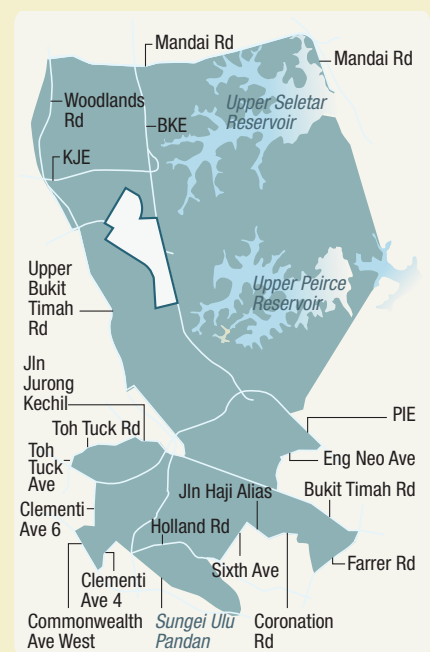
### Statistics

Voters: 91,607

Last election results:  
Uncontested

### Hot issues:

- Housing prices
- Transport woes



**People's Action Party**



Dr Vivian Balakrishnan



Mr Liang Eng Hwa



Mr Christopher de Souza



Ms Sim Ann



**Singapore Democratic Party**



Mr Tan Jee Say



Dr Vincent Wijesingha



Dr Ang Yong Guan



Ms Michelle Lee