



Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong speaking to national swimmers Joseph Schooling and Quah Zheng Wen in Parliament. PHOTOS: LEE HSIEN LOONG/FACEBOOK

Yip Pin Xiu is first to receive Inspiring Achievement award

Paralympic gold medallist hopes S'poreans can be 'best version' of themselves

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Five-time Paralympic gold medalist Yip Pin Xiu hopes a new President's Award for Inspiring Achievement can spur Singaporeans on to be the "best version" of themselves.

Ms Yip, 29, was yesterday named the inaugural recipient of the award, which will recognise Singaporeans who have overcome personal adversity and led inspiring lives through achievements and contributions to society.

Minister for Culture, Community and Youth Edwin Tong announced in Parliament that a proposal was made to create the award, which President Halimah Yacob has agreed to. It will sit alongside the other awards which are presented by the President.

On being its first recipient, Ms Yip, who was in attendance in Par-

liament yesterday along with 21 other Team Singapore athletes, said she was "extremely honoured". The athletes, who were recognised in Parliament for their efforts at the Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics, met with several Cabinet ministers including Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong.

"What I hope is... for all Singaporeans to push themselves beyond what is expected of them," said Ms Yip.

"Singapore is a country that is small but very powerful and I think Singaporeans have the attitude and the spirit... (to) push beyond the limits of their fields, and be the best version of themselves."

The para-swimmer is best known among Singaporeans for her achievements in her sport. She won five gold medals in three Paralympic Games over 13 years, most recently with two wins at the Tokyo Games in August. Mr Tong, however, noted that she has made



Top: National sailors Cecilia Low, Kimberly Lim and Amanda Ng chatting with PM Lee and Speaker of Parliament Tan Chuan-Jin.

Above: PM Lee with Paralympic archer Nur Syahidah Alim.

"extensive contributions" to the nation outside the pool as well.

She served as a Nominated Member of Parliament (NMP) from 2018 to last year, when she advocated on issues such as sports and inclusion, and spoke out against campus sexual violence and workplace harassment. She continues to impact the lives of many by serving in various organisations, including non-sporting ones.

Highlighting that the new award has a "high qualifying criteria", Mr

Tong said: "Pin Xiu has demonstrated these exceptional qualities. She has stared adversity in its face and overcome it, time and time again. She is truly an inspiration to Singaporeans, and it is only appropriate that she will now become the inaugural recipient of this award."

NMP Mark Chay, who is also Ms Yip's coach, said she was "extremely deserving" of the prize.

"It means we understand we have someone who is quite extraor-

PROUD OF ATHLETES

Proud of all our Team Singapore Olympians and Paralympians for flying our flag high at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics and Paralympic Games.

Today, Parliament passed a motion to congratulate and honour them for their achievements in Tokyo, in particular Yip Pin Xiu, our five-time Paralympic gold medallist.

The experience in Tokyo has enriched our athletes – 21 of whom were debutants. They have come back with five national records, seven personal bests and four best-ever performances.

To be able to compete among the world's best is no mean feat. It requires mental strength, hard work and grit, skills and talent. The pandemic made it even more challenging.

Our athletes adapted, persevered, and gave their best for Singapore. They have shown us that dreams are worth striving for.



PM LEE HSIEN LOONG, on Facebook.

dinary who is using her identity and platform to shed light on social issues to make society more inclusive, and help Singapore be a better version of ourselves," he said.

Singapore National Paralympic Council president Teo-Koh Sock Miang said: "Pin Xiu is a very fitting first recipient... and I hope this award will motivate any Singaporean to go to their maximum potential, and to do good."

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