



The Sept 21 event is the brainchild of environmental studies student Lad Komal Bhupendra (standing, in red), 19. Her co-organisers include (clockwise from far left) Ms Annika Mock, 20; Mr Aidan Mock, 24; Ms Tan Heng Yeng, 23; Mr Elwin Lim, 24; Mr Kristian-Marc Paul, 25; Ms Jay Wong, 20; and Mr Benedict Tan, 24. Mr Paul is a programme coordinator, while Ms Tan develops and executes arts programmes. The others are students. ST PHOTO: KHALID BABA

Young activists planning 'green dot' gathering on Sept 21

Singapore Climate Rally linked to global youth movement inspired by Swedish teen Greta Thunberg

Audrey Tan
Environment Correspondent

A "green dot" rally is being planned for next month at Hong Lim Park.

About 15 young activists in Singapore are organising a climate action rally on Sept 21, in line with the global Fridays for Future movement inspired by Swedish teen climate champion Greta Thunberg.

Next month's event, the Singapore Climate Rally, will be the first physical one in the Republic since the international movement began in August last year, although there have been other social-media climate campaigns here.

A permit for the event has been sought by the young organisers and approved by the National Parks Board, which manages Hong Lim Park – an area designated as Speakers' Corner where public protests are allowed. The organisers are also applying for a police permit.

The event will feature speeches, a picnic and a postcard-writing session in which participants will be encouraged to send notes urging stronger climate action to their representatives in Parliament and other government officials.

There will also be a "die-in", a photographic opportunity in which participants are encouraged to visually express their thoughts on the human lives and biodiversity that will be lost to unabated global warming. Attendees will be asked to form the shape of a spiral, and then gradually collapse inward domino-style to highlight the interconnectedness of the planet, organisers say.

The event is the brainchild of Year 2 National University of Singa-

Student activists fired up over climate change

AUGUST 2018

Swedish teenage activist Greta Thunberg, then 15, goes on the first solo school strike for climate action. She refuses to go to school in a bid to pressure her government into taking more drastic climate action. After skipping classes five days a week, she starts missing classes only on Fridays to sit on the steps of Sweden's Parliament. Her actions kick-start the global Fridays for Future movement, inspiring youth in other cities to do the same.

AUGUST TO DECEMBER 2018

Greta's actions inspire more than 20,000 other students around the world, in countries such as Australia and Belgium, to do the same.

DEC 8, 2018

Just before the final week of the United Nations (UN) climate change conference – or COP24 – begins in the Polish city of Katowice, Greta joins thousands of people of all ages and nationalities,

carrying banners and signs in a climate march near the conference venue.

MARCH 15, 2019

The first coordinated global school strike for climate is held. In more than 2,000 cities and towns across dozens of countries, the message is clear: climate change is a crisis and needs to be treated as such. In Singapore, the protest takes place online with the hashtags #climate-strike and #climateactionsg.

SEPT 21, 2019:

The first Singapore Climate Rally will be held at Hong Lim Park, in line with the "global week for future" movement.

SEPTEMBER TO DECEMBER 2019

Greta is due to attend the United Nations climate summits in New York in the United States and Chile. To reduce emissions from flying, she will be sailing across the Atlantic in a yacht, the Guardian reported.

pore (NUS) student Lad Komal Bhupendra. The 19-year-old environmental studies student told *The Straits Times* she had been alarmed by recent headlines on heatwaves, wildfires and the melting of ice occurring worldwide.

"All these could happen more frequently with climate change," she said. "Yet I feel that there is not enough done to address the climate crisis in Singapore. So I decided to bring people together to create this event to show the Government there are people here who care and want bolder climate action."

The global youth movement was

kick-started when Greta, now 16, went on the first solo climate strike last August, skipping school in a bid to pressure the Swedish government into taking more drastic climate action.

Since then, many young people have been inspired to do the same, missing classes on a Friday in protest against what they consider climate inaction.

The first #FridaysforFuture coordinated global school strike was held on March 15. Estimates by international climate organisation 350.org said more than one million young people took part.

In Singapore, the March protest took place on social media, with people sharing their thoughts on what policies and businesses should do to address climate change with the hashtags #climate-strike and #climateactionsg.

The next coordinated "global week for future" is being planned for the week of Sept 20 to 27 – the week of the United Nations climate summit on Sept 23. The Sept 21 event in Singapore will be held on a Saturday, from 3.30pm to 6pm.

Ms Komal said she decided to organise a physical event because it would send a stronger signal. "It requires extra commitment for people to show up for a physical event," she said.

"And we hope that this would send a stronger signal to the authorities, to businesses and to the Singaporean public, that climate change is everyone's fight."

Speaking to *The Straits Times* at Hong Lim Park yesterday, the organisers emphasised that their aim is not to appear confrontational.

Instead, they want to show that there is ground-up support for a cause that affects all Singaporeans – whether in terms of food security, biodiversity loss, soaring temperatures or extreme weather events that are affecting the livelihoods of people here and in neighbouring countries.

Fellow organiser Annika Mock, 20, a Yale-NUS student, said: "By holding it on a Saturday, we hope many more Singaporeans can join us. We want to stand in solidarity with all in Singapore who care about the climate crisis, and recognise that this is a political issue."

audreyt@sph.com.sg

• Updates on the Singapore Climate Rally can be found on @sgclimaterally on Instagram and on Facebook. Those interested can also subscribe to the SG Climate Rally channel on messaging application Telegram.

SEEKING BOLDER ACTION

I feel that there is not enough done to address the climate crisis in Singapore. So I decided to bring people together... to show the Government there are people here who care and want bolder climate action.



MS LAD KOMAL BHUPENDRA, an environmental studies student at the National University of Singapore, who is co-organising the event.

WHY A SATURDAY

By holding it on a Saturday, we hope many more Singaporeans can join us. We want to stand in solidarity with all in Singapore who care about the climate crisis, and recognise that this is a political issue.



MS ANNIKA MOCK, a student at Yale-NUS and fellow organiser of the rally.