Singapore wants text from youth
Correspondents in Singapore
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SINGAPORE'S new cabinet has asked young people to send their views on the country's long-term future by mobile text message and other high-tech means, a report said. The invitation comes after new Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong promised in his inaugural address on Thursday to create a more "open and inclusive Singapore".

Singaporeans born from 1965 - the year the country became independent from the Malaysian federation - will be asked to give their opinions by phone, fax, email or SMS, the Sunday Times reported.

"We want young Singaporeans to organise, to act on their beliefs, to do something about it with their friends, communities, organisations, societies," Acting Minister for Community Development, Youth and Sports Vivian Balakrishnan said.

Mr Lee has vowed to continue predecessor Goh Chok Tong's policy of opening up Singapore, which is admired widely for its order and affluence but often criticised for rigid social and political controls.

"Our people should feel free to express diverse views, pursue unconventional ideas or simply be different," he said after his swearing-in.

During the inauguration ceremony, President S.R. Nathan urged Lee and the government to engage younger Singaporeans on external and domestic issue and to "adapt their style to stay in tune with the times".

Officials say that unlike their parents who are more concerned with the economy and social stability, younger Singaporeans want a less restricted and more vibrant living environment.

"They are well travelled, well informed and exposed to a globalised world through mass media and the internet," Home Affairs Minister Wong Kan Seng said recently.

More than half of Singapore's resident population of 3.4 million was born after 1965.

Agence France-Presse

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