WHAT SM GOH SAID

1. The Government is ready to help during bad times. The Budget next year would also seek to help Singaporeans & businesses.

2. Singaporeans should stick together to overcome bad times, as in past crises like the 1997 Asian financial crisis and the Sars outbreak in 2003.

3. Singaporeans should take heart that the country’s economic base remains strong. Possible recession, but we will emerge stronger.

Academic, MPs describe his words as:

Timely message of HOPE

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On Saturday, Senior Minister Goh Chok Tong reassured Singaporeans that the Government would help to see them through the tough times ahead. Yesterday, political observers and Members of Parliament welcomed his assurance, saying it was a timely reminder to Singaporeans.

SM Goh was speaking at a Hari Raya dinner for about 1,000 residents of Marina Parade GRC on Saturday. He pointed out that OCBC Bank recently released a report rating Singapore as the best-equipped among 50 economies to overcome a serious economic crisis.

He said: “The message must be given, so that people don’t just listen to rumors. This is not the first time we have gone through a crisis, and there is strength and resilience in us. The Government is showing it has the will and commitment to respond.”

“Protects image”

The message of confidence was also important, Prof Ngiam pointed out, as it would prevent the public image of home-grown institutions and banks from being badly affected.

He said a quick response and a forward vision was a good strategy, similar to how the Government has dealt with previous crises.

Political observer and businessman Zulfiqar Ali Bishan, 46, agreed, but pointed out that Singapore’s open economy would inevitably be affected by the global storm.

Therefore, he noted that while the Government should do all it can, Singaporeans also have to be realistic.

He added: “At the end of the day, if the recession is prolonged, the Government has to ensure that we have enough resources to help the old, unemployed and the vulnerable to tide over the hard times.”

Mr Ong Kian Min, 46, MP for Tampines GRC felt that the Government is right in reminding Singaporeans of the previous crises they’ve been through.

He said: “The message will help to remind people that we’ve gone through this before, we have to rally to be strong, we have good reserves and good growth momentum.”

“…”

“…”

CALL FOR UNITY: Senior Minister Goh Chok Tong at the Marine Parade GRC dinner on Saturday where he made the three points.

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