

**The PAP got the mandate it wanted, yet, so far, it seems like more of the same.**

**Ghui**

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Professor Chan Heng Chee has in a series of lectures organised by the Institute of Policy Studies' 7th S R Nathan Fellow for the Study of Singapore observed that the results of the recent 2020 general election made clear that a new political culture is emerging in Singapore.

She further noted that many citizens have gone on from bread and butter issues to wanting to see Singapore evolve into a full-fledged democracy where all political participants are treated fairly, and for gerrymandering to be restrained.

While Professor Chan's observations are spot on, it remains to be seen whether or not the Peoples' Action Party (PAP) will take heed and be able to reform itself to appeal to a newer breed of Singaporeans.

In what was then hailed as a landmark general election in 2011, the Workers' Party (WP) made history by winning a Group Representative Constituency (GRC) from the ruling PAP. After that general election, the PAP made public overtures of contrition and expressed their desire to be more inclusive, with programmes such as the National Conversation in 2012 and introduction of policies such as the Pioneer Generation.

Yet, shortly after it won a landslide result in the 2015 general election, it seemed like the PAP reverted to old ways. Among other things, the PAP increased water taxes, changed the elected presidential rules, brought in POFMA and announced GST hikes.

If anything, this may indicate that the PAP did not truly learn any lessons from 2011.

General Election 2020 has seen the WP create another milestone by winning a second GRC from the ruling PAP. Will this be a repeat of the 2011 and 2015 general elections pattern or will the PAP learn any lessons from the recent general election? This remains to be seen.

What is now on the cards for the PAP dominated government is for them to display their sense of fair play and tackle the tanking economy while also managing the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. One of their justifications for having a general election amid the pandemic was that it needed a clear mandate to steer the country out of troubled waters. It has now got that mandate and have to show us the goods.

On the day after the general election, there were 170 new coronavirus cases reported. This was followed by 178 cases on July 12, a whopping 322 new cases on July 13, an even higher 347 on July 14, 249 new cases on July 15 and 248 new cases on July 16. These numbers indicate an upward and fluctuating trajectory post general election as opposed to pre general election which saw the numbers at 136 on July 5, 183 on July 6, 157 on July 7, 158 on July 8 and 125 on July 9 (one day before general election 2020).

Cases have clearly spiked post-election. Did the general election with its campaigning etc result in the increase of cases?

As for the economy, the results are also dismal. Just a few days after the general elections in Singapore, it was reported that Singapore has seen a record slump in GDP figures.

As for a fairer, kinder and gentler form of politics, it is important to note that the police and the AGC have still not yet dismissed the police reports made against newly minted Member of Parliament from the WP, Raeesah Khan.

Ex PAP candidate Ivan Lim also made a public appearance right after the results for general election 2020 were in, displaying a seemingly strong sense of the PAP protecting one of its own while in the same vein appearing to dismiss public sentiment once it got what it wanted.

Perhaps we need to give the PAP time to find its feet and reflect before changes can be seen but so far, it does seem like more of the same.