Building Singapore

Remaking Singapore

Singapore today comprises multiple layers and imprints of different eras, said Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong. **Tham Yuen-C** looks at some major projects to add new layers to the city, and key developments in the works.

Punggol Digital District

An earlier project to develop Punggol was halted in 1997 due to the Asian financial crisis. In NDR 2007, PM Lee gave it a new lease of life. Now, Housing Board blocks stand along the banks of the pristine Punggol Waterway, amid greenery and jogging tracks. By 2021, the area will have a new hawker centre, regional library, childcare centre and healthcare facilities. There are also plans for Punggol to become Singapore's mini-Silicon Valley with a new digital district.

Tuas Port

PM Lee first announced in NDR 2013 that a mega port would be built in Tuas. Phase 1 of construction work for Tuas Port has been completed and Phase 2 started in July this year. Operations will start in 2021, and the port is expected to be fully operational in the 2040s.

Jurong Lake District

Part of the plan to develop the area (below) around Jurong Lake and Jurong East MRT station into a lakeside business, shopping and leisure destination was first set out in 2008 and has been completed. The district, slated to become Singapore's "Second CBD", was once again a key highlight of PM Lee's NDR 2014. In the next decade, the area will also see a new Science Centre, the 90ha Jurong Lake Gardens, and a new 7ha tourism hub.

Marina Bay

The vision to transform Marina Bay into a sparkling new downtown was first unveiled in the 2005 National Day Rally. Today, it is a vibrant business and financial centre with iconic landmarks like Gardens by the Bay and Marina Bay Sands.

Greater Southern Waterfront

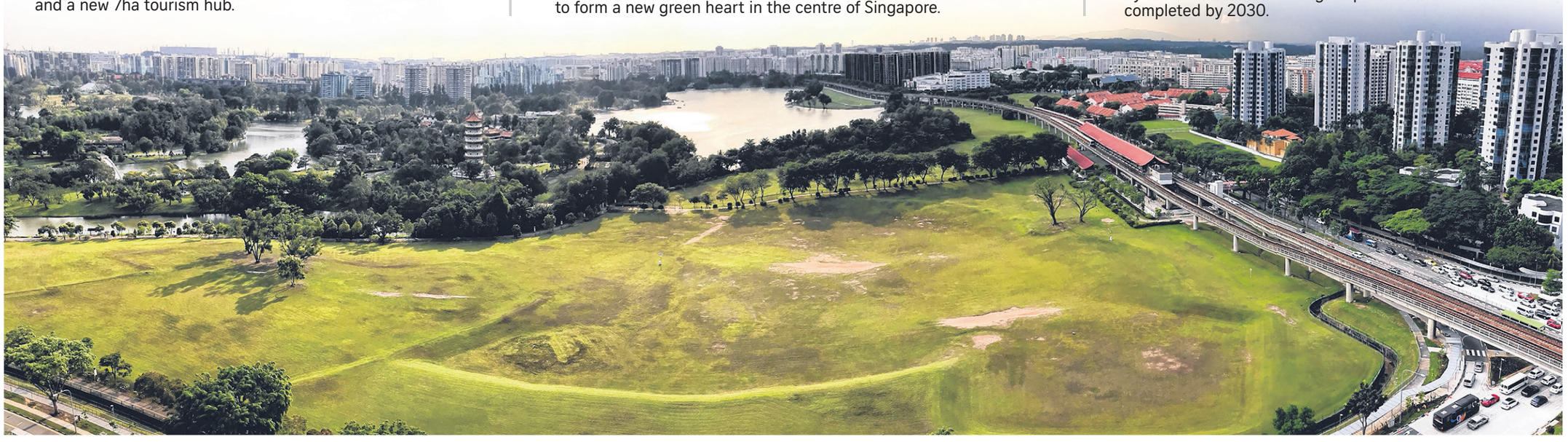
First mentioned in part in NDR 2013, the project will see developments along 30km of the southern coastline, covering 2,000ha of land. Some 9,000 housing units, including HDB and private housing, will be built on the land to be vacated by Keppel Club. There are also plans to build more office spaces, redevelop Pulau Brani, and revitalise Sentosa's beaches. When complete, the Greater Southern Waterfront will be connected to surrounding green areas, from West Coast Park to East Coast Park and the Rail Corridor, to form a new green heart in the centre of Singapore.

Redevelopment of Paya Lebar Air Base

In 2013, PM Lee first announced plans to move Paya Lebar Air Base to a new air force base when its lease expires in 2030. This will free up land and remove height restrictions around Paya Lebar, paving the way for the development of new homes, offices, factories and parks in eastern Singapore.

Jewel at Changi and Changi Airport Terminal 5

Jewel and Terminal 5 were both mentioned in NDR 2013. The attraction, codenamed "Project Jewel", opened in April this year. T5 will be "a whole airport by itself" and double Changi Airport's area when it is completed by 2030.



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Singapore, a city of layers built by multiple generations: PM Lee

Successive generations will have space to fill their hopes and dreams

Tham Yuen-C
Senior Political Correspondent

Hundreds of years ago, an ancient earth wall, a defensive line, used to stand where Stamford Road now runs, from Fort Canning all the way to the Padang. Alongside the wall was a stream that became the Stamford Canal of today.

Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong cited these faint traces of ancient Singapore to show that the country today comprises multiple layers and imprints of different eras, with each generation building on the work of their predecessors.

The Greater Southern Waterfront, comprising 30km of coastline from Gardens by the Bay East to Pasir Panjang, will add yet more layers to the city, he said, as he pledged to pass on a better Singapore to future generations.

In a National Day Rally speech yesterday delving deep into history in Singapore's bicentennial year, PM Lee recounted how the different communities here had come from different lands over centuries, bringing with them their identities, cultures and beliefs, and their hopes, passions and aspirations.

Touching on the topic first in his Malay speech and later in his Chinese and English speeches, he said 1819 was a turning point in Singapore's history.

After Sir Stamford Raffles arrived that year to establish a free port here, immigrants from South-east Asia, India and China followed to seek their fortunes here, he added.

The Malays, for instance, came in large numbers from around the region while Arabs came from Yemen and others arrived from India. He said their cultural and historical ties had helped to foster understanding with neighbouring countries, while their influence on society helped shape Singapore's national identity as a multiracial country.

In the process, he added, Malays have developed their own unique identity. The story is similar for the Chinese, Indians and Eurasians, who had come here as sojourners but eventually sank roots and developed their own distinct identities, he said.

"Slowly, we wove these strands together to become Singaporeans and to build today's Singapore," he added. "And the layout and the architecture of our city reflect this richness and complexity."

For instance, parts of the civic and central business districts are laid out in line with the first town plan drawn up some 200 years ago.

Noting that many colonial buildings from that time have been restored and re-purposed, PM Lee said it is through this process of building and rebuilding that each new generation will leave their mark on Singapore as their predecessors have done.

The new downtown in Marina Bay, for instance, has created a distinctive city skyline, while Jewel at Changi Airport has given Singapore a new gateway to the world.

"What we talk about, this Government, we will deliver," he said to applause.

Meanwhile, he added, the planned move of Tanjong Pagar port to Tuas will once again provide a "blank slate" for a new generation to build part of their vision for Singapore.

He listed other major projects unveiled at National Day Rallies over the years, which he said were progressively taking shape but "will not be done in a decade, or even in one generation".

These include the Punggol Digital District, Jurong Lake District, Changi Terminal 5, redevelopment of Paya Lebar Air Base, Tuas Port and the Greater Southern Waterfront. "There will be space for successive generations to fill with their hopes and dreams," he said.

Tracing some of the key developments across 200 years in all three of his speeches, PM Lee also noted that many have marked the Bicentennial in their own ways. These events include the Eurasian Festival to mark 100 years of the Eurasian Association, events in heartland areas like Jalan Kayu, the National Day Parade and The Bicentennial Experience show at Fort Canning.

The exhibition, originally slated to close after the September school holidays, will be extended to the end of the year, PM Lee said.

"All these activities help us trace our long history and appreciate the broader context that has shaped and created modern Singapore."

Wrapping up his speech, PM Lee said that Singapore's progress depends on Singaporeans remaining united and having an honest and capable government "working together with you, for you, for Singapore".

"The next few years will be demanding. We have to hand over smoothly to a new generation of leaders and continue to strive to realise our ambitions," he added.

Calling on Singaporeans to work together with his team, he said: "My team will work with you to build this jewel of a nation, so that Singapore will always be a vibrant, thriving city where opportunities are open to all, and our children and their children will have a bright future. Let us strive together to create this future. Let us unite as one nation to build tomorrow's Singapore."

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LAYERS OF RICH HISTORY

Our city today comprises multiple layers and the imprints of different eras. The Greater Southern Waterfront will add yet more layers to the city. Over the centuries, people have come to Singapore from different lands, bringing with them their identities, cultures and beliefs, their hopes and dreams, their passions and aspirations. Slowly, we wove these strands together to become Singaporeans and to build today's Singapore. And the layout and the architecture of our city reflect this richness and complexity.

PRIME MINISTER LEE HSIEN LOONG

UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCE

Hundreds and thousands of us have visited The Bicentennial Experience at Fort Canning. The vivid re-enactments brought our rich and complex history to life, and reminded us why we are proud to be Singaporean. We had planned to close the show after the September school holidays. But we've received so many requests to extend it. So we've decided to extend The Bicentennial Experience to the end of the bicentennial year. And I hope you will go and see it if you haven't done so already. It's well worth it and you won't forget the experience.

PM LEE, on extending The Bicentennial Experience show.