SINGAPORE: An MP and youths have welcomed Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong's announcement that there will be more young PAP candidates for the upcoming General Election - with perhaps some below 30 years old.

They say it is a step in the right direction to have young voices in Parliament.

Pasir Ris-Punggol GRC MP Penny Low was 33 years old when she was sworn in as a Member of Parliament five years ago, making her one of the youngest then.

But things look set to change.

Mr Lee hinted the People's Action Party will introduce more young candidates this time round, with some even under 30.

But are they up to the job?

Ms Low says: "We must give people a chance to prove themselves - if they are under 30 but have good experience in life, good perspective on what's wanted by the segment under 30, how they view things, issues, the world - that ought to be represented as well.

"If we look at our parliament today we are not lacking in the more mature group of people but quite lacking in the younger group of people so I think it is important to balance the entire composition of parliament."

Most youths say the move to bring in younger candidates is a timely one - to ensure parliamentarians stay in touch with the younger electorate, especially with many more first-time young voters expected this time round, compared to the previous election in 2001.

Mr Yam Yujian, a 23-year-old student, says: "Currently, a lot of young people are not interested in politics and this is not the way to go."

"If we have more and more younger people coming in to join politics and Parliament, it may encourage more young people to join politics and I think that's the way to go."

Mr Ngiang Boon Loong, a 24-year-old student, says: "I am more concerned about whether these young MPs are committed and driven to represent the social segment they belong to, and I presume younger MPs have more energy to engage the younger generation and go out there to meet them and I am definitely excited about that."

But Ms Low say the young faces should represent the people at large and not just the youth.

She says: "I don't think the younger people who come in should only represent youthful perspective or youthful aspirations. I think they must remember that when elected as Members of Parliament, we are representing an entire constituency made up of the advantaged, disadvantaged, able, less able, women, men, young, old and a whole spectrum."

The PAP candidates are expected to be unveiled within a week or two. - CNA/de