

**[TRANSCRIPT] OPENING ADDRESS BY MINISTER EDWIN TONG, DEPUTY
CHAIRMAN OF THE PEOPLE'S ASSOCIATION
PA COMMUNITY SEMINAR 2026 ON 10 OCTOBER 2026 AT
OUR TAMPINES HUB, COMMUNITY AUDITORIUM**

1. Good morning, everyone. Welcome to PA Community Seminar.
2. Before I start, I want to say good morning to Deputy Prime Minister Gan, and all our Grassroots Advisers, our PA Board Members; I want to give a special shout out to two new PA Board Members – Siti Nurbaya, Chief Commissioner of Girl Guides, and Ms Angelina Fernandez, President of the Eurasian Association. It's their first Community Seminar as board members, we welcome you warmly; To our Grassroots Leaders from across all our divisions, our Grassroots Mentors who are here this morning, our CDC Councillors, partners, our corporate partners; And to colleagues from the various government agencies and friends of PA.
3. We usually discuss policy topics or quite serious issues at Community Seminar. This year is also a serious issue, but we decided to make it a little bit more practical and more fun, so you can see we have a Tech Marketplace to show you some of the things that we are thinking of adopting in time to come.
4. We are also going to be showing you, in a few moments, some of the things that we have done at PA, both for Grassroots Leaders, our staff, and also for our residents. I will showcase a few things. The reason we do this is because, AI is everywhere. In fact, if you do not jump onto the train soon enough, you might be left behind.

5. I will remind us all that we are all part of the People's Association. Our organisation is about building communities, building trust, making our community cohesive, and retaining that special multicultural, diverse, but yet harmonious quality that we have amongst us.
6. Whilst AI is important, we must never forget that we are, at the end of the day, in a very strong people business. We build trust, we hold hands and we touch hearts. It's important that we always remember that with AI it helps us in what we do, but we must always remember that it is about building the personal connection that matters the most.
7. Now, before I carry on, I will play a short video on why AI is so important and why we've decided to devote this year's Community Seminar to talking about AI and technology. Let's listen to this 60 second video.

[Video]

8. “Thrive in the environment,” that is the key, and this morning what we are going to be doing is to spend about ten, fifteen minutes outlining some of the innovations that we have, share them with you, which you will see at the marketplace in person.
9. You will also hear from a couple of key speakers.
 - (a) Mr Lim Him Chuan, Singapore Country Head and Group Executive of DBS Bank.
 - (b) Mr Justin Lee, Chief Product Officer of ShopBack.

(c) And Mr Hubert Ng, Founder of BertyVerse.

10. They will join me later on stage to do a Reverse Podcast.
11. When we devise our technology, one of the most important driving principles for us at PA is to make sure that we do not adopt tech for tech's sake. And we do not just have the nicest and newest and most high-tech apps or equipment or processors, but we make sure it works for the purpose for which we exist. How do we serve residents better? How do we allow them to interact with us better? How do we make the lives of the Grassroots Leaders who constantly get involved with things like procurement and quotes and claims? How do we ease the process? Why do we do all this? So that we can free up more of your time to do the most important parts that I told you earlier. Hold hands and touch hearts.
12. This morning I will share a few of what we have introduced, with you. Let me start with what we are prototyping, which is an AI voice assistant for OnePA. We are calling it PA and Me, in short "Pam".
13. Pam will be the first of its kind across government in using agentic AI capabilities to provide seamless end-to-end experience. No need to browse and search through the different tabs on the website. This is a tool that we designed to help you find the relevant courses, or activities, or events that might be near you, that is across at different CCs, and once you found it, it will make a booking for you and eventually it will make a payment for you. And the best part is, you can do this without using your hands. Let me show you a demo.

[Video]

14. This will go live by the start of next year, early 2027. It will be live on our OnePA website. You can book facilities, whether it is pickleball court, cooking classes, or dance classes at the CCs. We will be able to introduce this in a very seamless fashion, allowing residents to focus on the activity rather than to browse the Internet. So, look out for this feature.
15. The second thing I want to tell you about is robots. How much more we can use robots for us, moving beyond repetitive tasks to working alongside us, helping us in our daily activities, helping our staff to give information to residents, and doing things that we might have thought was impossible in the past.
16. Again, I've got a video, because a video tells you much more than I can. I will use a video to explain to you what this robot can do.

[Video]

17. We will integrate the different kinds of technology. What I showed you earlier, put into the robot as well, so you can also make bookings, find out information, and speak in different languages. I think that's the real challenge in some cases for our frontline staff.

18. We intend to roll this out as a pilot, so that we can get some learning from it and we can improve. I brought the robot here today to introduce the robot to you. By the way, the robot is called Jeanie.
19. Good morning, Jeanie. How are you this morning?
20. *Robot: Hi, I'm Jeanie. I can't wait to meet everyone soon.*
21. *Robot: Hi DPM. I'm happy to tell you that we will be launching the pilot in Punggol. See you at Punggol Digital District early 2027.*
22. Okay, thanks, Jeanie. Bye.
23. *Robot: Bye bye.*
24. So DPM, you will have a new resident in Punggol soon. We will trial this in Punggol Digital District, get DPM and his Grassroots Leaders to give us ideas how we can improve it, and once we fine tune it, we will roll it out across to all the various divisions.
25. Third, let me talk to you a little bit about the Neighbourhood Kakis. It is basically Neighbourhood Kakis tasks that our seniors living in the estates, they can sign up for activities that they can take part in, and they get a small token as a remuneration for what they do. It helps us keep our seniors active. It helps keep them connected to the community, and I think they can play a part in doing and performing simple tasks around the neighbourhood.

26. Now, we have a PA Community App. You can sign-in through SingPass, and it will link you to events and programmes around your estate, around where you live. It will also show your opportunities to volunteer around the neighbourhood and your estate, especially for our seniors. So you can browse through the task very easily. You can then maybe settle on something, on a time, and then book it through the app entirely. It is already live on the PA Community App.
27. Next, for some of our residents, AI is a very high bar. It is very hard to even scan your CDC vouchers. A lot of them still come to our CCs to come and print the CDC vouchers. So, we are doing what we can to try and bring the barrier lower, try and facilitate access to AI for many of our residents. And of course, if you paid attention to our Chairman, PM Lawrence Wong's speech, which he made at Budget this year. He had a very strong focus on AI, and I want to remind you what he said.

[Video]

28. And so today, we want to talk about that right support. Remember what PM said – it is not just about using ChatGPT, or DeepSeek, or Gemini, but it's about how you can use it to integrate it into your workflow, your tasks, and understanding it and breaking down the barriers. It can be in simple bite-sized modules. It needs to focus on being usable, easy to use. It's got to be relevant to what we do, and I think in many ways it's got to be good, cheap, and fast.

29. Let me explain. We are going to launch AI @ Your Neighbourhood. You will again see that at the marketplace when you go and tour it. What does AI @ Your Neighbourhood do? It brings simple bite-sized, AI-related, and AI relevant courses right to your doorstep, right to your neighbourhood.
30. These will be bite-sized, practical, easy to learn AI courses where our residents can use AI to do simple things for those who are just getting into it. How to plan your holiday, how to enhance a photograph, how to make posters, how to create your own AI video, to more advanced steps for those who are able to master the more basic steps.
31. What is important is that we are doing this with very serious partners. We are going to work with these partners, AI Singapore, Micron, NTUC Learning Hub, SUSS, Tata, and Zero Gravity, as our partners for running the AI @ Your Neighbourhood courses right in our neighbourhoods.
32. Second, we intend to keep these courses cheap and affordable, and it is possible because of the generosity of many of our partners. Some of them do it pro bono for us. Some of them work with us to do it at a lower cost, so that we can break the barrier to entry. We will do it at \$10 per course which is very accessible. In order to promote it even more, for the first year after we announce it, all residents who sign up will enjoy a further 30 percent discount. So, \$7 for the first year, and our aim is to ensure that this is rolled out to as many of our residents as possible.
33. So for those who are volunteering in our grassroots, especially the CCMCs, please support your CCs, because there will be demand. There will be residents who come to your CCs to look for these courses. Help them to

navigate that, sign up, promote the courses, and encourage your residents to sign up.

34. Our Grassroots Leaders, all of you can avail yourself of these courses as well. They will be equally applicable to you. But there will also be certain segments of what you do that will be specialised. For that we have asked NACLI to run a series of specialised courses for Grassroots Leaders, tailored to the kind of work that you do, and the kind of facilities that you might come across, and maybe some of the tasks that you might have to discharge as you organise and run events. We will have NACLI roll this out, how AI can be applied to specific things that you do in your daily work on the ground. There will be hands-on workshop, for example, teaching you how to prompt better, what is the capability of the AI model, and also how to generate content for your programmes.
35. Next, I mentioned just now that sometimes getting quotes, procurement can be a chore, and it can be very tedious, and it does take away the attention of not only our staff, but also our Grassroots Leaders from spending time interfacing with our residents. So, we look at how AI can serve us better in this space.
36. Typically, when you go to an event or you do house visits, or you go and do a dialogue, what happens is you collect notes and feedback on municipal issues. You will have to manually take notes and organise it. So, what we have done is work with our engineers and look at how we can introduce a number of different features in the PA Staff Portal.

37. First will be an AI-assisted voice-to-text function. Whether you do house visits, dialogue, market visits, or you simply have someone who gives you feedback via email, you just have to pick up the app, speak into it, and it will automatically transcribe.
38. Second innovation is on how we organise events. I know we spend a lot of time on two very important tools, Grassroots E-Mart System (GEMS) and Grassroots Financial Accounting System (G-FAST), finding vendors, getting three codes, then doing the important paperwork. We will find ways to make sure that this is something that the new model of GEMS and G-FAST can sort out better. And that is not even counting the time, after you've done the event and people have all gone home, and you have claims and invoices. What we are doing is trialling a system with an AI assistant in both GEMS as well as G-FAST to allow us to do it in plain English, and with a system that helps us to predict what we need and to organise information into a form that we can file away.
39. So, let me give you an example. Halloween is coming up. Many of you will be organising Halloween, right? You can go into the system and speak to it in plain English what you need to organise a Halloween event. It will then give you some suggestions on what you need. If you're a first timer, this will be quite useful. If you are seasoned, you can bypass it or you can use it for suggestions or ideas. Choose it, tap on it, and then decide what you need.
40. It can prepare the first draft of the Invitation to Quote (ITQ) and Invitation to Tender (ITT) automatically, based on what you have chosen, based on your needs, the timeframe, and so on, it will fill up the ITT and the ITQ,

and your first draft of the specifications is ready. And the event approval can then be submitted. So, very quick, painless, and as seamless as possible. Still some work to be done, but a lot less.

41. And then after the event, when you decide you need to start making claims when your invoices start coming in, this system will be able to allow you to simply take a photograph of the invoice, capture it, and the G-FAST AI assistant will then automatically translate the invoice into a payment form, that will be in a form that can be recognised by the system, and then it can be submitted into the system for payment. So again, as painless as possible, as hurdle-free as possible, to allow you to focus on what matters more, time to interact with the residents, time to spend holding hands and touching hearts of your residents.
42. So, these are just some examples of what we have been able to do. Along the way as we take feedback from our staff from our Grassroots Leaders, we will begin to introduce more innovations into the system. But since G-FAST and GEMS has constantly been on top of the list when it comes to feedback about processes and procurement, we decided to start with it. But we are happy to take ideas along the way, if you think that we can do more through AI, please share them with us.
43. These are some of the things that we are thinking of, or which we have done. Check out the marketplace for some other ideas that we are thinking about. They include products and items and innovations from our partners that we are thinking of working with, and we are trialling some of them as well in some of the locations that are relevant for these items.

44. I want to go back to speak about what is important for us at the end of the day. Remember that all of these tools, in as much as we step up on our technology, we do a lot more, we use a lot more AI, it is really to free up the human time for something that is most important, the human instinct, the ability to connect with our residents emotionally, the way in which we can help them, even if AI might be available.
45. The role that Grassroots Leaders and staff of PA have to play is about building human capital and connection. So, people at the centre of what we do, and I just leave you with one final quote from Microsoft about why humanity and human control is still the most important behind all that we do, and particularly for People's Association, a very people-centred, people-oriented organisation. It is the experience of all of you and the interaction of all of you on the ground, in multiple ways, in all our divisions, that matters the most.
46. As I wrap up, we will have Him Chuan on stage to share with us his observations from a DBS perspective. We will then have our Reverse Podcasters on stage. After that, please do check out the Tech Marketplace where you will see a list of potential innovations that we can introduce, and if that gives you ideas on how we can implement them in your own constituencies, please share them with us.
47. Thank you very much for being here, I want to thank all of you for taking time on a Saturday morning. It shows that we are invested in not just AI, but in the progress of what we do as a mission, as an organisation at PA. I thank all of you very much for your cooperation and for constantly giving your all, day in day out, week in week out, every block, every unit, every

household, every family member. I think it is the value of PA, and it is really the true secret sauce behind the success of Singapore's social cohesion, harmony, and long may this continue. I thank all of you for all these efforts. Thank you very much.
