

Life • Fresh 48 photo shoots growing in popularity | C1



World • Indonesia's tech start-ups feel the heat from foreign rivals | A8



Singapore • New shuttle bus service to improve connectivity in 3 constituencies | A14



THE STRAITS TIMES

Integrated Shield Plan lifetime premiums vary widely across insurers

MOH data shows significant differences, even for plans pegged to same ward class

Salma Khalik Senior Health Correspondent

Two people of the same age buying an Integrated Shield Plan (IP) for private hospital treatment can pay a difference of more than \$85,000 over their lifetimes – depending on which insurance company they are with.

An IP is optional health coverage provided by private insurance companies, typically to cover stays in A or BI-type wards in public hospitals or private hospitals. A total of 2.9 million people here, or more than 70 per cent, have signed up with one of seven insurers offering such coverage.

Data published for the first time by the Ministry of Health (MOH) shows that premiums can vary significantly, even for plans pegged to the same ward class, since both coverage and price are determined by the insurer.

MOH's website shows the premiums that people have to pay for IPs from the time of birth to the age of 100, based on rates in effect on April 1.

Buying the most expensive private hospital IP by AIA can set a person back by \$323,900, the bulk of which has to be paid in cash. In contrast, the three cheapest, by Raffles, HSBC and Income, cost between \$234,400 and \$238,400.

For public hospital IPs, the difference between the most expensive and the cheapest is more than \$50,000 for Class A coverage, and about \$35,000 for Class BI. Both are private wards.

Choosing one's IP wisely has

been a common refrain from MOH in the past few years, and publishing premiums makes it easier for people to make an informed choice.

Associate Professor Wee Hwee Lin, director of the Centre for Health Interventions and Policy Evaluation Research at the NUS Saw Swee Hock School of Public Health, applauded the ministry for making such information transparent.

She said: "This is clearly useful for people to review their existing insurance policies but with caveats. It is not possible for people with existing medical conditions to switch providers."

This is because most insurers will not provide full coverage to new policyholders who have pre-existing medical conditions.

Still, Prof Wee said the information on premiums can help younger people choose their insurer.

Her colleague, Dr Cynthia Chen, whose research areas include the economics of ageing and healthcare financing, said that when choosing an IP, "it helps to look at what they cover on top of MediShield Life for the increase in premium".

She added: "Consider the pricing of premium, insurance coverage, family health. Also, individual preference for hospital wards and financial risk. IPs provide greater financial protection should an adverse event occur, compared to MediShield Life."

But different insurers offer different coverage for the same medical problem.

CONTINUED ON PAGE A2

Ulu Pandan Park Connector • Fully open after 2022 landslide

Reconstruction work at the Ulu Pandan Park Connector in Clementi has been completed, and the facility is fully reopened. A landslide in September 2022 had piled soil onto the pathway and into the Sungei Ulu Pandan canal.

Besides restoring the damaged section, the HDB also strengthened the slopes on the western edge of the Clementi NorthArc Build-To-Order project.

SEE THE BIG STORY • A4

Biden-Trump debate • Chinese netizens mock event

Short videos have appeared on Chinese social media platforms such as Douyin, WeChat and Xiaohongshu, playing up the gaffes, bickering and physical attributes of US President Joe Biden

and Donald Trump during their presidential debate on June 27. Chinese media mocked the event, describing it as a "variety show".

SEE THE BIG STORY • A6

Double celebration for Gardens by the Bay



The Cloud Forest and Flower Dome, along with 18 Supertrees, were illuminated in red and white over the weekend to commemorate Gardens by the Bay being named the eighth-best attraction in the world, as part of travel site Tripadvisor's 2024 Travelers' Choice Awards Best of the Best. Traveller reviews for Gardens by the Bay called it "stunning" and "out of this world". The light-up also marked the Gardens' 12th birthday on June 29. ST PHOTO: BRIAN TEO

Revamp of sport centres, new Sengkang park among ideas to transform north-east region

Ng Keng Gene Correspondent

Yio Chu Kang Sport Centre could be redeveloped when the area around Yio Chu Kang MRT station is turned into a hub for sporting, wellness and healthcare facilities – a plan currently under study.

Plans to transform the area were showcased at a travelling exhibition at One Punggol detailing current and future recreational facilities and amenities for Singapore's north-east region, including a new park in Sengkang West.

Organised by the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA), the roving exhibition is part of the agency's public engagement for its upcoming Recreation Master Plan, which will be incorporated into the Draft Master Plan to be launched in 2025.

Yio Chu Kang Sport Centre, which was completed in the mid-1980s, houses a swimming complex, multipurpose sports hall, squash centre, tennis centre, gym, and a stadium with a running track and field.

In response to queries from The Straits Times, URA and Sport Singapore (SportSG) noted the centre's age and said the authorities are seeking public feedback on ways to refresh facilities in the area to "meet the evolving needs and aspirations of the community".

Plans exhibited showed that the area bounded by the upcoming North-South Corridor, Ang Mo Kio Avenue 8 and the MRT viaduct could be used for "community nodes", while the space currently occupied by the sport centre could house sports, wellness and healthcare facilities.

URA said in exhibition panels that bringing such facilities closer to communities in and around Yio Chu Kang would support active living and ageing in place.

URA also said dining and retail options could be added, which can be "seamlessly connected to the North-South Corridor and the larger commuting and recreational cycling routes within the north-east region".

URA and SportSG added that rejuvenation plans could improve the walking and cycling experience, especially for people travelling to the MRT station, Nanyang Polytechnic and Ang Mo Kio Industrial Park 3.

Dr Belinda Yuen, research director at the Lee Kuan Yew Centre for Innovative Cities at SUTD, said URA could involve residents in identifying health and well-being

Potential new developments

YIO CHU KANG



NOTE: For illustration only

SENGKANG WEST INDUSTRIAL ESTATE



Source: URBAN REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY PHOTOS: GOOGLE EARTH STRAITS TIMES GRAPHICS



Facilities at the Yio Chu Kang Sport Centre, which could be redeveloped under plans to refresh the area around Yio Chu Kang MRT station. ST PHOTO: ONG WEE JIN

goals for the neighbourhood and to co-design and co-create facilities that would meet their needs.

Mr Benedict Choong, 37, who has been playing squash at Yio Chu Kang Sport Centre since 2011, said he hopes that if redeveloped, the centre will have more comprehensive squash facilities such as doubles courts and glass courts.

Mr Choong said it would be a let-down if the courts are removed during any redevelopment, especially with renewed interest in the sport in Singapore.

He said the current courts are old but well maintained, but they do not fare well in inclement weather and get wet when it rains.

Users of the sport centre would benefit from the addition of retail and food and beverage outlets, he said, adding that sports shops could complement future facilities.

Also set to be improved is Serangoon Sport Centre, which opened in 1994 and has a swimming complex, a table tennis room and a stadium.

URA said in its exhibition that renovation plans for the centre are under study, and "could include facilities such as a gym, gym activity rooms, basketball courts and an accessible sheltered pool".

Meanwhile, a new park in Sengkang is in the works.

Set to encircle Sengkang West Industrial Estate – an area of about 140ha zoned for industrial use in URA's Master Plan 2008 – the proposed park will provide residents and future workers with more greenery and recreational options, said URA, the National Parks Board (NParks) and JTC Corporation in response to ST's queries.

Should the park be developed, it may become part of an upcoming nature corridor – a series of green spaces that facilitate wildlife connectivity – for the Seletar area, which was announced in June 2022.

Botanist Shawn Lum, a senior lecturer at NTU's Asian School of the Environment, suggested that a green belt should not be a periph-

RECREATION MASTER PLAN ROVING EXHIBITION STOPS

- Canberra Plaza (July 6 to 14)
- The URA Centre (July 18 to 27; closed on Sundays)

eral feature skirting the industrial estate, but instead, that green spaces could be planned alongside future developments in the area.

Assuming that the authorities have already set aside a fixed area for greenery around the estate, Dr Lum said planners could explore taking some space allotted to the perimeter park and using it instead to create habitat patches within the estate.

This could benefit species that do not require contiguous greenery to move around as they can use patches of vegetation as stepping stones, he said, adding that academics and NParks can model various configurations for green spaces, and arrive at the best outcome for human recreation and wildlife.

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SEE THE BIG STORY • A2

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New park connector to be built along Sungei Pandan

It will be linked to Old Jurong Line Nature Trail in future, says minister

Ng Keng Gene
Correspondent

Residents of Teban and Pandan Gardens can look forward to a new park connector stretch along Sungei Pandan, and a new pedestrian bridge across the river along the Ayer Rajah Expressway (AYE).

Slated to be completed by March 2025, the new bridge and park connector were among upcoming plans for the neighbourhoods that National Development Minister Desmond Lee shared with residents on June 30.

Speaking at a community event centred on eco-friendly practices at Ayer Rajah Community Club, Mr Lee said that the improvements will allow residents to complete a loop around a section of Sungei Pandan located between the AYE and Pandan Reservoir.

In the future, the park connector will be linked to the upcoming Old Jurong Line Nature Trail, which will run from Clementi Forest to the International Business Park just next to the river.

Plans displayed at the event showed that the new park connector will be about 570m long.



Minister for National Development Desmond Lee (left), fellow West Coast GRC MP Foo Mee Har (fourth from left) and residents showing off vegetables at the Ayer Raja-Gek Poh Eco Day event on June 30. ST PHOTO: SHINTARO TAY

As for the bridge, Mr Lee said the National Parks Board is repurposing for pedestrian use what was previously a bridge lined with cables that runs along the AYE, linking Jurong East to West Coast.

Other plans presented to residents on June 30 included upcoming MRT stations on the Jurong Region Line and the future Cross Island Line, as well as the possibility of realigning the AYE.

Noting that then Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong had broached the

possibility of the realignment at the National Day Rally in 2014, Mr Desmond Lee said that "agencies are currently studying various options, including how we can make it easier for residents to move between Teban Gardens and Jurong Lake District".

More details will be announced when they are ready, he said.

Mr Lee said that with the upcoming Jurong Region Line – slated to be ready in 2028 – residents in Ayer Rajah would be able to get to

Jurong East in about 10 minutes, half the time it currently takes.

He also mentioned the blocks selected for the Housing Board's Neighbourhood Renewal Programme, and improvement plans for 13 parks in Singapore's south-west.

Health coach Janson Lim, 49, a resident of Ayer Rajah for more than four decades, said he was excited by the extensions to the park connector network, where he goes cycling about once a week.



Source: NATIONAL PARKS BOARD STRAITS TIMES GRAPHICS

Park connectors are a space for him to unwind and relax, and where he can be more connected to nature through activities such as wildlife spotting, he added.

West Coast GRC MP Foo Mee Har, whose Ayer Rajah-Gek Poh ward includes Teban Gardens and Pandan Gardens, said residents have been forthcoming in giving feedback on the improvements they would like to see in the neighbourhoods.

Many of their suggestions have been implemented, she added.

She cited improvements to Pandan Reservoir, which she said was pitch dark at night more than a decade ago, but now has night lighting along the water's edge.

Pandan Gardens resident Regional Satha said he hopes that opportunities for outdoor recreation will be improved, as his young family – which includes his daughters aged seven and eight – enjoy spending time in nature.

Mr Satha, 40, would like to see more camping areas in West Coast Park, and for more public barbecue pits to be built there.

Ms Elsie Nee, 64, a Teban Gardens resident, said that while she sees value in improving the neighbourhoods, she hopes that their relative peace and tranquillity will not be lost amid new developments.

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Lowest premiums may not mean lowest coverage

FROM A1

Coverage for kidney dialysis for Class B1 plans, for example, ranges from \$24,000 a year to "as charged". Similarly, coverage for community hospital care, which is capped at 45 days per admission for some plans and 90 days for others, is up to \$450 a day with one insurer, \$1,000 a day with another, and "as charged" with a third.

Similarly, some private hospital IPs provide for critical illness and others do not, while Class A coverage for psychiatric treatment varies from \$4,500 to \$7,000 a year, to coverage for up to a certain number of days.

To confuse matters further, the lowest coverage may not come from the insurer charging the lowest premiums.

The only IPs where the coverage is identical across the board is the Standard IP for B1 wards, as the coverage is stipulated by MOH. In spite of that, the seven companies offering this charge different premiums, with more than \$22,000 difference between the most expensive and the cheapest, over a lifetime.

Prof Wee said choosing an IP boils down to personal preferences and how one wishes to allocate one's budget.

"Assuming that I am willing to put aside 10 per cent of my net income for healthcare, and assuming a median monthly salary of \$3,300, then annually, I am putting aside \$4,000, or \$180,000 over 45 years of working life," she explained. Given the calculations made by the MOH, at best, she will be able to afford a Class A IP.

The ministry has also shown the proportion of premium that can be paid by MediSave, and the amount that has to be paid in cash.

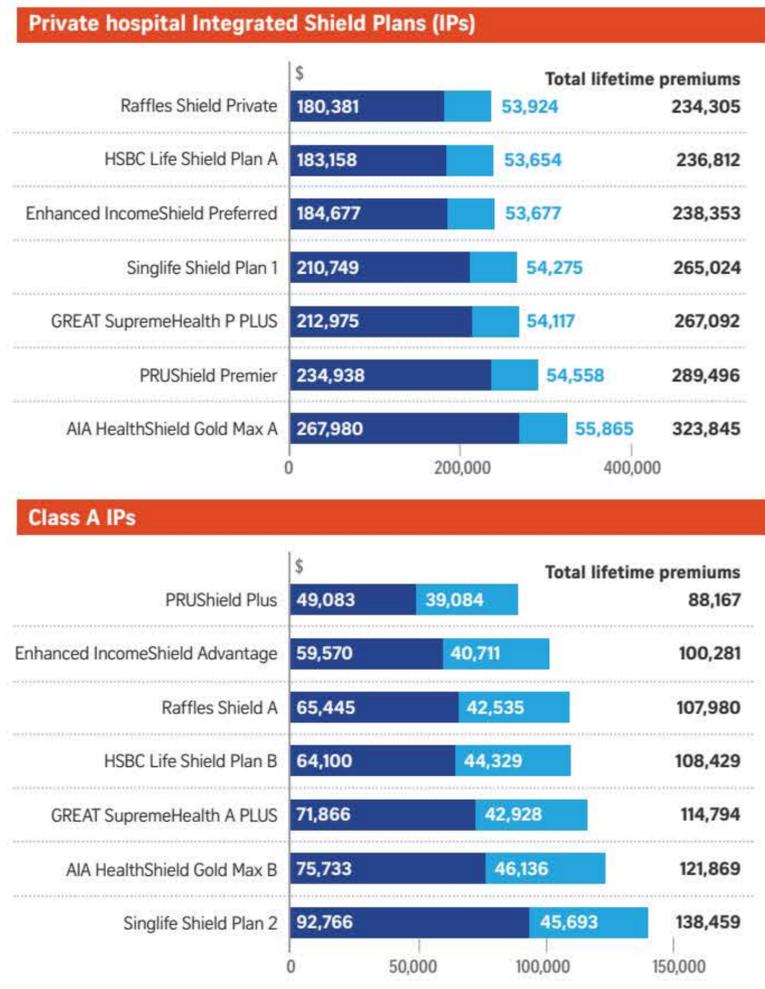
The lifetime cash outlay for the most expensive private hospital IP at today's rates exceeds \$260,000.

Dr Chen said people must expect the cost of healthcare to go up, and likewise, insurance premiums.

MOH's calculations do not take into account future premium increases that, historically, vary from insurer to insurer, and year to year.

In September 2022, Health Minister Ong Ye Kung said: "Private hospital IP premiums have already

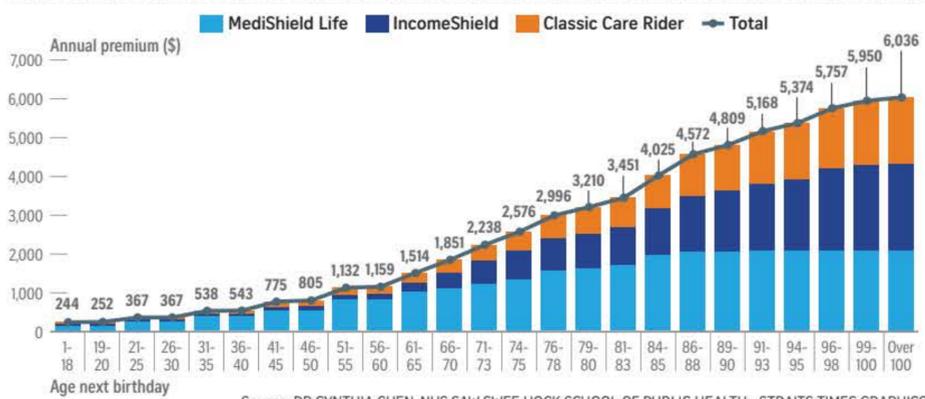
How much your IP will cost



NOTE: Lifetime premiums are based on amounts charged in April 2024, and payments are made from birth to 100 years old.

Source: MINISTRY OF HEALTH STRAITS TIMES GRAPHICS

Cost of IncomeShield Standard Plan and rider for Class B1



Source: DR CYNTHIA CHEN, NUS SAW SWEE HOCK SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH STRAITS TIMES GRAPHICS

gone up by around 20 per cent over the past few years. At this rate of increase, in five years' time, someone in their 50s will probably have to pay about \$300 more in annual premiums."

Such expected increases must also be considered when choosing the class of IP to purchase.

Furthermore, significant numbers of people pay for the highest possible coverage, but choose a lower class ward when they actually need medical care.

From 2020 to 2022, 57 per cent of patients with IPs chose subsidised wards when they were hospitalised, according to the Central Provident Fund Board. Among those with private hospital IPs, less than half actually sought treatment at a private hospital.

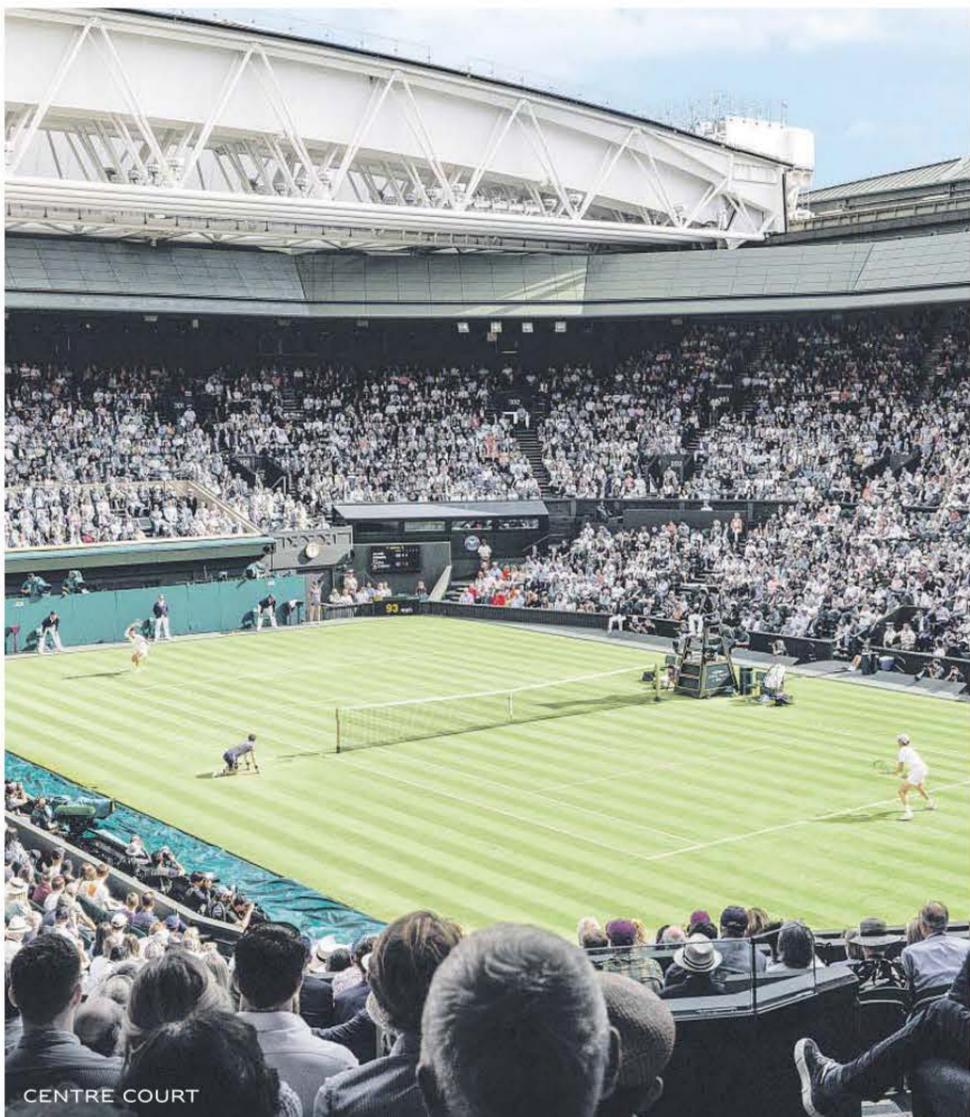
More than one million people here also have riders to complement their IPs. IPs can pay a maximum of 90 per cent of the bills. The

rest have to be paid using MediSave or cash. Having a rider can cap a patient's outlay to 5 per cent of the bill, up to a maximum of \$3,000 a year. Premiums for riders have to be paid in cash.

Prof Wee said that in choosing medical insurance, people should think of both affordability and the probability of their needing such coverage. They should also think of their desired comfort level and the trade-offs with reduced disposal income.

"For example, before getting a rider that covers cancer drugs not on the Cancer Drug List, think about the probability that you are going to need one of those drugs," she said, referring to how IP coverage is limited to drugs on MOH's list, but insurers are free to cover other cancer therapies with their riders.

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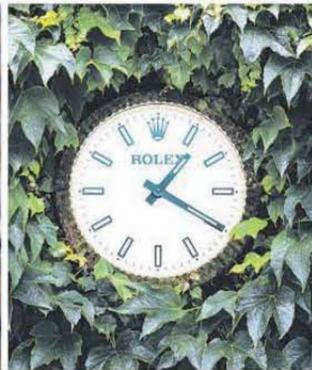
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The damaged section of the Ulu Pandan Park Connector after the landslide in September 2022. The incident occurred at the western edge of the Clementi NorthArc Build-To-Order project construction site. ST FILE PHOTO



The park connector reopened on June 30, after reconstruction works to restore the damaged section were completed and slopes on the western edge of Clementi NorthArc were strengthened. ST PHOTO: SHINTARO TAY

Ulu Pandan Park Connector in Clementi fully reopened following landslide in 2022

Facilities planned for the nearby Clementi NorthArc BTO project also completed

Osmond Chia

The Ulu Pandan Park Connector in Clementi was fully reopened on June 30 after a landslide that piled soil onto the pathway and into the canal in September 2022.

The Housing Board said on June 30 that it has finished reconstruction works to restore the damaged section of the park connector and strengthen the slopes on the western edge of the newly completed Clementi NorthArc Build-To-Order project, where nearly all the flats have been taken up.

HDB had reopened sections of the park connector in phases, with the final stretch initially due to be reopened in December 2023 before the date was pushed back.

Senior Minister of State for National Development Sim Ann, who visited the site and joined residents for a morning workout on June 30, told reporters the reopened area covers the final 150m of the affected bank.

Facilities that had been planned at Clementi NorthArc were also opened, including a sheltered pavilion, a playground, fitness stations and a ramp leading to the

park connector.

Ms Sim said the remaining precinct facilities for the project have been completed along with restoration and repair works.

"Our residents have been looking forward to being able to walk unimpeded along the Ulu Pandan Park Connector south bank, and now they can do so," she added.

HDB said 98 per cent of 1,179 units at the six-block NorthArc estate have been taken up, and nearly all the residents have collected the keys to their new homes.

Commenting on the delay, Ms Sim said bad weather slowed the restoration works.

HDB previously said the site experienced unusually heavy rain in the second quarter of 2023 and in late 2023, and that it needed to en-

sure the site was stable enough before building facilities there.

HDB had also limited working hours – especially for noisy construction works – to avoid disturbing residents.

Ms Sim said the agencies carried out additional work to further strengthen the slope, to create a larger safety buffer.

Asked how a similar incident can be prevented, she said HDB has carried out checks to ensure that there are no risks to residential blocks here or to ongoing projects with a similar geography to that of Clementi NorthArc.

"This is something we placed a lot of priority on because we wanted to reassure soon-to-be residents of their safety," she said.

The incident, which HDB de-

scribed as a slope failure, occurred on Sept 2, 2022, at the western edge of the NorthArc construction site.

It resulted in a massive amount of earth sliding into the Sungei Ulu Pandan canal, damaging the park connector and raising concerns about flooding.

A passer-by had minor injuries in the incident.

To prevent flooding, a channel was carved out in the displaced soil in the canal before it was eventually cleared.

HDB said that since then, its work had focused on stabilising and strengthening the slope by installing more soil retaining structures and anchors like long piles, and injecting more jet grout piles underground. It also repositioned some ramps and staircases to distribute the load on the slope more evenly.

The park connector was reopened in several phases, including the March 2023 opening of the north-facing side, after the soil had been removed and the canal restored to its original dimensions.

Thereafter, HDB's contractor continued to build the BTO project's amenities, such as a multi-purpose court and viewing points.

The park connector's restoration comes as a relief for residents in the area, especially for those who enjoyed exercising along it.

Mr Chandramogan, 57, who goes

by one name and works for a social services organisation, said residents had to cut through the estate to get around the pathway that was cordoned off for repair works.

He said: "The delays were understandable, (the repairs) were something we had got used to."

"At the end of the day I think the restoration is nice and very beautiful. I'll definitely go for more walks."

Engineer Tan Kuan Khoo, 42, said he was satisfied with the repair works, but added that runners and brisk walkers will most likely have to look out for cyclists using the pathway again.

"The path is back to its previous state, so that's good for the residents," said Mr Tan.

"Most of us got used to the closure. There are a lot of alternative paths here, so it's not the only place for us to run."

Former industrial worker Sim Key Son, 78, who enjoys brisk walking around the area, said the pathway on the opposite bank was not as convenient as the route affected by the landslide as it was farther away and lacked shelter when it rained.

He said in Mandarin: "I got used to finding other routes for cycling or walking in the neighbourhood. But now that it's back up, it's much more convenient for us."

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WP leaders Pritam Singh, Sylvia Lim retain posts; former MP Lee Li Lian returns to CEC

Tham Yuen-C
Senior Political Correspondent



Former MP Lee Li Lian is a new addition to the 14-member central executive committee.

Workers' Party (WP) secretary-general Pritam Singh and chairwoman Sylvia Lim were returned to their posts at the party's biennial conference on June 30, paving the way for them to lead the opposition party into the next general election (GE).

The party's cadres also re-elected the other WP MPs into the central executive committee (CEC), along with former party chief Low Thia Khiang, 68, in an internal election marked by continuity.

The MPs are Aljunied GRC MPs Faisal Manap, 49, and Gerald Giam, 47; Sengkang GRC MPs He Ting Ru, 41, Louis Chua, 37, and Jamus Lim, 48; and Hougang MP Dennis Tan, 54.

Party sources told The Straits Times that Ms Lim, 59, was again challenged by long-time WP member Tan Bin Seng, but prevailed with about two-thirds of the vote to retain the post of party chair, which she has held since 2003.

Mr Singh, 48, was returned unopposed.

There was a new addition to the CEC – former Punggol East MP Lee Li Lian, 46, who had stepped down from the party's top decision-making body in 2020. The CEC line-up remains unchanged, apart from Ms Lee returning.

She was MP for Punggol East from 2013 to 2015, before ceding the single seat to PAP MP Charles Chong in the 2015 GE. Punggol East became part of the newly formed Sengkang GRC in 2020, and Ms Lee is currently a town

councillor on the WP-run Sengkang Town Council.

Rounding out the 14-member line-up are former GE candidates Nathaniel Koh, 41, and Kenneth Foo, 47; as well as Mr Tan Kong Soon, 47, and Mr Ang Boon Yaw, 42, a lawyer who started volunteering with the party in 2012.

About 80 cadres cast their votes at the closed-door conference held at the Huone meeting and event venue in Clarke Quay on June 30.

Speaking to reporters after the conference, Mr Singh said it was a "fantastic result". "We are looking forward to working with this CEC for the next two years," he added.

In a statement, WP said it will announce the CEC appointments in due course. "The new CEC has taken office, with a mix of members of different ages and backgrounds; and has started work with immediate effect."

In the past six months, WP has stepped up its outreach efforts, going to its usual stomping grounds to sell its Hammer newsletter and also making more house visits in areas it has contested in the past. The upcoming GE, due by No-



Workers' Party secretary-general Pritam Singh (right) and chairwoman Sylvia Lim speaking to the media at the Huone meeting and event venue, where the party's biennial conference was held on June 30. Their re-election paves the way for them to lead the party into the next general election. ST PHOTOS: MARK CHEONG

vember 2025, will be Mr Singh's second at the helm.

In his first election outing as WP chief in 2020, the party achieved a watershed victory in Sengkang GRC, only the second such multi-member constituency to be won by an opposition party. The WP had first achieved the feat in 2011, when it pulled off a shock defeat of the People's Action Party in Aljunied GRC.

After the 2020 election, Mr Singh was made Leader of the Opposition.

But he has faced several crises in the past few years, most recently when he was charged in March 2024 with lying to a parliamentary committee.

The committee was investigating the conduct of Ms Raeesah Khan, 30, then a WP MP for Sengkang GRC, after she admitted to lying in Parliament about a sexual assault victim being treated shabbily by

the police.

Mr Singh was asked in December 2021 about the matter by the committee, which later found that he had lied and referred the matter to the public prosecutor.

In 2023, Mr Singh also had to deal with the emergence online of a video clip that showed two key WP leaders, Mr Leon Perera, 53, and Ms Nicole Seah, 37, sharing an intimate moment.

Mr Perera, who was then an Aljunied GRC MP, and Ms Seah, who was part of the WP East Coast GRC team in the 2020 GE, eventually left the party over the incident.

Sunday's uneventful election signals that the party has closed ranks behind Mr Singh's leadership.

Commenting on the election result, analysts said WP sent a signal of continuity to Singaporeans, by maintaining the status quo.

National University of Singapore (NUS) associate professor of politi-

cal science Chong Ja Ian said the party appears to be keeping its footing despite the recent challenges.

Singapore Management University law don and former Nominated MP Eugene Tan said the result suggests party unity will not be a significant issue as WP gears up for the GE. "Notwithstanding the setbacks, (WP chief) Pritam's grip on power in his party has arguably strengthened with this party election," he added.

At the same time, while Mr Singh's standing in the party is strong and secure, cadres are also "comforted to have Mr Low remain in the decision-making body", noted Institute of Policy Studies senior research fellow Gillian Koh.

Together with Ms Lee's return to the CEC, the party appears to be "building on what it has and who it trusts", she added.

Noting that Ms Lee had worked

the ground before the 2020 GE in Sengkang GRC, Dr Koh said she will be a boon as WP plans its next campaign.

Associate Professor Tan said Mr Low's presence in the CEC points to his continued relevance as a stabilising force in the party, adding that the respected former party leader may well contest the upcoming GE.

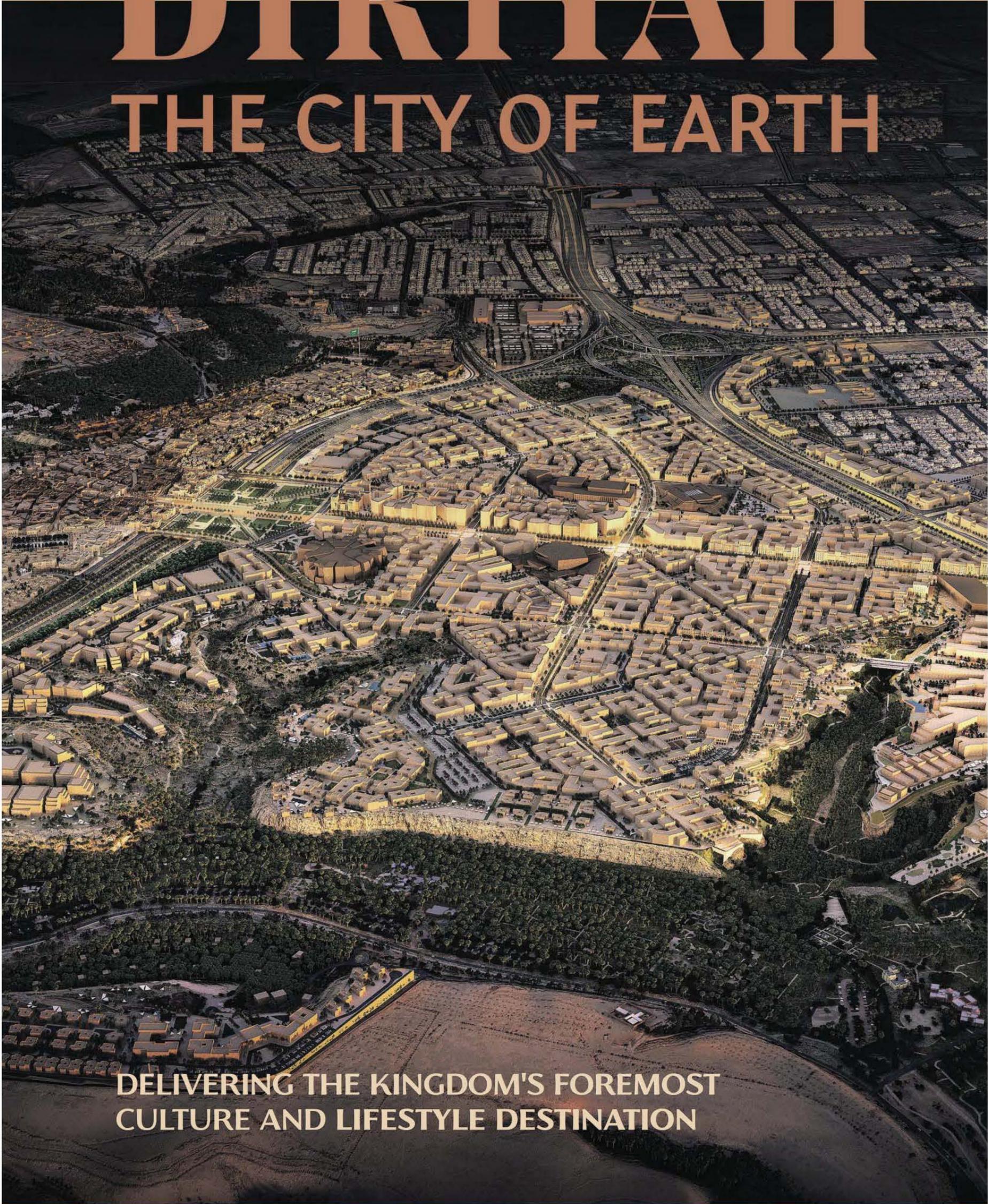
NUS associate professor of political science Bilveer Singh said having established and credible former MPs who can step in will allow WP to weather "possible shocks" like the loss of one of its leaders.

Meanwhile, Prof Chong said it is a positive sign that WP now has more women in the CEC, adding that political parties seeking popular support should strive towards being more representative of the population.

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'It's like a variety show': Chinese media mocks Biden-Trump debate

Netizens not interested in topics discussed but ridicule US political system instead

Tan Dawn Wei
China Bureau Chief

BEIJING – Chinese media has engaged in an all-out mockery of the first Biden-Trump presidential debate that took place on June 27, calling the event a "variety show". Short videos have appeared on popular social media platforms such as Douyin, WeChat and Xiaohongshu, playing up the two men's gaffes, bickering and physical attributes.

Chinese social media is heavily scrutinised by the country's censors, which routinely promote or scrub certain content to push particular narratives favourable to China's official policies.

Videos and posts that took aim at the two presumptive presidential candidates' ages, the episodic personal attacks and name-calling, as well as their blame game, were allowed to flood Chinese social media.

So, too, were clips of US President Joe Biden fumbling over his words and losing his train of thought.

On Douyin, the domestic version of TikTok, the debate hit the trending chart, chalking up 5.5 million views as at June 30.

Chinese netizens showed no interest in the topics being debated, instead choosing to ridicule the US political system for pitting one geriatric against another.

"This is democracy," mocked one commenter.

Some of the short videos posted online, including by state media such as China Daily, homed in on the two men trading barbs about each other's golf handicap, with

comical music laid over the clip and superimposed text describing the scene as "like children fighting".

"This is the kind of bickering you see in nursing homes. Two oldsters quarrelling, and then they forget who the other person is," said a commenter.

The edited clips circulating on social media appear to reinforce certain Chinese views of the US' decline and growing political polarity.

"You all keep bickering, while we all keep going to the Moon. We'll have a bright future," said another commenter.

China's Chang'e-6 spacecraft on June 25 brought home samples from the far side of the Moon, the first time rock and soil from this lunar region have successfully made it back to Earth.

Many Chinese netizens also lamented the lack of choice candidates for the upcoming US presidential election in November.

"The US is doomed. And you want to rule the world like this? Isn't there anyone else in this world?" said one netizen.

A blogger on Xiaohongshu sarcastically called the debate "outstanding".

"Otherwise, we won't be able to see an old man who has one foot in the coffin and a chatterbox who is constantly spouting nonsense compete to be president," said the blogger from Zhejiang province.

The debate, organised by US news network CNN, cannot be accessed in China except in international hotels, as well as through illegal streaming boxes.

Professor Shen Dingli, a Shanghai-based international relations scholar, said the general response



A US presidential debate watch party hosted by Young Republicans at Dirty Water, a bar in Washington, on June 27. The debate between presumptive presidential candidates Joe Biden and Donald Trump cannot be accessed in China except in international hotels, as well as through illegal streaming boxes. PHOTO: NYTIMES

the Chinese displayed to the debate "reflects a kind of mutual antagonism between the two countries' netizens".

He cited a Pew study released in July 2023 which showed that half of the more than 10,000 Americans polled named China as the greatest threat to the United States. No similar research has been done in China to adequately capture Chinese sentiments about the US.

"It's like a mirror of the two sides. China dislikes the US, so we have negative opinions of certain things that happen in the US, including the presidential debates. Likewise, American sentiments towards China are also negative," he told The Straits Times.

State media has also disparaged the debate, liberally citing the US media's own criticisms of how the face-off went down.

Well-known nationalistic commenter Hu Xijin, who has more than 550,000 followers on social media platform X, described the debate as "very entertaining for many Chinese people".

"Objectively speaking, the low-quality performance of these two old men was a negative advertisement for Western democracy," said the former editor-in-chief of the hawkish Global Times.

While both President Biden and Donald Trump sparred mostly over domestic issues such as the US economy, immigration and abor-

tion rights, China was also a contentious topic since both candidates are under pressure to be tough on the East Asian giant.

Asked about the country's opioid crisis, Trump said China was "killing us" and accused Mr Biden of letting it happen. The US has said that China plays a major role in the flow of illegal fentanyl, a synthetic opioid drug, into the US.

Trump, whose trade tariffs against China have remained throughout Mr Biden's term, also pointed out that fact while defending his proposed tariff hike of 10 per cent on all imports, including a 60 per cent increase for Chinese goods.

Meanwhile, the Biden adminis-

tration has proposed a 100 per cent tariff hike on all Chinese electric vehicles.

A video analysis by the state-run Defence Times on Douyin centred on the two men's "attack" on China.

"This is a stark reminder to China that whoever becomes president will continue to be tough on China. China-US relations may also not change course," the analysis said.

"China doesn't interfere in the internal affairs of other countries, but it also has to be prepared for the actions the US may take against us."

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France votes in crucial election that could see far right gain power



French far-right leader Marine Le Pen speaking to the media after voting in the first round of early parliamentary elections in Henin-Beaumont, France, on June 30. Her eurosceptic, anti-immigrant National Rally party was a long-time pariah, but is now closer to power than it has ever been. PHOTO: REUTERS

PARIS – French voters cast their ballots on June 30 in the first round of a snap parliamentary election that could usher in the country's first far-right government since World War II, a potential sea change at the heart of the European Union.

President Emmanuel Macron stunned the country when he called the vote after his centrist alliance was crushed in European elections in June by Ms Marine Le Pen's National Rally (RN). Her eurosceptic, anti-immigrant party was a long-time pariah, but is now closer to power than it has ever been.

Polls opened at 8am local time (2pm in Singapore), closing at 6pm in small towns and cities, and at

8pm in the bigger cities, when the first exit polls for the night and seat projections for the decisive second round a week later are expected.

However, the electoral system can make it hard to estimate the precise distribution of seats in the 577-seat National Assembly, and the final outcome will not be known until the end of voting on July 7.

"We are going to win an absolute majority," said Ms Le Pen in a newspaper interview last week, predicting that her protégé, 28-year-old Mr Jordan Bardella, would be prime minister.

Ms Le Pen's party has a high-sounding economic programme and seeks to reduce immigration.

If the RN does win an absolute majority, French diplomacy could be headed for an unprecedented period of turbulence, with Mr Macron – who has said he will continue his presidency until the end of his term in 2027 – and Mr Bardella jostling for the right to speak for France.

At a voting station in Sevres, on the outskirts of Paris, former company director Didier Delacroix, 70, said he voted for Mr Macron's alliance.

"Otherwise it'll be a complete mess," he said.

France has had three periods of "cohabitation" – when the president and government are from opposite political camps – in its post-war history, but none with such

radically divergent world views competing at the top of the state.

Mr Bardella has already indicated he would challenge Mr Macron on global issues.

France could lurch from being a pillar of the EU to a thorn in its side, demanding a rebate of the French contribution to the EU budget, clashing with Brussels over European Commission jobs, and reversing Mr Macron's calls for greater EU unity and assertiveness on defence.

A clear RN victory would also bring uncertainty as to where France stands on the Russia-Ukraine war. Ms Le Pen has a history of pro-Russian sentiment, and while the party now says it would help Ukraine defend itself against

Russian invaders, it has also set out red lines, such as refusing to provide long-range missiles.

Opinion polls have suggested the RN has a comfortable lead of 33 per cent to 36 per cent of the popular vote, with a hastily assembled left-wing coalition, the New Popular Front, in second place on 28 per cent to 31 per cent, and Mr Macron's centrist alliance in third on 20 per cent to 23 per cent.

The New Popular Front includes a wide range of parties, from the moderate centre-left to the hard-left, eurosceptic, anti-Nato party France Unbowed, led by one of Mr Macron's most vitriolic opponents, Mr Jean-Luc Melenchon.

How the poll numbers will translate into seats in the National Assembly is hard to predict because of how the election works, said University of Nice and Ecole Polytechnique political science professor Vincent Martigny.

Candidates can be elected in the first round if they win an absolute majority of votes in their constituency, but that is rare.

Most constituencies will need a second round involving all candidates who received votes from at least 12.5 per cent of registered voters in the first round. The top scorer wins.

"If you have a very high level of participation, you might have a third or fourth party that is getting into the struggle. So then of course there's a risk of split voting, and we know that the split vote favours the National Rally," said Prof Martigny.

For decades, as the far right steadily gained popularity, voters and parties that did not support it would unite against it whenever it edged closer to national power, but that may not hold true this time.

Prof Martigny said no one knew whether candidates from Mr Macron's camp would consider dropping out of the second round to give rivals from the left a chance of beating the RN, or the reverse.

Ms Le Pen and Mr Bardella have sought to make their party's image more acceptable to the mainstream, for example by denouncing anti-Semitism.

Ms Le Pen's father Jean-Marie Le Pen, founder and long-term leader of the RN's forerunner, had a history of overtly anti-Semitic comments.

But critics say the RN's courting of Jews is just a cover allowing it to deny accusations of racism while constantly stigmatising Muslims and foreigners. REUTERS

Singaporean suspected of drug trafficking arrested in Vietnam

Kolette Lim

A 43-year-old Singaporean man suspected of being involved in drug trafficking has been arrested in Vietnam, said the Central Narcotics Bureau (CNB).

His involvement was uncovered during an investigation in February 2021, said CNB in a June 30 statement.

The man, who operated from overseas, allegedly supplied drugs to associates in Singapore for subsequent trafficking and sale.

Immigration records showed he had left Singapore on Sept 27, 2019. CNB subsequently reached out to its foreign counterparts for information on his whereabouts.

Following close cooperation with the Counter-Narcotics Police Department of Vietnam's Ministry of Public Security, the man was deported and handed over to CNB on June 28.

CNB deputy director of operations Leon Chan attributed the arrest to the cooperation and trust between the bureau and its Vietnamese counterpart.

He added that the man, who "believed he could carry on supplying drugs to associates in Singapore with impunity simply by setting up a base in Vietnam... was badly mistaken".

The man, whose name CNB declined to reveal, was charged with drug trafficking in relation to the February 2021 investigation upon his return to Singapore.

Following the same investigation, a 39-year-old man was arrested with about 472g of heroin. He has been convicted and sentenced.

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WORLD

Indonesian tech start-ups face struggles with funding, innovation

Foreign rivals have wider funding pool, regional reach and more aggressive tactics

Wahyudi Soeriaatmadja
Indonesia Correspondent

JAKARTA - Indonesia's start-ups are struggling to compete against their cash-rich foreign rivals, with the nation's two largest unicorns GoTo and Bukalapak seeing their valuations slide substantially in 2024.

Investment in local start-ups has also slowed by about two-thirds, from around US\$3.5 billion (\$4.8 billion) annually in 2020 and 2021, according to a November 2023 joint report by venture fund AC Ventures and management consultancy Bain & Company. This places more pressure on local companies to innovate, stop burning cash and become profitable, say analysts.

GoTo, formed by the merger of ride-hailing firm Gojek and e-commerce giant Tokopedia in 2021, has seen its share price fall by 55 per cent year to date. It is currently valued at 60 trillion rupiah (\$4.98 billion) on the Indonesia Stock Exchange.

Meanwhile, e-commerce unicorn Bukalapak is down by 33 per cent, bringing its market capitalisation to 14 trillion rupiah.

Both companies have significantly underperformed on the exchange's broader composite index, which has declined around 4 per cent in 2024. Tough competition from their larger, regional rivals as well as slower innovation are largely to blame, say experts.

Key competitors such as Sea Limited's Shopee and Grab have

access to a wider pool of funding, regional reach and more aggressive tactics.

Sea is listed on the New York Stock Exchange and has a market capitalisation of US\$43.6 billion, while Grab is worth US\$4 billion on Nasdaq.

"Being listed in the US market allows you to raise US\$1 billion relatively easier. This is a small figure compared with the total market capitalisation there. While for GoTo, which is listed on the Indonesia Stock Exchange, such size is an upper value," said senior equity analyst Henry Pranoto.

These rivals can also use cash generated from their other profitable businesses to gain market share in Indonesia. Shopee's parent Sea has said it is fully committed to using the group's global gaming subsidiary Garena to fund cash-burning strategies for its main e-commerce market in Indonesia.

Meanwhile, Grab is eating into GoTo's share in Indonesia's ride-hailing sector, using backup funds from markets outside Indonesia such as Singapore, which is already operating profitably.

The continuous need to innovate is also key, say analysts. Bukalapak, for example, has raised investors' eyebrows for sitting on its 20 trillion rupiah cash pile instead of deploying it to draw new e-commerce customers.

"The inability to channel funds into businesses shows it's lagging in technology and innovations,"



GoTo, one of Indonesia's start-up unicorns which was formed by the merger of ride-hailing firm Gojek and e-commerce giant Tokopedia in 2021, has seen its share price fall by 55 per cent in the year to date. PHOTO: BLOOMBERG

said an analyst at Jakarta-based investment bank BNI Sekuritas, who declined to be named as the person was not authorised to speak to the media.

There have also been missteps. In January 2022, Bukalapak spent US\$81 million to buy an 11.5 per cent stake in Jakarta-based digital bank Allo Bank, but the initial boost to its profits turned into unrealised losses a year later. An attempt starting in 2020 to get Indonesia's thousands of mom-and-pop shops to use Bukalapak's app for their business processes also failed to properly take off.

Being innovative, however, is no guarantee of profitability, as GoTo has discovered. In 2015, it introduced GoSend, pairing its ride-hailing drivers with Tokopedia's e-commerce customers who wanted

their orders shipped instantly.

Jakarta-based hedge fund investor Leontinus Alpha Edison said: "Gojek was the first ride-hailing company in the world that catered to e-commerce customers."

Due to its prolonged losses and unclear path towards profitability, GoTo has recently started downsizing. It has cut employee headcount by more than 1,000 and stripped off business units to prioritise profitability over its previous aspiration for high growth.

The challenges faced by these two early Indonesian unicorns underline problems in the country's tech start-up landscape, observers have noted. Scores of Indonesian tech companies failed in the early stages, they say, due to a heavy reliance on providing copycat services, a lack of technological innova-

tion, and offering services for which there is a lack of demand.

Economist Wijayanto Samirin said the majority of tech companies are funded by investors whose investment timeframe ranges between five and seven years. After that, the companies are expected to turn a profit and be financially independent.

"Indonesia's technology sector has just entered a consolidation phase, marked by the decline in the number of players because many did not survive due to competition... After this phase is over, the surviving ones are set to enjoy huge profits," Mr Wijayanto, who was an economic adviser to Indonesia's former vice-president Jusuf Kalla, told The Straits Times.

"The surviving companies must do efficiency drives, cut operating

PROFITABILITY CONCERNS

The surviving companies must do efficiency drives, cut operating costs, end cash burning.



ECONOMIST WIJAYANTO SAMIRIN

costs, end cash burning," Mr Wijayanto stressed. "Investors are now less concerned about companies' valuation and more concerned about profitability."

Jakarta-based e-grocery stores such as TaniHub and Sayurbox - Covid-19-era-born digital platforms that bridge farmers and consumers, thereby cutting out the middleman - are struggling with their cash flows.

TaniHub, for example, failed to honour its debt services to creditors after it financed farmers who promised to deliver their harvest but defaulted.

Mr Henry told ST: "Tech companies tended to throw money at the farmers in need of cash without the usual prudent lending practice." He added that such a role is predominantly carried out by local middlemen who know which farmers are honest and could be given loans.

Looking ahead, Indonesia's start-ups will have to stay nimble and move quickly, with competition only set to ramp up.

"The prize of winning the Indonesia market is so big. They (foreign tech companies) are making Indonesia the last battleground in South-east Asia and using the ammunition they have collected elsewhere to rule the Indonesia market," said Mr Henry.

Jakarta-based East Venture, one of Indonesia's leading venture capital firms, told ST in an e-mail reply that the country's digital sector is entering a new cycle, after start-up valuations rose and reached their peak between 2020 and 2021.

"In 2022 to 2023, we entered a new phase where there are continuous increases in interest rates in the US, inflation that is difficult to control, geopolitical pressures... So the entire technology ecosystem globally is facing pressure," it added.

"Investors are becoming increasingly careful in providing funding. However, it is always worth remembering that money is still available for good companies," it said.

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Indonesia's creative industry making waves on global platform

Hariz Baharudin
Indonesia Correspondent

JAKARTA - In an achievement for Indonesia's creative industry, heavy metal band Voice of Baceprot (VoB) has become the coun-

try's first music act to play at the prestigious Glastonbury Festival in England.

Being able to perform on the same stage as English pop-rock band Coldplay and pop music stars like Dua Lipa was a dream come true for the three VoB members, who formed the band in 2014.

The milestone is just the latest by Indonesian artists, who are lighting up the global scene in the genres of television, music, gaming and comic books, as the government intensifies efforts to nurture the creative industry.

The high-potential creative economy has been growing, with

the sector amounting to 1.3 trillion rupiah (\$107.8 million) in 2023, an increase from the 1.28 trillion rupiah in 2022 and 1.19 trillion rupiah in 2021.

Earlier in June, streaming giant Netflix released Nightmares And Daydreams, an original series by local film-maker Joko Anwar,

which has made it to most-watched lists not just in the archipelago, but also in countries like Singapore, Malaysia and Vietnam.

The show, which is a collection of supernatural and science-fiction stories, has been compared to the works of American producer Jordan Peele who made the movies Us

and Get Out, as well as Mexican film-maker Guillermo del Toro, famous for works like The Shape of Water and Pan's Labyrinth.

"A film-maker's responsibility is to create works that reflect our society," said Mr Joko at a press con-

CONTINUED ON PAGE A9



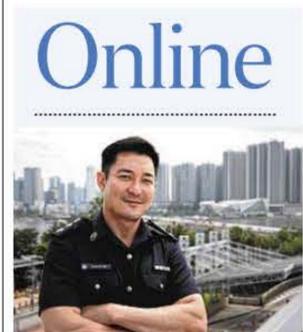
Indian youth • Exam paper leak adds to anger over jobs | A10



Climate • What Europe's unbearable heatwaves mean for travellers | A11



US politics • Biden tries to reassure big donors in wake of debate debacle | A12



FEATURE
Causeway turns 100

Superintendent Patrick Ong's great-grandfather and grandfather owned the iconic Green Bus Company, whose bus No. 1 plied the only Singapore-Johor route from 1950 to the 1970s. Join him on a ride down memory lane.

tr.sg/feature-bus

Malaysia's travel industry urges KL to fight AI scams

Hoteliers highlight report by Booking.com warning of sharp rise in global phishing attacks

PETALING JAYA – Stronger regulation and protection are needed with the alarming rise of scams powered by artificial intelligence (AI) targeting hoteliers and travellers, say industry players.

Malaysia Budget & Business Hotel Association president Sri Ganesh Michiel said although such cases are rare in the country with cooperation between hoteliers and online travel agencies (OTAs), they are still a cause for concern. He highlighted the urgent need for government intervention to regulate OTAs, including Airbnb operators, many of which are based overseas.

"There must be clear procedures for collecting personal information for domestic and international travel bookings to thwart fake reservations, fictitious accommodation,

and phishing schemes facilitated through malicious APK (Android Package Kit) downloads and external links," said Dr Ganesh.

"For example, one should not be allowed to register or make a booking using a fake name before verifying his identity.

"Regulation is crucial to prevent data abuse and ensure customer safety. Measures like strict policies on links and two-step identification are being implemented by Booking.com to enhance security.

"There is a need for laws and regulations to control online platforms and consumer behaviour."

A report by the chief information security officer of online travel website Booking.com has noted a sharp rise in global phishing attacks targeting the hospitality sector.

Using AI, it said, scammers create realistic e-mails to trick people into divulging sensitive data like credit card or personal information.

"For Booking.com to raise the alarm, it means it's a dangerous trend, as AI can get smarter," Dr Ganesh said in a June 29 interview.

"The platform's warning underscores the evolving capabilities of AI and the diverse methods perpetrators can exploit to deceive and compromise individuals making travel bookings."

He noted that except for some individual operators, hoteliers in Malaysia have been working closely with travel platforms such as Booking.com and Traveloka. This has helped to address the issues effectively. "The coordination and sharing of information among industry

stakeholders have improved to prevent and mitigate scams," he said.

"We are always taught the latest trends and tactics and how to spot possibly fraudulent e-mails before clicking on any link."

Malaysian Association of Hotels president Christina Toh said smaller players may be more vulnerable to scams as large international chains have the tech and cyber-security support systems in place to handle these challenges.

"Nonetheless, these companies usually have mechanisms to detect and prevent such incidents, including working with their system providers," she said, adding: "Hotels usually work collaboratively with platforms like Booking.com to identify and address such issues.

"That's why frequent training and

education of hotel staff on the tell-tale signs of scams is a regular practice to strengthen defences."

Datin Toh noted that the rapid response capabilities of OTAs are vital in managing these problems, making close cooperation between OTAs and hoteliers essential for maintaining online security and trust in the industry.

"Such support is crucial in helping these smaller entities manage and potentially circumvent cyber threats effectively," she said.

Malaysian Tourism Federation president Tan Kok Liang recommended proactive steps be taken by travel operators to protect against AI-enabled phishing scams. Such steps include providing employee education and training.

"Customers should also be informed about potential scams and taught how to verify the authenticity of communications from the business," said Datuk Tan, adding that establishing secure communication channels is critical to safeguarding business interactions, and installing robust cyber-security tools would also help protect against digital threats.

"Finally, conducting regular security audits will help identify and address vulnerabilities, enhancing safety and confidence in online transactions."

THE STAR/ASIA NEWS NETWORK

Bus driver in Genting crash arrested; probe into tour agency

KUALA LUMPUR – The driver of a tour bus that crashed on the way down from Genting Highlands has been arrested, said Malaysian Tourism, Arts and Culture Minister Tiong King Sing.

He said the man is being investigated for irregularities related to the incident, which claimed the lives of two Chinese nationals.

"We are saddened by the incident and we will ensure a thorough investigation," Datuk Seri Tiong said on June 30 after visiting eight victims who are being treated at Hospital Kuala Lumpur.

Also present during the visit were China's Ambassador to Malaysia Ouyang Yujing and other officials.

Mr Tiong said that according to preliminary investigations, passengers who survived the crash described their journey to Genting Highlands as filled with problems.

"They were here for a six-day, five-night trip and had to change (buses) three times. We found that the inbound tour agency involved had sublet the jobs to others," he said.

He added that his ministry was investigating whether any troubled agents were involved in the incident.

The travel agency involved is also being investigated and may have its licence revoked if found to have breached any standard operating procedures.

"We will wait for the full investigation report. We will not hesitate to suspend the licences of any repeat offenders if they are found responsible," he said.

Mr Tiong said he would meet the Transport Ministry and its agency, the Road Transport Department, on July 2 to discuss tour bus regulations, maintenance and enforcement.

"There should be standard operating procedures for tour buses ferrying tourists. Part of the responsibility and enforcement should be on our ministry's side and we will discuss this further during the meeting," he added.

It was previously reported that the 32-year-old bus driver did not have a driving licence and had 27 previous traffic summonses for various offences. THE STAR/ASIANEWS NETWORK

Visitors to Penang Hill will get to enjoy cable car rides from 2026

GEORGE TOWN – Penang residents and tourists can enjoy a cable car ride to Penang Hill by the third quarter of 2026, and it promises to be a scenic one.

About 400m from Penang Botanic Gardens' front gate, the road will be turned into a pedestrian promenade. Pedestrians who stroll up to the fountains and water lilies decorating the front of the gardens will see the cable car station to their left.

The 1.2ha station will be called the Garden Station, and it will have food and beverage outlets and retail shops. From there, one can take a 2.73km cable car ride to the peak of Penang Hill, about 700m above sea level, where the temperature is several degrees cooler than below. The ride will take less than 10 minutes.

During peak hours, a maximum of 1,000 passengers an hour may travel this way. To minimise environmental impact, only five pylon towers will be erected in the jungle while the remaining 10 towers will be built close to the upper and lower stations and the jeep track.

At the ground-breaking ceremony

on June 29 for the Garden Station, Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim reminisced about his early days of visiting Penang Hill.

"Penang Hill is unique and its conservation was taken into account when the cable car was planned," he said in his speech.

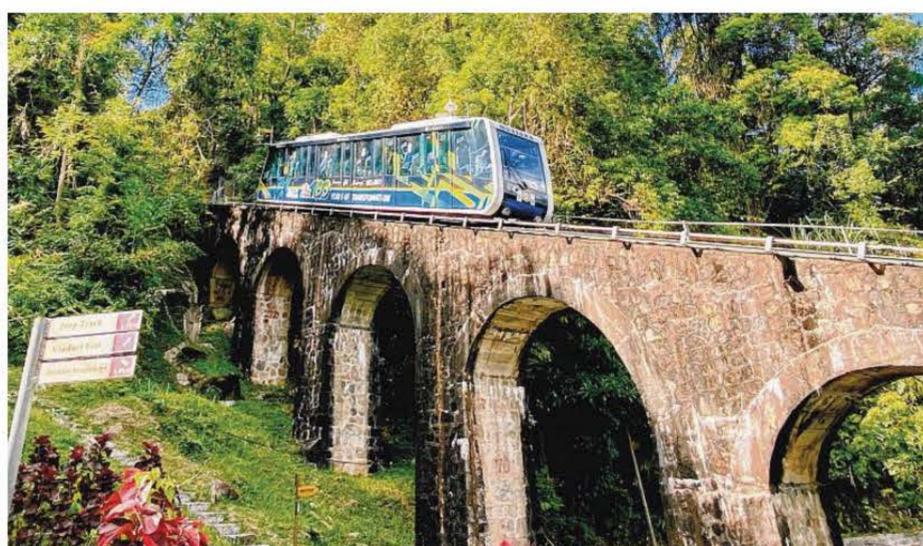
"There is an aspect of culture in its architecture.

"I hope the design will reflect the beauty of the hill that is not only scenic but also historical and significant to the region as an important tourist destination."

Penang Chief Minister Chow Kon Yeow said the cable car system would provide a much-needed alternative to and alleviate pressure on the century-old funicular train service.

Referring to the company that will build the system, he said: "Hartasuma Sdn Bhd won the project with an investment of RM250 million (\$71.8 million) made through a public-private partnership with the Penang government and now, we move on to the physical work.

"To alleviate concerns over limited parking during the construction



A cable car system for Penang Hill would provide a much-needed alternative to the century-old funicular service. The hill is a key destination in Malaysia. It drew 1.66 million visitors in 2023, up from 1.48 million in 2022. PHOTO: PENANG HILL/FACEBOOK

phase, Penang Hill Corporation has negotiated with Penang Hindu Endowment Board and Penang Island City Council to provide temporary parking at Arulmigu Balathandayuthapani Temple and Penang City Park."

Mr Chow added that Penang Hill is a key destination in Malaysia. It drew 1.66 million visitors in 2023, up from 1.48 million in 2022.

"In the first five months of this year, there were 665,994 visitors, of which 40 per cent were foreign tourists," he said.

Hartasuma Group executive director Ravindran Menon said the cable car system was a pivotal step

in re-energising the appeal of the historic hill.

"Our goal for Penang Hill is to create an experience that respects and upholds its history and natural beauty as a Unesco Biosphere Reserve," he said.

Aware of concerns surrounding this project, Tan Sri Ravindran gave the assurance that the construction approach was rooted in respect for the natural environment.

"Extensive studies and careful planning were taken to minimise ecological disruptions, and we have stringent measures in place to protect the flora and fauna," he

said.

Hartasuma, a pioneer in the Malaysian rail industry, was awarded a 30-year concession to design, finance, build and operate the Penang Hill cable car system.

The company appointed Austria-based ropeway market leader Doppelmayr Seilbahnen to supply the cable car system.

Doppelmayr has built more than 15,400 ropeway installations worldwide, including 86 cable car installations located in Unesco heritage, geopark and biosphere sites as well as various national parks around the world.

THE STAR/ASIA NEWS NETWORK

Government proactive in nurturing artists

FROM A8

ference before the June 14 premiere of the show.

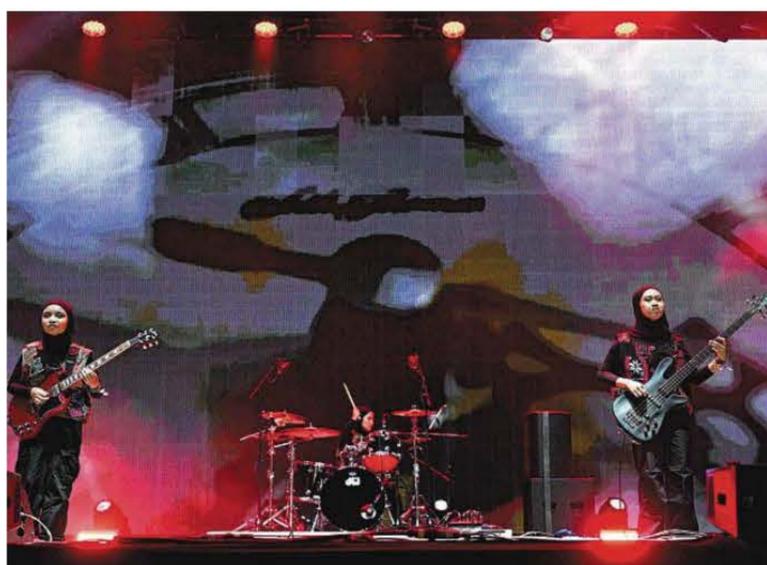
While the series is rooted in supernatural science fiction, "the stories in it are very relevant to our lives now, namely issues that are hotly discussed, everyday life, and the socio-political themes that we experience", he said.

Two other made-in-Indonesia Netflix hits from 2023, documentary Ice Cold and period drama Cigarette Girl, were also on most-watched lists globally and were streamed by millions of people.

Indonesia's creative industry is made up of 17 sub-sectors, including fashion, culinary arts, mobile app and video game development, architecture, interior design, television and radio, performance and fine arts, as well as film, animation and video.

The achievements are not limited to the more well-known sub-sectors of television and music – creators in other fields are also making waves.

The Straits Times had reported in 2023 on the rise of made-in-Indonesia video games based on local culture that were well received by the global gaming community and also played a part in introducing Indonesian culture to the world.



Indonesian heavy metal band Voice of Baceprot performing at the Glastonbury Festival in England on June 28. They are the country's first music act to play at the prestigious music event. PHOTO: AFP

A Space For The Unbound by Surabaya-based Mojken Studio got a stellar review from British newspaper The Guardian. It also received The Future Division award in late 2022 from the Computer Entertainment Association of Japan. The prestigious award recognises excellence in upcoming games.

In the realm of comic books, a team led by Mr Bryan Valenza, a colour artist at Marvel Entertainment, is currently raising funds to publish a series called Bandits Of Batavia, inspired by the Indonesian Betawi culture.

One of the first of its kind in Indonesia, the action-packed crime

thriller centres on Indonesia's past in the 1800s and tells the story of a man who encounters a group of supernatural bandits and gets involved in high-stake clashes with the authorities.

The team, which launched its fund-raising campaign in June, has raised more than \$5,000 so far, and hopes to publish its first issue in September.

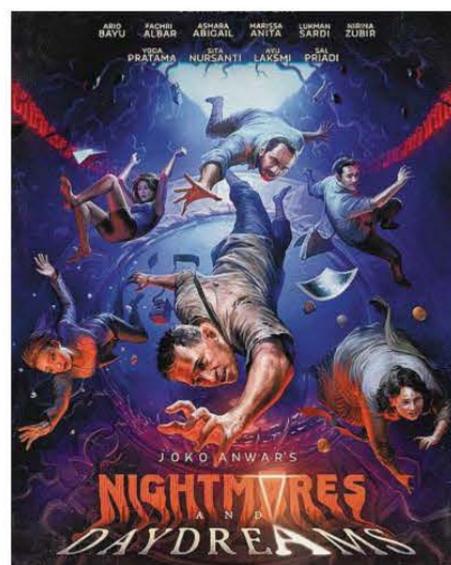
"Writing a good story requires dedication, sacrifice and (persistence). Since I entered the world of comic writing, this project has been the most challenging and ambitious," said Mr Bryan in an Instagram post on April 11.

Recognising the potential of the

creative sector, the government has been proactive in supporting artists.

With backing from the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, Mr Bryan and some others in the comics field participated in Singapore Comic Con 2023, which saw thousands of attendees and booths from more than 450 brands in products like comics, toys, tabletop games and comic books.

VoB was reported to have received the government's help in the processing of the members' immigration documents ahead of their trip to play in Glastonbury. They had to cancel a tour of the United Kingdom in 2022 due to vi-



Film-maker Joko Anwar's Nightmares And Daydreams is on the most-watched lists in the region. PHOTO: NETFLIX

sa problems.

The band was also given accommodation at the residence of the Indonesian Ambassador to the UK.

Other recent moves by the government also reflect keenness to nurture the creative industry. For instance, the Communications and Information Ministry in March backtracked on proposed regulations involving video game companies, after feedback that they could stifle the industry and restrict global market access.

These planned laws will now target only online game publishers, rather than offline traditional ones, following discussions that officials had with local game associa-

tions.

More recently, on June 24, President Joko Widodo launched a new digital licensing service which aims to cut through the red tape and bureaucratic complications of staging arts events in the country.

Mr Widodo said some events required 13 different permits and recommendation letters, which he described as cumbersome and a deterrent to organising them.

"With the upcoming digitisation of permits, I hope it will not just be a web service but truly provide ease of management, certainty, reduce bureaucracy, and lead to lower costs while being more open and transparent," he said.

While the contribution of the creative economy to Indonesia is getting higher in absolute terms, economists have pointed out that its relative contribution to the total economy has decreased.

Indonesia-based Permata Bank chief economist Josua Pardede told ST that the latest data showed the sector constituted 6.54 per cent of Indonesia's overall economy in 2022, down from 7.02 per cent in 2021.

In order to advance the creative economy in Indonesia, Mr Josua said the government needs to develop more high-value added creative products, such as software and gaming, architecture services, design services, music, and film. These sectors, he explained, could provide higher-paying jobs. "The development of these sectors should also target the foreign market, not only the domestic, as it could also help Indonesia's trade balance, especially from increasing Indonesia's service export value," added Mr Josua.

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Exam paper leaks in India fuel youth anger over job, education options

Integrity of several national exams comes under doubt in recent weeks

Debarshi Dasgupta
India Correspondent

KOLKATA – Mr Alkesh Singh spent the last six months studying hard for his exam in June.

The 20-year-old Hindi literature postgraduate student at the University of Delhi left nothing to chance – spending nearly 10 hours daily revising his syllabus and even taking mock tests – so that he could clear the UGC-NET exam.

Cracking this government-run test is critical because it would make him eligible for entry-level teaching positions at Indian universities, easing the pressure on Mr Singh, the eldest son from a modest farming family in Uttar Pradesh, in his pursuit of a job.

“Everyone wants to bring relief to their parents,” he said. “Mine have been farming for a long time. If I get a job soon, they will get some respite.”

Things went well for Mr Singh on June 18, the day of the exam, but fate dealt him and more than 900,000 others who sat the test across India, an unfair blow.

The government announced the

following day that the question paper had been leaked on Telegram and on the dark web. It was reportedly up for grabs for as little as 5,000 rupees (\$81).

A mix of anger and sadness overcame Mr Singh, and his voice during the phone interview on June 27 still belied his initial exasperation. “All day, we take mock tests, study night and day at the library, while someone is able to buy a copy of the paper for just 5,000 rupees. What’s the point in us studying?” he said.

“Education is up for sale entirely,” added Mr Singh who, along with other students, showed up outside the Ministry of Education in New Delhi on June 20 to take part in his first protest against the leak.

India’s examination system is in the throes of an unprecedented crisis. The UGC-NET exam is among several national exams whose integrity has come under doubt in recent weeks because of allegations of paper leaks.

This has infuriated millions of young people desperate for India’s limited quality education and employment opportunities, and

whose futures now hang in the balance. Such competitive exams are held both nationally and at the state level for admission into higher educational institutes, as well as for government recruitment.

At least three other central government-managed public exams were postponed in June because of concerns over their integrity, taking the number of affected candidates to more than 1.3 million.

One of them is the NEET-PG exam, which was scheduled to be held on June 23, but 12 hours before the exam, candidates were told it was postponed. A fresh date for the exam, which determines admission into postgraduate medical courses, has not yet been announced.

Among the 229,000-odd candidates who found themselves in limbo is Dr Shubham Anand, a 27-year-old aspirant from the eastern Indian state of Jharkhand.

He has been juggling his work at a hospital in north India with his studies for the past one year. Dr Anand even skipped family functions to realise his dream of becoming either a radiologist or a dermatologist.

And like many others, he pushed himself further as the exam deadline approached to get across the finishing line.

“So, when just the night before



Members of the youth wing of the Indian National Congress party clashing with police at a protest in Srinagar, Kashmir, India, on June 26. PHOTO: EPA-EFE

you get to know that it has been postponed, and you do not know when next it will be conducted, there is a sensation of sadness along with anger,” he told The Straits Times.

As angry students protest across the country, this controversy has presented the freshly elected Bharatiya Janata Party-led government with its first real challenge. The rattled government has already fired the head of the National Testing Agency, set up an expert committee to reform examination processes, and even put into action a national anti-exam paper leak law.

But these short-term efforts address only in part what is essentially a deep structural problem – the inadequate availability of quality education and employment opportunities for the country’s youth. More than half of India’s population is under 30.

According to a March 2024 report from the International Labour Organisation and the Institute for Human Development, the share of educated youth – those between the ages of 15 and 29 – among the

unemployed in 2022 stood at 65.7 per cent, up from 54.2 per cent in 2000.

More than 4.8 million applicants signed up for an exam in 2024 to select 60,244 police constables in Uttar Pradesh. The exam was eventually cancelled because the paper was leaked from the warehouse of a transport company that had been contracted to deliver copies of the paper.

Ms Ruchi Gupta, executive director of Future of India Foundation, said: “If there were more opportunities so that these exams were not so pivotal to young people’s lives, then there wouldn’t be these kinds of leaks. It’s the lack of opportunities, it’s the system that is creating the incentive for the leaks.”

Limiting attention to just the problem of leaks, she told ST, was a “narrow and short-term perspective”.

“While there’s no question that exams must be conducted with complete integrity, fixing the problem requires a broader view,” she told ST, calling for a “massive infusion” of public funds to ex-

pand education and employment opportunities.

At least eight states have enacted laws to prevent paper leaks. Yet, such instances over the last five years have resulted in 41 recruitment exams in 15 states, including those with anti-leak laws, being cancelled, crushing the aspirations of 14 million applicants, reported The Indian Express in February 2024.

The desperate struggle for quality education is even worse when paired with Indian families’ stubborn obsession in pushing their children to become doctors.

In 2024, more than 2.4 million applicants sat the NEET-UG test on May 5, including at 14 centres abroad. They competed for around 109,000 undergraduate medical seats available in 700-odd medical colleges.

The exam, too, is now mired in controversy, with allegations of leaks amid an unprecedented rise in the number of candidates scoring full marks.

Investigations in the state of Bihar have revealed that students reportedly paid touts 3 million rupees to 5 million rupees to obtain the question paper beforehand. The Supreme Court is currently examining numerous petitions from several students and parents demanding a retest. It has so far refused to stop the admission process scheduled to begin from July 6, even as the government acknowledged there had been “some errors limited to specific regions”.

Ms Gupta said she is not surprised by the recent leaks and controversies. “It’s not like some invisible subterranean water leak that has suddenly erupted. Anyone with any sort of visible interest in the country would know that this pressure-cooker situation is building up and it needs to be fixed. The question is if there is enough political will to fix it.”

Meanwhile, Mr Singh is preparing to sit the cancelled UGC-NET exam again when it is held some time between Aug 21 and Sept 4.

“I don’t have any other choice,” he said.

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Plucky way to draw tourists in Thailand

Members of the Ban Yakang community taking part in a duck-catching competition as part of activities to promote tourism in Thailand’s southern province of Narathiwat on June 29. PHOTO: AFP



Myanmar refutes UN report on weapons transactions

NAYPYITAW – Myanmar’s central bank refuted a UN report that the country’s military government can still access money and weapons for its war against anti-coup forces, saying financial institutions under the bank’s supervision followed prescribed procedures.

The Central Bank of Myanmar “expressed our strong objection to the UN special rapporteur’s report”, it said in a statement published in a junta newspaper on June 29.

“The UN report severely harms the interests of Myanmar civilians and the relationship between Myanmar and other countries.”

The rapporteur on Myanmar’s human rights, Mr Tom Andrews, reported on June 26 that while international efforts to isolate the junta appeared to have dented its ability to buy military equipment, it still imported US\$253 million (\$343 million) worth of weapons, dual-use technologies, manufacturing equipment and other materials in the 12 months to March.

The report said Myanmar had the help of international banks, including those from Thailand, for its purchases.

Western countries have imposed financial sanctions on Myanmar’s military, banks and associated businesses.

The central bank said local and international banks engaged in transactions with Myanmar have undergone comprehensive due diligence measures for all business relationships and transactions.

“The financial transactions are only for the importation of essential goods and basic necessities for Myanmar civilians, such as medicine and medical supplies, agricultural and livestock supplies, fertilisers, edible oil and fuels,” it said.

The UN report said exports from Singapore had plunged to just more than US\$10 million from more than US\$100 million in 2022 but that Thai companies partially filled the gap, transferring US\$120 million worth of weapons and materials in 2023, double from 2022.

The Thai Foreign Ministry said in a statement on June 27 that the country’s banking and financial institutions follow protocols, adding the government will look into the report. REUTERS

Pyongyang calls US, S. Korea and Japan ‘Asian version of Nato’

SEOUL – North Korea criticised a joint military exercise by South Korea, Japan and the United States held in June, state media said on June 30, saying such drills show the three countries’ relationship has developed into “the Asian version of Nato”.

On June 27, the three countries began large-scale joint military drills called “Freedom Edge” involving navy destroyers, fighter jets and the nuclear-powered US aircraft carrier Theodore Roosevelt, aimed at boosting defences against missiles, submarines and air attacks.

The exercise was devised at the three-way summit at Camp David in 2023 to strengthen military cooperation amid tensions on the

Korean peninsula stemming from North Korea’s weapons testing.

Pyongyang will not ignore the strengthening of a military bloc led by the US and its allies and will protect regional peace with an aggressive and overwhelming response, North Korea’s Foreign Ministry said in a statement, according to KCNA news agency.

The ministry also said Washington was continuing its effort to link up South Korea and Japan to Nato, adding that Seoul’s attempts to supply weapons to Ukraine is one example of that.

Seoul’s Defence Ministry said in a statement that the Freedom Edge exercise was in response to North Korea’s nuclear and missile programme, while dismissing

Pyongyang’s criticism.

South Korea said it would review the possibility of supplying arms directly to Ukraine, in protest against a recent mutual defence pact signed between North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and Russian President Vladimir Putin.

South Korea and the US have accused the North of supplying weapons to Russia that are being used in the Ukraine war. Both Russia and North Korea deny any such transactions.

North Korea’s ruling party held a meeting on June 28 and 29 presided over by Mr Kim, who addressed “deviations” hampering economic development and laid out the focus for the second half of 2024, state media said.

North Korea has long condemned joint military drills between the US and South Korea as a rehearsal for invasion and proof of hostile policies by Washington and Seoul.

In 2023, South Korea, Japan and the US staged joint naval missile defence and anti-submarine exercises to improve responses to North Korean threats. REUTERS

North Korean officials sport Kim Jong Un pins for first time

SEOUL – North Korean officials wore pins with a portrait of Mr Kim Jong Un in public for the first time in pictures released by the state media on June 30, the latest step in the development of a cult of personality around the leader.

The officials, speaking at a key meeting chaired by Mr Kim of the reclusive state’s ruling party, wore the party logo pin on the right lapel and, on the left chest, the pin with Mr Kim’s face against a flag-shaped red background.

The 10th plenary meeting of the eighth central committee of the Workers’ Party of Korea, which reviews the party’s performance for the first half of the year, began on June 28, state news agency KCNA said.

The Kim dynasty that has ruled North Korea since its founding after World War II has sought to strengthen its grip on power by building cults of personality around itself.

In an apparent push to solidify Mr Kim’s status as a leader equal to his father and grandfather, the North Korean media published photographs showing his portrait hanging next to those of Mr Kim Jong Il and national patriarch Kim Il Sung earlier in 2024.

In April, the music video for a propaganda song praising Mr Kim Jong Un as a “friendly father” and a “great leader” was aired on the state-controlled Korean Central Television, which has been banned by South Korea. REUTERS

Heatwaves in Europe are getting more dangerous



The authorities in Greece have repeatedly warned tourists not to underestimate the intense heat, especially during the middle of the day. Hiking in high temperatures has been a common thread linking recent deaths in the country. PHOTO: BLOOMBERG

Travel industry urged to consider climate adaptation as tourists feel warming's impact

ATHENS – Growing up in the US state of Texas, Ms Mary Beth Walsh thought she was accustomed to high temperatures. Her home town of Dallas, which is currently being blasted by unrelenting heat, frequently experiences heatwaves.

But when the 21-year-old visited the Greek capital Athens in mid-June with her friends, she was shocked by the “unbearable” 37 deg C heat she faced.

“I actually had no idea about the heat that was going on until we were there, which was pretty surprising,” she told CNN.

“I always joke around that I have such a high heat tolerance; I bring my sweatshirt with me to class in August (in the US),” she said.

But the apartment she was staying in had no air-conditioning, and temperatures were too high during the day to explore the city on foot.

“Our energy levels were lower than we thought they would be,” she said. “It felt pretty unbearable to walk in the direct heat.”

Climate crisis-driven sweltering summers in Europe are now a reality that tourists are waking up to.

Interest in visiting hotter Mediterranean countries dropped in 2023 amid record heatwaves and wildfires, with more temperate destinations becoming increasingly popular, experts say.

Recent heat-fuelled deaths and disappearances in Greece, including that of the British TV personality Michael Mosley, have the potential to further fuel this northwards shift, as incidents of extreme heat influence holiday decisions.

The degree to which the travel industry and tourists alike can adapt to the rising tide of climate impacts is becoming a bigger issue for countries in southern Europe, many of which rely on tourism to boost their economies.

The recent high temperatures have brought the climate crisis into sharp focus for some European vacationers.

“The climate crisis that we’ve been fearing will happen in 10 or 15 years is already here in some parts of the world. That’s the scary part,” Mr Roo Clark, 28, from Suffolk in eastern England, who is currently staying with his girlfriend on the Greek island of Skyros, told CNN.

“Five years ago, my friends and I wouldn’t have even spoken about it (climate change), whereas now it’s more of a conversation.”

The authorities in Greece have repeatedly warned tourists not to underestimate the intense heat, espe-

cially during the middle of the day. Hiking in high temperatures has been a common thread linking recent deaths in the country.

Temperatures in Greece are forecast to be between 32 deg C and 35 deg C over the next couple of weeks, a few degrees above summer average, according to CNN meteorologists, except for one to two days when rain is forecast, which will keep temperatures down.

Mr Stefanos Sidiropoulos, who runs Greece’s largest travel agency specialising in outdoor activities, said tourists should not jump straight into activities.

“People that are coming from north Europe, or from Canada, places with colder temperatures, it’s more difficult for them. They need time to adapt to these conditions,” he told CNN.

Mr Sidiropoulos’ travel agency, Trekking Hellas, now offers some activities when temperatures are lower, such as during sunrise and sunset hours. “Or at night, with torches,” he said.

Climate change’s influence on where tourists are taking their vacations will have serious repercussions for some countries dependent on income from travellers.

In Greece, tourism contributes nearly €38 billion (\$55.3 billion) – around 20 per cent of the country’s entire economy, according to the World Travel and Tourism Council.

In Italy, where level-three heat alerts – the highest warning – have recently been issued for the cities of Rome, Perugia and Palermo, tourism represents 10 per cent of the country’s economy, according to the latest figures, with one in every eight jobs linked to the industry.

Following Europe’s 2023 summer heatwave, which saw thousands flee from wildfires on the Greek island of Rhodes, there was a 7 per cent rise in expression of concerns about climate change among European travellers, according to the European Travel Commission (ETC), a non-profit association responsible for the promotion of Europe as a travel destination.

This followed a decline in interest in southern Mediterranean vacation locations between the summers of 2022 and 2023, with cooler destinations like the Czech Republic, Bulgaria and Denmark becoming more appealing, ETC told CNN.

Mr Eduardo Santander, chief executive of ETC, told CNN that “travellers are increasingly aware of extreme weather events and their potential impact on their vacations”,

adding that in the future this could cause more travellers to visit southern Europe during the spring and late autumn instead of during the hotter summer months.

For now, Mr Santander said, tourist concerns about climate change tend to be relatively short-lived. “Travellers are concerned after the summer, but tend to forget about

those events when booking their next holidays in spring,” he said.

Extreme heat is one consequence of climate change impacting tourist hot spots across Europe. But there are others.

Warmer conditions caused by climate change are pushing populations of disease-transmitting mosquitoes into new areas of

Europe, according to the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC).

Mr Clark, the tourist staying on Skyros, said the number of mosquitoes was very high during the heatwave in early June. “We were absolutely riddled with bites. There was no wind, and even though we sprayed ourselves they still found a way,” he told CNN. “It was definitely the low winds and high temperatures causing it.”

The ECDC said one key mosquito species that can spread dengue, chikungunya, and Zika viruses, called *Aedes albopictus*, is now established in many European countries, including Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain.

Dr Andrea Ammon, ECDC director, said travel can contribute to the expansion of the species’ reach.

“Increased international travel from dengue-endemic countries will also increase the risk of imported cases,” she said in a statement.

In 2023, the ECDC recorded 130 locally acquired cases of dengue in Europe, up from 71 cases in 2022.

There have been no locally acquired dengue cases reported in Europe so far this summer, the centre said, but based on previous summer trends, it expects the first cases to be reported in the coming weeks.

One human case of West Nile virus infection, spread by the native *Culex pipiens* mosquito, was reported in Spain’s Seville province in March, according to the ECDC.

In 2023, the organisation recorded 713 locally acquired human cases of West Nile virus infection in nine European Union countries, resulting in 67 deaths.

Last summer’s record-breaking temperatures across the globe were driven by a mix of human-caused climate change and the return of the natural, El Nino phenomenon, which brings warmer global temperatures. This combination raised temperatures to record levels in parts of Europe, the planet’s fastest-

warming continent.

But even as the impact of El Nino diminishes, experts say the long-term trend of global warming will go on.

“Climate change is tilting the odds in favour of more extreme events happening more frequently, and then becoming more severe,” Dr Rebecca Carter, director of climate adaptation and resilience at the World Resources Institute, told CNN.

She added that high tourist numbers in some regions of Europe were putting already hard-pressed local authorities under pressure, as they juggle the need to keep residents safe from high heat as well as protecting visitors.

Dr Carter said the travel industry needs to consider climate adaptation. “It’s something I don’t think the travel industry is thinking about as much as it should,” she said, adding that booking rules could be made more flexible for flights and hotels, for example.

“When people plan these trips, it’s weeks or months in advance, and you can’t predict when a specific place is going to have extreme heat.” Some tourists, such as parents whose children are at school, have less flexibility when deciding travel plans, Dr Carter said.

In these circumstances, she said, planning was key: “What would you do if there was an extreme heatwave, and the power was out? Can you map out in advance where you would go for help?”

Mr Sidiropoulos from Trekking Hellas agreed that forward planning was important, but he was keen for visitors to still get out and enjoy the beauty of Greece’s culture and natural world.

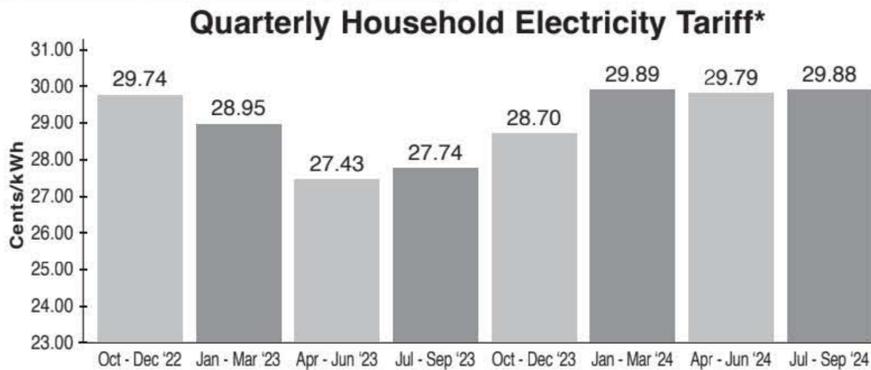
“I always say to people who are travelling, ‘Don’t stay in your hotel and just do the classic things like go to a restaurant,’” he said. “You have the opportunity to see nature... and to see the authentic side of our country.” CNN

ELECTRICITY TARIFF REVISION (1 Jul to 30 Sep 2024)

For the period from 1 Jul to 30 Sep 2024, household electricity tariff (before 9% GST) will increase by 0.3% or 0.09 cent per kWh compared to the previous quarter. This is due to higher energy costs compared with the previous quarter. Electricity tariffs (before 9% GST), including tariffs for non-households, will increase by an average of 0.3% or 0.09 cent per kWh.

| | TARIFF CATEGORY | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--|-----------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| | Low Tension (e.g. households and small businesses) | | | High Tension Small (HTS) | | | High Tension Large (HTL) | | | Extra High Tension (EHT) | | |
| Usage Charge (¢ per kWh) | EXISTING TARIFF (before GST) | REVISED TARIFF (before GST) | REVISED TARIFF (incl GST) | EXISTING TARIFF (before GST) | REVISED TARIFF (before GST) | REVISED TARIFF (incl GST) | EXISTING TARIFF (before GST) | REVISED TARIFF (before GST) | REVISED TARIFF (incl GST) | EXISTING TARIFF (before GST) | REVISED TARIFF (before GST) | REVISED TARIFF (incl GST) |
| Peak Period (7.00am - 11.00pm) | 29.79 | 29.88 | 32.57 | 27.31 | 27.05 | 29.48 | 27.09 | 26.83 | 29.24 | 26.11 | 25.88 | 28.21 |
| Off-Peak Period (11.00pm - 7.00am) | 29.79 | 29.88 | 32.57 | 16.49 | 17.38 | 18.94 | 16.48 | 17.37 | 18.93 | 16.38 | 17.27 | 18.82 |
| Reactive Power Charge (¢ per chargeable kVArh) | - | - | - | 0.59 | 0.59 | 0.64 | 0.59 | 0.59 | 0.64 | 0.48 | 0.48 | 0.52 |
| Capacity Charge (per kW per mth) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Contracted Capacity Charge | - | - | - | \$16.37 | \$16.37 | \$17.84 | \$16.37 | \$16.37 | \$17.84 | \$12.90 | \$12.90 | \$14.06 |
| Uncontracted Capacity Charge | - | - | - | \$24.56 | \$24.56 | \$26.77 | \$24.56 | \$24.56 | \$26.77 | \$19.35 | \$19.35 | \$21.09 |

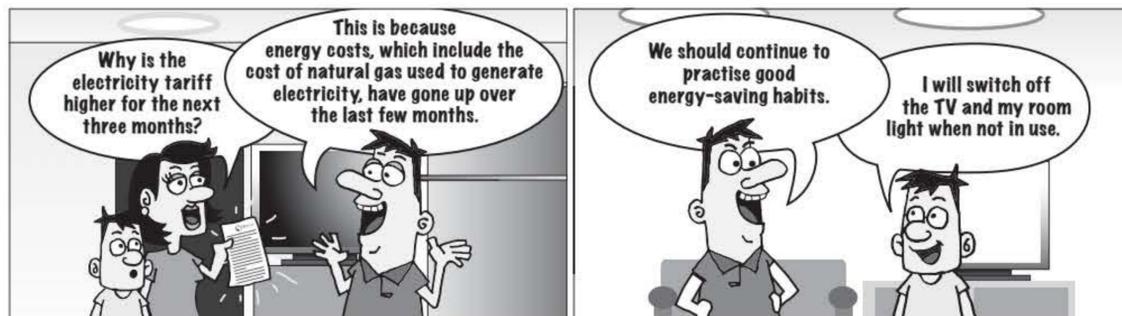
Household Electricity Tariff



* before 9% GST

• For households, the electricity tariff* will increase by 0.3% or 0.09 cent per kWh from 29.79 to 29.88 cents per kWh for 1 Jul to 30 Sep 2024.

• The average monthly electricity bill for families living in four-room HDB flats will increase by \$0.35*.



Tips on how to save electricity

- Switch off electrical appliances, such as TVs, computers, air-conditioners, fans and lights when not in use. Switch off the power socket to save standby power.**
- If you use an air conditioner, set the temperature at 25°C. A household can save more electricity for every degree raised.**
- Choose an energy-efficient appliance by checking the energy labels. The more ticks, the more energy efficient the appliance is.**

For more information on electricity tariffs, please visit our website at <https://www.spgroup.com.sg/our-services/utilities/tariff-information>

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Gas tariffs for 1 July 2024 to 30 September 2024 have been revised. For households, the gas tariff (before 9% GST) will increase by 0.30 cent per kWh to 23.42 cents per kWh.

| TARIFF CATEGORY | EXISTING TARIFF* | REVISED TARIFF* | REVISED TARIFF (with 9% GST) |
|--|------------------|-----------------|------------------------------|
| General Tariff (cents / kWh) | 23.12 | 23.42 | 25.53 |
| Bulk Tariff A (cents / kWh) Minimum consumption: 1,000 kWh of gas per month | 21.91 | 22.21 | 24.21 |
| Bulk Tariff B (cents / kWh) Minimum consumption: 50,000 kWh of gas per month | 21.31 | 21.61 | 23.55 |

* Rates reflected are not inclusive of 9% GST

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Biden reassures big-money donors after debate debacle

Poor performance of US leader, 81, raises fears about his age and mental acuity

WASHINGTON - US President Joe Biden attended a triple-header of campaign fund-raisers on June 29, seeking to reassure high-dollar donors that he can still win reelection in November despite a debate performance that sparked panic among many Democrats.

Accompanying him at the fund-raisers in New York and New Jersey was First Lady Jill Biden, who has fiercely defended her 81-year-old husband amid calls for him to step aside.

"Joe isn't just the right person for the job - he's the only person for the job," she told one gathering, which featured A-list actors Sarah Jessica Parker and Matthew Broderick among the co-hosts.

The President is facing a wave of doubts following the June 27 debate against Republican rival Donald Trump, after he frequently stumbled over his words and lost his train of thought - exacerbating fears about his age and mental acuity.

Many political commentators called for Mr Biden to stand down following the debate, including The New York Times editorial board.



President Joe Biden and First Lady Jill Biden travelling for campaign events in New York and New Jersey on June 29. Mr Biden's campaign has accepted that the debate with Republican rival Donald Trump did not go how it had hoped, but insists the neck-and-neck race has not been significantly altered. PHOTO: AFP

The Washington Post's editorial board, meanwhile, urged him to do some soul-searching at the

weekend after his "calamitous" debate performance raised "legitimate questions about whether

he's up for another four years in the world's toughest job".

No high-ranking elected Demo-

crat has yet joined the call, and former presidents Barack Obama and Bill Clinton both publicly reit-

erated their backing.

Mr Biden attempted to tamp down the nay-saying with a fiery campaign speech on June 28 in North Carolina in which he pledged to keep fighting.

"I don't walk as easy as I used to. I don't speak as smoothly as I used to. I don't debate as well as I used to," he admitted to supporters.

"But I know how to tell the truth. I know how to do this job," he said to huge cheers, vowing "when you get knocked down, you get back up".

Mr Biden's campaign has accepted that the debate did not go how it had hoped, but insists the neck-and-neck race against Trump has not been significantly altered.

Mrs Jennifer O'Malley Dillon, chairwoman of Mr Biden's campaign, said in a public memo on June 29 that internal post-debate polling showed that "voters' opinions were not changed".

She said there had actually been a surge of support during and following the debate, with US\$27 million (S\$36.6 million) raised by the evening of June 28.

"I didn't have a great night but neither did Trump," Mr Biden told one of the gatherings on June 29.

"I promise you're gonna win this election," he added.

Later, he and Mrs Biden flew to neighbouring New Jersey to attend a fund-raiser with the state's Democratic governor, Mr Phil Murphy.

"I understand the concern after the debate," Mr Biden told the gathering. "I get it. I didn't have a great night, but I'm going to be fighting harder," he pledged.

Mr Murphy told the crowd that Mr Biden is "on fire, and we are all with you 1,000 per cent".

Mr Biden was later set to travel with his family to the Camp David presidential retreat, where he had spent the previous week preparing for the debate with close aides. AFP

Immigration at heart of UK healthcare - and election

LONDON - Britain's state-funded National Health Service (NHS) is hugely reliant on migrant workers, yet politicians have vowed to slash immigration as they fight for votes before July 4's general election.

The governing right-wing Conservatives and the main opposition centre-left Labour Party, which is tipped to win the national vote, each pledge action over the key battleground yet seek to safeguard Britain's cherished but stretched NHS.

Conservatives want to hike the minimum salary required for a skilled-worker visa to crack down on Britain's record migration levels, but opponents argue this will worsen recruitment.

Labour wishes to recruit and train more British staff, arguing that the NHS has been starved of cash by 14 years of Tory government and become too reliant on overseas staff.

The topic also grabbed voters' attention after Brexit champion Ni-

gel Farage in May took the helm of hard-right minority party Reform UK, which vows to freeze immigration altogether.

Yet from hospital wards and emergency departments to opticians and laboratories, foreign workers are vital to the NHS, which provides universal healthcare free at the point of delivery - but has been plagued in recent years by strikes over pay.

Commentators and industry experts warn about curbing the inflow of health workers, while a London museum exhibition highlights their often-overlooked vital role.

"It's an enormous institution, something like one in 10 workers in Britain works for the NHS," said Mr Matthew Plowright, communications director at the Migration Museum.

"From the beginning... it's needed people from all over the world." The museum features an exhibition entitled Heart Of The Nation,

detailing how thousands of doctors and nurses from across the world have joined the NHS since its creation in 1948.

It shows how many health workers escaped war-ravaged Britain to pursue new lives in Australia, Canada and the United States, sparking a shortage of staff which prompted the authorities to recruit abroad - especially from countries of the former British Empire, including in the Caribbean.

The NHS of today employs about 1.2 million full-time staff in England but about one-fifth are non-British - with Indian, Filipino and Nigerian the most common out of more than 200 different nationalities.

However, staffing levels are deemed too low, especially for nurses.

"The UK is very reliant on international recruitment for its nursing workforce," noted Mr Martyn Campbell, international policy expert at the Royal College of Nurs-

ing. "Of all countries in the world, we're one of the most dependent ones," he told AFP.

University College London professor of healthcare organisation and management Naomi Fulop said the entire UK sector suffers from a labour crisis.

"It's a workforce crisis and it's in the NHS. It's also in the care sector," said Prof Fulop.

"There's the lack of training (and) the lack of new people coming in."

Britain issues health- and care-worker visas to help plug chronic staff shortages.

Many exhausted health workers have chosen to leave the profession in the wake of the Covid-19 crisis.

Britain's departure from the European Union in early 2021 has meanwhile curbed the influx of key health workers, as well as those in other sectors such as tourism, hospitality and agriculture.

"There's recently, and particularly since the pandemic, high levels of stress that have caused people to leave" the NHS, said Prof Fulop.

"So there's a retention problem; doctors, nurses and others retiring early."

"Brexit has contributed so that the source of staff that the NHS had from EU countries has dried up," she added. AFP

UK's Reform party drops three election candidates over offensive comments

LONDON - Britain's hard-right Reform UK party, led by Brexiteer Nigel Farage, has withdrawn support for three candidates for this week's general election over allegations that they made offensive comments, local media reported on June 29.

Mr Farage's anti-immigration group - tipped to take support away from Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's Conservatives in the July 4 vote - has been embroiled in a racism scandal as the election campaign enters its final days.

Reform no longer endorses Mr Edward Oakenfull, Mr Robert Lomas and Mr Leslie Lilley, but they will still appear on the ballot paper as Reform candidates since it is too late for them to be removed, said BBC and Sky News.

Mr Oakenfull, standing in Derbyshire in the East Midlands area of England, is accused of having posted on social media in 2023 derogatory comments about the IQ of sub-Saharan Africans.

Mr Lomas, a candidate in Barnsley in north England, reportedly

made offensive comments about black people.

Mr Lilley, seeking to become an MP in Southend in south-east England, allegedly described irregular migrants arriving in Britain on small boats as "scum", adding: "I hope your family get robbed, beaten or attacked."

Appearing on BBC Television on the night of June 28, Mr Farage disowned the trio, saying: "I want nothing to do with them."

The development came after Mr Sunak, Britain's first leader of colour, denounced a racist slur used against him by a campaigner for Reform.

An undercover investigation by Channel 4 filmed campaigners making racist, homophobic and offensive comments in Clacton-on-Sea, in eastern England, where Mr Farage is hoping to be elected as an MP.

The supporter also called for Muslims to be kicked "out of mosques" and their places of worship to be turned into pubs.

Mr Farage suggested that the



Mr Nigel Farage's Reform UK party - tipped to take support away from the Conservative Party in the July 4 election - has been embroiled in a racism scandal. PHOTO: AFP

comments were a "complete and total set-up", claiming without evidence that the man may have been paid to act in the video, possibly by opponents threatened by the party's popularity. He has complained to Britain's elections watchdog.

Channel 4 denied Mr Farage's claims of fabrication.

In its report, another campaigner suggested that members of the LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer) community are paedophiles.

Reform UK has come under growing scrutiny in recent weeks as it climbs up the polls.

According to anti-racism organisation Hope Not Hate, the party has withdrawn at least 166 candidates since the beginning of the

year, many of whom have made racist or offensive remarks.

Mr Farage, seeking to become an MP at the eighth attempt, has tried to blame a vetting company for not properly scrutinising would-be candidates.

The Tories and the main opposition Labour party, which is expected to win the election, accuse Mr Farage of failing to tackle racism in his party.

A new poll published by the Labour-supporting Mirror newspaper on June 28 put Mr Sunak's Conservatives at 18 per cent, with Reform at 21 per cent, both well behind Labour at 38 per cent.

Support for Reform could split the right-wing vote, handing Labour a landslide, analysts say. AFP

Clashes erupt as far-right AfD declares aim to govern Germany

ESSEN, Germany - The far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) declared its ambition to rise to power in Germany as its party congress kicked off on June 29 amid clashes between hooded demonstrators and police, just weeks after it scored record European Union election results.

About 1,000 policemen were deployed in the western city of Essen, where demonstration organisers said 50,000 protesters marched towards the congress. The police have not yet provided figures.

"We want to govern, first in the east (of Germany), then in the west, then at federal level," Mr Timo Chrupalla, co-president of the AfD, told around 600 delegates of the two-day meeting, which started half an hour late due to street blockades.

The police said that two officers had to be hospitalised following attacks by protesters.

"Unknown assailants kicked two police officers in the head" and continued to "hit them while they were on the ground", said the police of North Westphalia, where Essen is located.

Seven officers were also slightly injured in the same attack near the Grugahalle hall. The perpetrators fled the scene.

The police said earlier that they had used pepper spray and batons, and eleven officers were injured in a separate incident.

"Several disruptive violent actions occurred in the Ruettenscheld quarter. Demonstrators, some of them hooded, attacked security forces. Several arrests were made," they said on social media platform X.

A top regional official had warned that "potentially violent far-left troublemakers" could be among the protesters.

Adding to the headache of security forces is the Euro 2024 football tournament, with the last 16 clash between hosts Germany and Denmark taking place on June 29 in Dortmund - not far from Essen.

In early June, AfD notched up its best EU election result since its creation in 2013, winning 16 per cent of the vote to take second place.

Mr Chrupalla praised the party's progress at a local level and its strong EU election result.

It was behind the main conser-

vative CDU-CSU opposition bloc, but ahead of Chancellor Olaf Scholz's Social Democrats, which is in power at the head of a troubled three-party coalition.

The AfD congress comes ahead of three key elections in September in states that once formed part of communist East Germany, and where the AfD has been topping opinion polls.

"We are here, and we will stay," said party co-president Alice Weidel, opening the congress.

Both Ms Weidel and Mr Chrupalla were re-elected to lead the party for another two years.

"We have the right, like all political parties - to hold a congress," she added.

Buoyed by a surge in immigration and a weak performance by Europe's top economy, the party hit as high as 22 per cent in opinion polls in January. However, its support faltered amid a welter of scandals that mainly implicated its top EU election candidate, Mr Maximilian Krah.

"I believe that the party has learnt a lot in recent months and will be very careful when we put forward leading candidates in the future," Ms Weidel told the Politico news outlet on June 27.

Mr Krah initially faced allegations of suspicious links to Russia and China. He then sparked widespread anger by telling an Italian newspaper that not every member of the Nazis' notorious SS was "automatically a criminal".

The comments prompted the AfD's expulsion from its far-right group, Identity and Democracy (ID), in the European Parliament, in which France's National Rally (RN) and Italy's League had been its partners.

While the AfD has sought to shift the blame for all its recent woes onto Mr Krah, there were signs of problems even before.

The RN had already distanced itself from the AfD after reports emerged in January that the German party had discussed the expulsion of immigrants and "non-assimilated" citizens at a meeting with extremists. The reports caused shock in Germany and triggered weeks of mass protests.

Following the EU polls, the AfD ejected Mr Krah from the delegation it sends to Brussels, but the ID group does not seem ready to re-admit it, leaving the party searching for new partners. AFP

Fighting rages in Gaza City district for fourth day

Tens of thousands of Palestinians flee devastated area as Israeli army strikes

GAZA STRIP - Heavy battles and bombardment hit Gaza City's Shejaia district for a fourth day on June 30, months after the Israeli army declared Hamas' command structure dismantled in the northern area.

Tens of thousands of Palestinians have fled the devastated neighbourhood, where the Israeli army said it has fought Hamas and Islamic Jihad militants both "above and below ground" in tunnels.

The military said troops had "eliminated several terrorists, located weapons and conducted targeted raids on booby-trapped combat compounds" over the past 24 hours while the air force had "struck dozens" of the militants' infrastructure sites.

It also reported clashes in central Gaza and the southern Rafah area, a week after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu declared that the "intense phase" of the war raging since Oct 7 was nearing an end.

The UN humanitarian agency Ocha estimated that "60,000 to 80,000 people were displaced" from Shejaia since new fighting broke out there on June 27 and the army issued evacuation orders.

Months of on-and-off talks towards a Gaza truce and hostage release deal have, meanwhile, made little progress, with Hamas saying on June 29 there was "nothing new" in a revised plan presented by US mediators.

US President Joe Biden late in May outlined what he called an Israeli plan for a six-week truce and exchange of some hostages for Palestinian prisoners held in Israel.

Washington last week presented



Smoke billowing from an area targeted by Israeli bombardment in the Gaza City district of Shejaia on June 28, where Israel's army said it has fought Hamas and Islamic Jihad militants both "above and below ground" in tunnels. PHOTO: AFP

"new language" for parts of the proposed deal, according to US news site Axios.

A Hamas official in Lebanon, Mr Osama Hamdan, confirmed that the Islamist movement had received the latest proposal but said it presented "no real progress in the negotiations to stop the aggression".

Hamdan labelled the proposals "a waste of time" that aimed to give "additional time for the occupation (Israel) to practise genocide".

The war started with Hamas' attack on southern Israel on Oct 7 that resulted in the deaths of 1,195 people, mostly civilians, according to an AFP tally based on Israeli figures.

The militants also seized 251 hostages, 116 of whom remain in Gaza although the army says 42 are dead.

Israel's retaliatory offensive has

killed at least 37,877 people, also mostly civilians, according to data from the Health Ministry in Hamas-run Gaza.

Six more people were killed in an air strike at dawn targeting a family house in Rafah, said medics at Nasser Hospital where the bodies were taken.

Artillery shelling also struck southern areas of Rafah city, witnesses said.

UN and other relief agencies have voiced alarm over the dire humanitarian crisis and threat of starvation the war and Israeli siege have brought for Gaza's 2.4 million people.

"It is really unbearable," said Ms Louise Wateridge from UNRWA, the UN agency supporting Palestinian refugees, speaking on June 28 after returning to the city of Khan Younis.

"Everything is rubble," she said.

"And yet people are living there again... There's no water there, there's no sanitation, there's no food. And now, people are living back in these buildings that are empty shells."

In Israel, thousands of protesters again took to the streets of Tel Aviv on July 29, demanding greater efforts to secure the return of the remaining captives and calling for early elections.

Former hostage Noa Argamani, 26, who was rescued in a special forces raid on June 8, said in a video address that "we can't forget about the hostages who are still in Hamas captivity, and we must do everything possible to bring them back home".

The Gaza conflict has also led to soaring tensions on Israel's northern border with Lebanon, where the army has traded cross-border fire with the Hezbollah movement since October.

Hezbollah is part of the "axis of resistance" of Iran-backed armed groups against Israel and its Western allies. The grouping includes militants in Iraq and Yemen's Houthi rebels.

Israel's military said in June that its plans for a Lebanon offensive had been "approved and validated", prompting Hezbollah to respond that no part of Israel would be spared in a full-blown conflict.

Iran's mission to the UN, on social media on June 29, said it "deems as psychological warfare the Zionist regime's propaganda about intending to attack Lebanon".

It also warned its arch foe that "should it embark on full-scale military aggression, an annihilating war will ensue".

"All options, including the full involvement of all resistance fronts, are on the table."

Iran, which backs Hamas, has praised the Oct 7 attack as a success but has denied any involvement. AFP

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SINGAPORE

Discounts, freebies to recognise efforts of national servicemen

Deals at over 180 merchants part of initiatives to celebrate 40 years of Total Defence

Osmond Chia

All former and current national servicemen and Safra members can receive freebies and discounts for food, lifestyle products and services at more than 180 merchants islandwide, to recognise their contributions to Singapore's defence.

Among the highlights are half-price discounts on booking fees for Safra club facilities, weekend movie offers at Shaw Theatres, and promotions at food and beverage joints such as Burger King and Coffee Bean and Tea Leaf.

Safra members can each redeem an ice cream at Swensen's outlets islandwide. They, as well as national servicemen, can also claim a

chicken burger at McDonald's, which is handing out 15,000 burgers in phases over the coming months.

Between June 28 and July 2, Safra members and national servicemen can get 23 per cent off fuel purchases at Caltex, too.

Most of the 220 Appreciating NSmen Deals will commence by July 1 on Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) Day, with most promotions lasting till Aug 31, said Safra in a statement on June 30. National servicemen and Safra members have to present their IB or Safra membership card to enjoy these benefits. For the list of deals, visit safra.sg/appreciationdeals

The deals are part of initiatives to celebrate the efforts of national



President Tharman Shanmugaratnam and his spouse, Ms Jane Ittogi, together with Senior Minister of State for Defence and Manpower Zaqy Mohamad (standing, in red shirt), observing participants of a first aid activity at the Be@Safra Open House at Safra Choa Chu Kang on June 30. ST PHOTO: GIN TAY

servicemen and to commemorate 40 years of the Republic's long-running national defence campaign Total Defence, which rallies Singaporeans to rise up to social, economic, military, civil, psychological and digital challenges.

As part of the festivities, more than 80,000 national servicemen and their families have participated in Safra open house events, which held carnival activities and Total Defence-related exhibitions between June 15 and 30 at seven Safra locations across Singapore.

The Safra open house events

ended on June 30 with an open house at the recently opened Safra clubhouse in Choa Chu Kang, featuring performances, games and other activities.

President Tharman Shanmugaratnam and his spouse, Ms Jane Ittogi, were among the visitors at the event. They were joined by Defence Minister Ng Eng Hen and Senior Minister of State for Defence and Manpower Zaqy Mohamad.

They met national servicemen and participants at the open house, including families playing a giant Total Defence-themed board

game and children participating in an art jam.

Home-grown singer-songwriter Yong Wen Yen, whose stage name is AEONA, performed her song Carry Forth The Fire. The song, based on the theme of cohesion, was the winning entry in a songwriting competition for Total Defence organised by The Songwriter Music College.

Mr Tharman, who is also patron of Safra, penned down a personal pledge of commitment to Total Defence. Speaking to the media, Mr Zaqy, who is also president of Sa-

fra, said more than 40,000 pledges have been collected from the public to show support for NSmen or themes related to Total Defence, like multiculturalism.

"Every year, NSmen serve their duties, whether in the SAF, SCDF (Singapore Civil Defence Force), or the police, to train and safeguard our defence and security," said Mr Zaqy. "We appreciate all the efforts and their contribution, especially their families, too, for their support."

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Free shuttle bus to connect Marine Parade GRC, MacPherson, Mountbatten residents to amenities

Therese Soh

A new shuttle bus service will be rolled out from July 8 to connect residents living in areas such as Marine Parade and Joo Chiat to amenities including MRT stations, polyclinics and hawkers centres.

The free service will ply the roads from 10am to 4pm on weekdays, excluding public holidays, and serve residents in Marine Parade GRC, MacPherson and Mountbatten.

Each of the seven wards in these constituencies will be served by one shuttle bus, which can seat 22 passengers and will arrive at inter-

vals of about one hour – the time it takes for the buses to complete their route.

The initiative, which will be reviewed after one year, is by the People's Association and MPs of Marine Parade GRC, MacPherson and Mountbatten.

Minister for Culture, Community and Youth Edwin Tong said the aim is to improve connectivity for residents in the various constituencies.

The bus routes and stops were planned based on feedback from residents garnered through engagements such as dialogues and walkabouts, he added.

"Even with a very widespread (transport) system of public buses

and MRTs, there is sometimes a gap, and that gap can translate into something that is quite difficult, especially if you are a senior," said Mr Tong, who is MP for the Joo Chiat ward of Marine Parade GRC.

Each route makes five to seven stops at places frequently visited by residents like polyclinics, as well as destinations that seniors and individuals with mobility issues might find hard to reach because of walking distance, he said.

The shuttle service in Joo Chiat, for instance, will include stops at Eunos Polyclinic, Marine Terrace MRT station, which opened on June 23 along with six other Thomson-East Coast Line stations, and Kembangan MRT station.

A signboard will be placed at all stops along the routes so that residents can identify them.

Manpower Minister Tan See Leng said that besides improving accessibility to different areas, the initiative aims to encourage social connectivity among elderly residents, given Singapore's ageing population.

"In terms of productive longevity, it is about getting our elderly residents out of their houses (and to) build relationships and social spheres around them," said Dr Tan, who is MP for Marine Parade in the GRC.

Stops located on more than one route will allow residents to transfer between services so that they

can travel to different constituencies. For instance, Eunos Polyclinic is a stop on four of the seven routes.

From June 30, residents can register for the service via the app TongTar Riders, which will generate a barcode that they must scan upon boarding a bus.

During registration, residents must use their postal codes to verify that they live in eligible constituencies.

They can also register for a physical card – for tapping a card reader upon boarding the bus – at nine community centres or clubs.

These are Braddell Heights Community Club, Geylang Serai Community Club, Joo Chiat Community Club, Kampong Ubi Community Centre, Katong Community Centre, MacPherson Community Club, Marine Parade Community Club, Mountbatten Community Centre and Siglap South Community Centre.

The app will display the real-time location of the buses and the amount of time they will take to reach a stop.

A colour-coded system will signal how crowded buses are – with green indicating a high number of vacant seats. Amber means the bus is moderately filled, while red means most seats are taken.

While residents will get priority for the buses, non-residents, such as those who are the caregivers of residents, may be allowed to board the buses, depending on factors like the availability of seats.

Retiree Noeline Gomes, who lives in Kembangan-Chai Chee, said she plans to use the service to explore stops along the route for leisure.

Retiree Maggie Cheng, 73, who lives in Geylang Serai, said the shuttle bus will make visits to Eunos Polyclinic more convenient and save time. She would otherwise have to spend 20 minutes walking there, as no buses go from her home to the clinic.

"I hope next time, they extend (the operating hours of the service)," she said.

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Over 300 cancer patients have received proton beam therapy

Singapore is the second country in South-east Asia to offer proton beam therapy (PBT), an advanced form of radiation treatment. Ms Leong Pei Ying, 41, hopes that having undergone PBT together with chemotherapy – to shrink the tumour in her brain following surgery earlier this year – her frequent dates with the operating theatre would be a thing of the past. ST PHOTO: AZMI ATHNI



Treatment targets tumours more precisely, minimising damage to other tissues, organs

Salma Khalik
Senior Health Correspondent

Ms Leong Pei Ying, 41, is grateful that proton beam therapy (PBT) is now available in Singapore, and is covered by her Integrated Shield Plan (IP).

The hospital clinical administrator has had her skull opened five times since she was diagnosed with a brain tumour in her frontal lobe 11 years ago, when she was 30 years old.

The operations in 2013, 2016, 2019, 2021 and 2024 were to cut out as much of the cancer tumour as possible. But each time after surgery, the tumour grew again.

She is hoping that having undergone PBT together with chemotherapy – to shrink the tumour following her surgery earlier in 2024 – her frequent dates with the operating theatre would be a thing of

the past. Previously, she did not follow up on the surgical excision of the tumour with chemotherapy and radiation, which she declined as conventional X-ray may severely damage parts of her healthy brain cells.

“My doctor suggested whole-brain radiation,” she said. “When I asked about side effects, he said it might affect my mental capacity, make me forgetful, and as it (the tumour) was just behind my right eye, it could also affect my vision. The risk was too high.”

In March, she went for PBT treatment, which comprised 33 daily sessions, each lasting a few minutes.

“The prognosis for her is good,” said her radiation oncologist, Dr Looi Wen Shen. Before the PBT treatment, the pace of disease progression was picking up and the tumour was growing, so she had surgery to reduce the size of the

tumour in January.

Said Dr Looi: “Following PBT, the tumour progression halted, with some slight shrinkage. We don’t expect her type of tumour to have a complete response right away as PBT’s effects on the tumour may take some time. Although some tumour cells may die right away, some cells may only die when they attempt to replicate.”

Dr Michael Wang, who chairs radiation oncology at the National Cancer Centre Singapore (NCCS), said the therapy is an advanced form of radiation treatment that can target cancer tumours with greater precision and minimise damage to surrounding tissues and organs.

The risks of damaging healthy cells are far lower with PBT.

In conventional radiation, the rays start strong and diminish as they move from outside the body, through the tumour and out the opposite side. This means that healthy cells in the path of the rays may get affected.

With PBT, the rays start at a low dose, spike at the tumour and

THE THERAPY’S EDGE

PBT potentially causes fewer treatment-related side effects and reduces the risk of developing secondary cancers due to radiation... Proton therapy is also suitable for cancers located in sensitive areas like the brain, or near the eye or spinal cord.



DR MICHAEL WANG, who chairs radiation oncology at the National Cancer Centre Singapore, referring to proton beam therapy (PBT).

stops, without going further. So there may be damage to healthy cells from the point of entry to the tumour, but not beyond that. Also, the strength of the rays is lower on entry and peaks at the tumour.

Singapore is the second country in South-east Asia to offer PBT. The other is Thailand, but treatment there is exclusively for Thai nationals.

Singapore’s first PBT centre opened at Mount Elizabeth Novena in May 2023. Two more opened one month later at the Singapore Institute of Advanced Medicine Holdings (SAM) at Biopolis, and NCCS.

Mount Elizabeth Novena and SAM have one PBT treatment gantry each, while NCCS has four treatment gantries. The rotating gantries are the treatment arms of the machine, with each located in a separate room.

Since the launch of PBT here, more than 300 people have undergone treatment.

Dr Wang said PBT “potentially causes fewer treatment-related side effects and reduces the risk of

developing secondary cancers due to radiation. It is recommended for young adults and children below the age of 25. Proton therapy is also suitable for cancers located in sensitive areas like the brain, or near the eye or spinal cord”.

He added that at NCCS, “the top three cancers that were treated using proton therapy to date are head and neck cancer, prostate cancer, as well as cancers of the nervous system and musculoskeletal system arising in children, adolescents and young adults”.

Ms Leong said she had thought of going to the US for the treatment, but this would not have been covered by insurance and she found the cost prohibitive. Aside from the cost of the therapy, she would need to be there for over a month as the treatment is done in more than 30 short doses daily.

Her bill of \$67,000 for the therapy at SAM was almost entirely covered by her IP and rider.

The Ministry of Health (MOH) has limited the use of PBT to certain cancers, largely because the treatment costs 2½ to three times that of conventional radiation, and, for most cancers, it does not increase survival rates.

Claims from MediShield Life must also meet certain criteria, such as “an expected survival of more than five years (for the patient) after treatment with PBT”.

Coverage under the IPs varies. The current maximum coverage is \$100,000.

The majority of PBT patients here are locals.

The NCCS has had 164 patients, of whom 151 were Singaporeans or permanent residents. Its spokesperson said locals paid from \$28,600 to \$50,000, depending on the number of treatment sessions needed.

The spokesperson added: “About 87 per cent of these patients have had their treatment cost covered by Integrated Shield Plans or MediFund, after MediSave and MediShield Life.”

At Mount Elizabeth Novena, more than 110 patients have been treated, of whom 52 per cent were locals. Its spokesman said the rest were foreign patients coming “from 16 countries, mainly Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Vietnam, and also countries farther away like the UK, Canada, Bhutan and Kenya”.

SAM did not want to reveal how many patients it has treated, but said 60 per cent of them were locals. Said its chief operating officer Paul Yeo: “Foreign patients were mainly from Australia, Vietnam and Indonesia, but we had patients from all over, even Nepal.”

MOH said there is no subsidy for PBT as it is a non-standard treatment option. Its spokesman added: “MOH will review the financing approach for proton beam therapy when there is sufficient data and evidence of its cost-effectiveness.”

Said Ms Leong: “I hope that with the PBT treatment, I no longer need to go for surgery every few years.”

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Commentary

Consider 2-tier system, so more cancers can be treated with PBT while managing costs



Salma Khalik

Senior Health Correspondent

Proton beam therapy (PBT) is touted as a precision radiation tool to kill cancer cells, causing less damage to surrounding healthy cells than conventional radiation.

Dr Michael Wang, who chairs the division of radiation oncology at the National Cancer Centre Singapore (NCCS), said PBT reduces radiation exposure to nearby healthy tissues and organs, and “potentially” reduces the risk of developing secondary cancers due to radiation. So it can be used more aggressively to kill off more cancer cells.

Since the middle of 2023, Singapore has joined a handful of countries in the region offering PBT to treat cancer. Three places here offer this treatment: Mount Elizabeth Novena and the Singapore Institute of Advanced Medicine Holdings at Biopolis have one treatment gantry each, while the NCCS has four treatment gantries.

The rotating gantries are the PBT’s treatment arms, with each sited in its own room, away from the cyclotron that divides and speeds up the protons for use.

Since its introduction, only about 300 people have been treated with PBT, although thousands of cancer patients undergo radiation therapy every year.

The sticking point is the high cost. The cost of the treatment, about 2½ to three times that of conventional radiation therapy, can be prohibitive. So if radiation treatments cost \$10,000 to \$30,000, the cost of PBT could range from \$20,000 to \$90,000. Also, while the PBT treatment

may have fewer side effects, a patient’s survival rate after the treatment has not been proven to be superior to conventional radiation for the majority of cancers.

To keep a lid on possible runaway cancer treatment costs, the Ministry of Health (MOH) has drawn up a list of cancers and conditions for which PBT can be used. PBT cannot be used for cancers or conditions not on the list, no matter whether the patient and the doctor think it might be beneficial.

This is aligned with the objective of the Cancer Drug List (CDL) that MOH introduced in 2022 for proven cancer therapies that can receive MediShield Life, Integrated Shield Plan (IP) and MediSave coverage – to prevent money from being spent on expensive but unproven treatments.

As Health Minister Ong Ye Kung explained in September 2022: “Ultimately, someone still pays for it. In this case, rising cancer drug prices will feed into insurance premiums. Private hospital IP premiums have already gone up by around 20 per cent over the past few years. At this rate of increase, in five years’ time, someone in their 50s probably has to pay about \$300 more in annual premiums.”

The same principle applies for PBT. If the cost of radiation treatment for thousands of people triples every year, insurance premiums will definitely go up. So MOH has decided that the cancers for which PBT is allowed insurance coverage are either in children or young people for whom the risk of getting

secondary cancers could impact their lives far more than it would in an older person; or for cancers in sensitive areas of the body, such as in the head and neck, or prostate.

MOH does not provide any subsidy, although its spokesman said MediShield Life and MediSave do provide some coverage “pegged at existing limits of their conventional radiation therapy treatment, for a specified list of medical conditions approved by MOH for proton therapy”.

MediSave withdrawal ranges from \$80 to \$2,800 and MediShield Life claims range from \$300 to \$2,800 per treatment. There is a different limit for PBT used for the central and peripheral nervous system, where the limit is for per course of treatment and that is \$7,500 for MediSave and \$10,000 for MediShield Life.

This would put PBT beyond the reach of 30 per cent of the population who have only the basic MediShield Life insurance, even if the cancer that afflicts them is on the MOH list for PBT treatment – unless they qualify for and are granted MediFund coverage, the government safety net to help the poor afford their medical treatment.

As it stands, PBT is essentially an option only for close to half the population, those with IPs that give good coverage for PBT treatment. Although 70 per cent of the population has IPs, not all insurers provide sufficient coverage.

Different insurers provide different coverage. For those with private hospital IPs, insurance

pays between \$30,000 and \$100,000 per year. Coverage for those with IPs pegged at B1 class range from \$15,000 to \$100,000 per year.

MOH cannot be faulted for wanting to limit the use of PBT, since allowing it to be freely used will inevitably drive up healthcare costs significantly. Insurance premiums might also rise to the point where many may have to opt out of IP coverage.

But where patients are concerned, some of their major considerations are having fewer side effects, getting rid of more of the tumour, and facing a lower risk of getting secondary cancers.

Today, even if a patient wants to foot the full bill himself for PBT treatment, he is not able to do so for cancers not on the approved list.

Meanwhile, with six very expensive treatment gantries here – each PBT machine costs between \$80 million and \$100 million – having just 300 patients in a year seems to be a gross under-utilisation of the equipment.

Perhaps MOH could ease its grip on who can receive PBT, while ensuring that its use does not push up healthcare cost for everyone.

It could do this with a two-tier system. The first tier would comprise the current PBT-approved list of cancers and conditions that can be covered by IPs, MediShield Life and MediSave, subject to existing caps.

The second tier would be all other cancers requiring radiation treatment. But for this tier, coverage even by private insurers offering IPs should be capped at

conventional radiation rates.

Patients who want to opt for PBT would have to top up the difference in cash. This way, their use of PBT will not impact premiums, but would still give them the choice of therapy.

To be fair to all patients, MOH should also offer similar subsidy for PBT treatment that it does for conventional radiation – although in reality, it will still leave a huge portion of the bill to be paid for by the patient.

If this scheme were to be adopted, it would mean insurers would no longer be allowed to cover conventional radiation treatment on an “as charged” basis.

It would again reflect the CDL model where MediShield Life places coverage caps for different cancer treatments, and the IPs’ coverage is, currently, a few times of that amount – for example, an IP might cover five times the amount covered by MediShield Life.

This would have an added advantage of controlling prices for radiation treatment in lieu of the blank cheque that comes with the current “as charged” model.

It would also allow more foreigners to come for treatment, since any cancer can be treated with PBT. This would help the three institutions offering PBT to recover the costs of the machines more quickly, and hopefully, result in reduced rates.

This would be a win-win for all parties. MOH would be able to keep a lid on costs and patients would have the freedom of choice should they want to pay for it.

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Welfare of confiscated wildlife a growing concern



Veterinarian Petrina Teo with a bearded dragon at the National Parks Board's Centre for Wildlife Rehabilitation on June 24. Dr Teo said that although bearded dragons are native to Australia, with the country's strict biosecurity laws, it is unlikely to accept any animal seized from the illegal wildlife trade. ST PHOTO: BRIAN TEO

Rise in seizures from illegal trade will test Singapore's capacity to keep animals here

Shabana Begum

As Singapore is a key global transshipment hub for illegal wildlife trafficking, the local authorities seize numerous smuggled animals every year.

In 2023, at least 30 cases of pet animal and wildlife smuggling were detected by the authorities in Singapore, with the largest seizure involving 337 birds squeezed into plastic boxes.

Since 2021, the National Parks Board (NParks) has seized 180 wildlife in cases that involved suspects who had peddled these animals for sale on online platforms such as Telegram.

Each year between 2019 and 2023, there were one to eight instances of wildlife smuggling detected at land checkpoints, according to NParks.

A small portion of the confiscated animals are repatriated to their native habitats in other countries.

For the 337 birds, those that survived and are native to Singapore were released here in 2024. They include the scaly-breasted munias, white-rumped shamas and Swinhoe's white-eyes.

Surviving red-whiskered bulbuls were rehomed as they are approved as pets here.

More than 130 of the birds died, likely from the smuggling ordeal.

The most ideal outcome is repatriation, said Ms Xie Renhui, director for wildlife trade at NParks, as these animals get a second shot at life in their natural habitat after being seized from the underground trade.

Ms Elizabeth John, communications manager at Traffic – a global anti-wildlife-trafficking non-go-

vernmental organisation – said: "As enforcement against illegal wildlife trade grows, so too do confiscations. This in turn presents growing problems for countries making those confiscations in terms of how to handle the live animals involved."

Wildlife rescue group Animal Concerns Research and Education Society (Acres) is currently raising funds to explore options to repatriate one of its exotic tortoise species.

In 2018, the organisation sent 51 of the Indian star tortoises rescued from roadsides, households and briefcases of smugglers back to India, where they were eventually released into a protected reserve in Karnataka state.

Unfortunately, repatriation is "not that common", Ms Xie said.

There are many considerations involved for repatriation, such as the commitment between the receiving country and Singapore, costs, documentation needed, and the conservation value of the species in question.

For example, bearded dragons and sugar gliders are native to Australia, but with the country's strict biosecurity laws, it is unlikely to accept any animal from the trade, even if the species were endangered, said Dr Petrina Teo, a vet at the NParks Centre for Wildlife Rehabilitation.

These exotic animals may also have been bred in captivity elsewhere.

In some cases, animals that return to the wild may end up being poached again. There is also the risk of unknown diseases that the animal could bring to the wild.

"The truth here is, in reality, a lot of countries will say no to repatriation. You don't know where this ani-

mal has gone through in terms of its transit, or its full journey until reaching Singapore. So the level of exposure to unknown pathogens is really unknown," said Dr Teo.

Ms Xie added that if the source country has a population of a certain species that is doing well, there is no incentive for the country to bring in another one that might risk disrupting its entire ecosystem.

Could confiscated animals not be repatriated, released into the wild here or rehomed strain Singapore's capacity to keep them here?

NParks' Ms Xie is not ruling out space constraints in Singapore to keep confiscated wildlife, as the illegal wildlife trade remains rife.

"There's definitely a limitation. I don't think there's a point where we say: 'Enough, we've built a large enough building to keep everything.' Constraint is definitely always a challenge," she said.

In 2022, NParks opened the 1,250 sq m Centre for Wildlife Rehabilitation in Lim Chu Kang to care for injured native wildlife and animals seized from the illegal trade. The centre has the capacity to take in up to 200 animals. There are more non-native species housed there, as native ones can often be released or rehomed after rehabilitation.

The centre has various rooms to house different groups of animals, such as aquatics, mammals and reptiles.

When The Straits Times visited the centre on June 24, many seized wildlife were there, including arowanas, axolotls, several tarantulas, snapping turtles, milk snakes, green iguanas, sugar gliders and one hedgehog.

Since the centre's opening, fewer cases have gone to Mandai Wildlife Group's Wildlife Healthcare and Research Centre (WHRC), which was established in 2006, unless an animal requires specialised care.

For example, a non-native silvery langur was spotted in Singapore in

September 2023 and brought to the WHRC in January 2024.

"Due to extensive injuries and the requirements for specific diet and husbandry, it was in our care for about two weeks until its condition had stabilised. It is currently being cared for by NParks," said Dr Charlene Yeong, a vet with Mandai Wildlife Group and Mandai Nature.

For Acres, its 0.5ha Wildlife Rescue Centre is a permanent home to 125 exotic animals, including 31 pig-nosed turtles, and various snakes and tortoises that the society had rescued itself or had been alerted to. The animals are likely to have been smuggled into Singapore at one point, said the society's co-chief executive Kalai Vanan Balakrishnan.

Acres is planning to significantly expand its facility in Sungei Tengah, by 0.75ha.

NParks follows international guidelines for the disposal of confiscated live animals drawn up by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (Cites), the global wildlife trade regulator.

Apart from repatriation, other options include permanent captivity in zoos and rescue centres, and euthanasia.

Mandai Wildlife Group has taken in some seized animals at its zoo and wildlife parks. They include the blue tree monitor and emerald tree monitor lizards, sugar gliders and fishes like the sturgeon, said Dr Yeong.

Before Mandai Wildlife Group takes in an animal, there are several considerations such as the condition or behaviour of the creature and whether the animal is suitable to fulfil conservation, education or research roles at the parks, she added.

The Cites guidelines state that sending confiscated animals to zoos is getting less viable with large numbers of animals and, increas-

The fate of seized animals



1 Animals are confiscated by border authorities

Those in poor shape from the smuggling ordeal may not survive.

2 They are kept at the Centre for Wildlife Rehabilitation

After health and disease checks, the animals are cared for until the end of investigations and trials.



3 What eventually happens to the animals?

The National Parks Board decides what to do based on international guidelines. There are four possible outcomes:

Repatriation



- Ideally, the animals are returned to their country of origin.
- This is a less common outcome, as this requires strong partnership and commitment between countries, especially with regards to biosecurity.

Captivity



- Animals are rehomed in zoos or rescue centres in the country of seizure or other countries.
- There is added value to this if there is potential for captive breeding.
- However, zoos have limited capacity to take in large numbers of increasingly common species being smuggled, such as bearded dragons and green iguanas.

Release or rehome



- If the animal is healthy and native to the country it was seized in, it can be released.
- Domestic animals can be put up for adoption.

Euthanasia



- While controversial, euthanasia can be the most apt and humane option.
- This can apply to animals that are very unwell or have serious behavioural issues; species that can spread diseases to humans or animals; or those that fare poorly in prolonged captivity.
- This option is weighed carefully against conservation goals for threatened species.

Sources: CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA, NPARKS PHOTOS: BRIAN TEO, IMMIGRATION & CHECKPOINTS AUTHORITY STRAITS TIMES GRAPHICS

ingly, common species. There are only so many green iguanas, bearded dragons and sugar gliders that zoos can take in.

According to Cites, euthanasia can be the simplest and most humane option available for confiscated animals. At the Centre for Wildlife Rehabilitation, animals are put down largely on welfare grounds.

This is especially so for animals that may not be well adapted to living in captivity for prolonged periods or the rest of their lives, and may develop signs of stress and diseases, said Dr Teo.

She said many primates, such as marmoset monkeys, need to be housed socially, but they may be trafficked individually. "They may already come in with behavioural

issues – depending on how they were reared in captivity or poached too young from their parents – that we cannot correct. Therefore, euthanasia is a better option."

NParks did not say how many seized animals were euthanised.

Dr Teo stressed that the centre does not put animals down due to housing constraints.

"We're fortunate we've never had to," she said.

Like many in the animal welfare scene, Dr Teo said tackling the root cause of wildlife trafficking and curbing demand is the main solution.

"We don't even want to see (seized animals) come in," she said.

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A non-native silvery langur was under the care of Mandai Wildlife Group's Wildlife Healthcare and Research Centre in January. PHOTO: MANDAI WILDLIFE GROUP



A bearded dragon at NParks' Centre for Wildlife Rehabilitation in Lim Chu Kang, which opened in 2022 and can take in up to 200 animals. ST PHOTO: BRIAN TEO



Mandai Wildlife Group has taken in some seized animals at its zoo and wildlife parks, including the blue tree monitor. PHOTO: MANDAI WILDLIFE GROUP

CIMB accounts not compromised, says bank after glitch

Sherlyn Sim

CIMB Singapore said its core banking systems and customer accounts were not compromised, after some customers reported having zero or negative balances in their accounts.

In a media reply on the evening of June 29, the bank said the glitch was due to a technical issue, with-

out elaborating.

The bank said it successfully cleared both inbound and outbound transactions, but certain transactions were not reflected in the bank account balances of "a small group of affected customers".

It added that all affected customers "will have their funds posted into their account in the next 24 hours" and apologised for the inconvenience caused.

Earlier in a Facebook post at

1.45pm, CIMB Singapore said it was aware of the disruption and was working to resolve it.

"The root cause has been identified... We assure all our customers that your account is safe and we thank you for your understanding," it said.

Logistics assistant Irman Suratnor told The Straits Times that he found that two of his savings accounts had zero balances when he checked his bank app at around

12.30pm.

A third account showed a negative balance of \$29.

The 42-year-old said that he had about \$5,000 across the three accounts.

"It was shocking to see that my bank balance was \$0. I thought the bank was being hacked," he said.

Mr Irman added that he was unable to make transfers and payments on his banking app.

He said he contacted the bank for

help, but his three accounts still reflected a zero or negative balance as at 7pm on June 29.

He said: "It's been a stressful day. I have some bills and debts due today."

"How am I going to send money?"

Several others recounted similar experiences of having zero or negative account balances on the bank's Facebook page.

In a Facebook update on June 30,

CIMB Singapore said a majority of its affected customers have had their transaction postings reflected in their bank accounts.

It added that it was working with the remaining small group of affected customers, whose accounts require additional checks to resolve the issue.

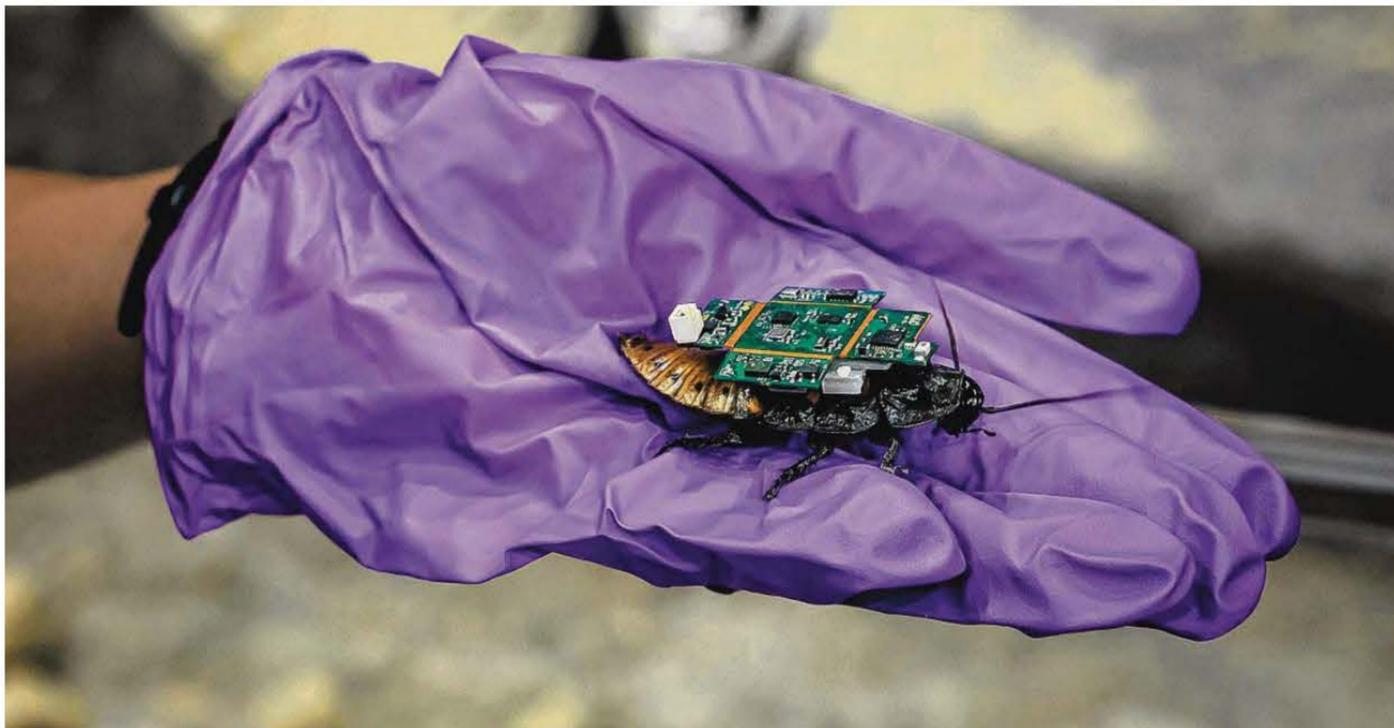
"We would like to assure that our core banking systems remain secure, and our channels remain effective," said the bank.

It added that it will provide updates on the CIMB website and its Facebook page.

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SCIENCE

A cyborg Madagascar hissing cockroach carrying a "backpack" with built-in sensors and a small infrared camera that can detect life in disaster zones by picking up temperature signatures.
ST PHOTO: GAVIN FOO



A look at ethical concerns of using animals like insects in cyborg tech

Experts say evidence suggests some insects could feel pain, and that researchers should take stress on the animals into consideration

askST
you ask. we answer.

Ariel Yu

The Nanyang Technological University (NTU), together with the Home Team Science and Technology Agency (HTX) and Class Engineering and Solutions, has been developing cyborg cockroaches – part organism, part electronic – which could be used in disasters to find survivors during search and rescue operations within the next two to three years.

The Madagascar hissing cockroaches, averaging 6cm in length when fully grown, wear "backpacks" with built-in sensors and a small infrared camera that can detect life by picking up temperature signatures.

Each backpack also carries a microcomputer that can control the insect's movements through electrical signals sent to its nervous system.

In a building collapse, the cyborg cockroaches can crawl through rubble, and into crevices and confined spaces, to find survivors – a task which is dangerous for humans – and provide front-line responders with critical information.

Seeing the potential for using cyborgs in such search and rescue operations, HTX collaborated with NTU and Class Engineering to enhance the technology, making the cyborgs fully autonomous when they search for survivors.

HTX directed The Straits Times to Professor Hirotsugu Sato, the provost's chair in mechanical and aerospace engineering at NTU, for answers to questions regarding the ethical considerations of the technology.

Prof Sato said that he and his research team are serious about developing cyborg insects to save humans.

Most medical researchers use live animals such as mice for the purpose of curing human diseases. His team carries out research with the same aspirations as medical researchers, using live insects to save humans from disasters, he added.

Published in May 2023 in the journal *Advanced Intelligent Systems*, the research paper by Prof

Sato and his team stated that the cockroaches were fed various vegetables weekly.

The researchers kept the insects in plastic containers with a system that pumped clean air throughout their living space and kept the temperature in the containers at 25 deg C.

The containers were washed every week. The researchers limited the number of cockroaches to just five per container, giving them plenty of space to move around.

It was also stated in the paper that "the use of the cockroach(es) was permitted by the National Environment Agency".

ST spoke with experts in biological and animal behavioural science to understand the science and ethics behind using animals, especially insects, in technology that allows for the direct control of the animals' nervous system.

Q What are some advantages of deploying insects in scientific research?

A The very traits that make them unpopular – resilience and adaptability – make cockroaches valuable research subjects.

Assistant Professor Eunice Tan of the Department of Biological Sciences at the National University of Singapore said that insects such as cockroaches have evolved over millions of years, and their biological structures or processes can inspire research in non-biological science and technology.

"The rapid reproduction of insects and their abundance also make them good test beds for use in research," Prof Tan added.

Mr Foo Maosheng, entomologist at Lee Kong Chian Natural History Museum, said: "It is a testament to how capable and useful cockroaches are to humans, in contrast to the general stigma that cockroaches are disgusting pests which should be exterminated."

However, author Lars Chittka, who wrote the book *The Mind Of A Bee*, said the potential benefits of using insects in search and rescue should be balanced against the ethical concerns of doing undue harm to them in the process.

The sensory and behavioural ecology professor at Queen Mary University of London said: "If you think about malaria-transmitting mosquitoes, there is a very good reason why we do research on them, as there are clear benefits to humans."

"For the mitigation of infectious

diseases, it wouldn't be defensible to actually abandon such research. And likewise, if there are good reasons to suggest that these cyborg insects might be beneficial to saving human lives, then that's at least worth considering."

Q Do insects feel pain?

A At the nub of the question is whether the technology would cause insects unnecessary suffering. Vertebrates, such as mammals, reptiles and birds, can feel pain and this is evident from their ability to learn and avoid the repetition of stimuli that result in a negative experience.

It is thought that insects – which make up the largest group of invertebrates – do not feel pain, but have a sense of nociception – the ability to detect potentially harmful stimuli in the environment.

This ability is distinct from pain, as it is a reflexive response controlled by neurons relaying signals from nociceptors – specialised nerve endings that respond directly to noxious stimuli – to the spinal cord and back again.

It prompts withdrawal from the stimulus without necessarily involving the conscious experience of pain.

But Professor Chittka, who is also the founder of the Research Centre for Psychology at Queen Mary University of London, said it is not possible to say with absolute certainty that insects do not feel pain. Instead, he points to "reasons to be sufficiently worried that insects might not be the sort of machine-like living things that many people think that they are".

A review by his team of hundreds of studies was published in *Advances In Insect Physiology* in 2022.

To assess if insects feel pain, the researchers evaluated six insect groups based on an established set of criteria that has been used to indicate pain.

University of Pennsylvania post-doctoral researcher Matilda Gibbons, the primary author of the review, said the review found strong evidence for pain in the insect orders that include adult flies, mosquitoes, cockroaches and termites.

She added that pain is a subjective, personal experience that changes between individuals, and many criteria need to be used to evaluate pain. Taken together, these suggest that some orders of insects could feel pain.

Prof Chittka said that while the approach used by the team in the review does not amount to formal proof, the many pieces of evidence add up to either a high or a low probability.

"We just looked at multiple indicators, both psychological ones, neurophysiological ones and so on, to see where the probability is for various types of insects, and at least it looks quite high for a number of taxa, including flies, cockroaches and bees as well. But we're not saying we've identified a formal proof."

Using fruit flies as an example of an insect species that fulfils many criteria for the capacity to feel pain, Dr Gibbons said that fruit flies possess the necessary nervous system components such as nerves to detect painful stimuli, as well as interconnected neurons that can send signals to their brains.

She said that fruit flies also have the neural circuitry for painkillers, and research has shown that analgesic drugs work to reduce their response to painful stimuli. Finally, fruit flies will actively avoid painful stimuli, and will remember to avoid them in the future.

Prof Chittka's research on bees also suggests that there is evidence that insects can choose to bear discomfort for a better reward.

A stereotype about insects is that their response to noxious stimuli is hardwired and therefore predict-

able.

In contrast, one of the hallmarks of pain in humans is that they do not have a hardwired response to noxious stimuli and thus have the ability to choose whether to bear the discomfort, said Prof Chittka.

"We were interested in whether a bee could actually suppress a reflex-like response to withdraw from a source of heat if there was an appropriate gain."

The animal behavioural scientist and his team found that given a choice, bees could suppress their default response to withdraw from a more unpleasant stimulus – an artificial flower that was heated to 55 deg C – and land on it to get a sweeter reward than could be found on another surface.

"And it's this kind of plasticity that, while again it's not on its own a formal proof of a pain-like response, shows a similar flexibility there as you might see in humans – where you can modulate when it's to your own advantage your responses to pain, or injurious or unpleasant stimuli."

Q What are some considerations that researchers should take into account when developing cyborg insects?

A A major factor to consider would be the ratio of the mass of the device attached to the animal to its body mass.

A best-practice recommendation for scientific research is that devices borne by animals, such as birds and dogs, should weigh less than 3 per cent to 5 per cent of their body mass.

The average weight of each Madagascar hissing cockroach developed by HTX, NTU and Class Engineering and Solutions is about 23g, which means that the 5.5g backpack would be an estimated 24 per cent of the insect's body weight.

Prof Tan said: "Sensors that are too bulky or heavy will impede the cockroach's movement and ability

to navigate disaster sites and reach survivors."

Mr Foo said a device that is too heavy could cause the animal to expend a significant amount of energy to move as usual.

"Researchers won't want the device to impair the animal as that will defeat the intended outcome," he added.

Other factors that researchers should take into consideration would be the stress on the insect from having its movements dictated by an external force and the amount of voltage used to control the insect.

"Every step it takes, it encounters a new thing to escape from, which is an obviously stressful life to live. The cockroach has no control over its movement and is thrust into situations it would likely never put itself into," said Dr Gibbons.

There might not be research as to the physical effects of passing a current through the cockroach's body, but multiple studies show that cockroaches and other insects will avoid areas where they have received electric shocks, she added.

Q What are other animals that have been developed into cyborgs?

A In 2017, research and development company Draper and the Howard Hughes Medical Institute collaborated to develop a drone piloted by dragonflies.

Dubbed DragonflyEye, the technology used optical electrodes to deliver steering commands directly to the dragonfly's nervous system, which had been genetically modified to respond to these light signals.

In 2013, a team of researchers at the University of Tokyo built a robot that could be steered by a silk-worm moth towards a target scented with female moth sex pheromones. The moth walked on a special ball that controls the robot's direction. Sensors tracked the ball's movement and steered the robot accordingly.

Researchers at the Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology developed cyborg mice which wore special headgear that had a fibre-optic thread penetrating the skull. It stimulated the part of the brain which drives them to pursue an object dangling in front of them that is always just out of reach.

When the male mouse travels through a maze, signals are sent to its brain to cause it to chase after the object dangling in front of it, ignoring distractions such as food and a female mouse.

Their work was published in the journal *Nature Neuroscience* in 2018.

Q What should researchers consider when designing cyborg animals?

A They could consider the "3Rs" framework, which was first defined by scientists W.M.S. Russell and R.L. Burch in their book, *The Principles Of Humane Experimental Technique*, published in 1959.

Most researchers working in the biosciences field, including entomologists, would be familiar with the framework.

The core principles of the "3Rs" have not changed much since they were introduced, although there have been some refinements in emphasis and definition over the years.

They are as follows:
Replacement: Animals believed to have the ability to experience feelings and sensations should not be used if animals without such ability are available.

Reduction: If animals have to be used, then the research has to be designed and analysed for the minimum number of animals to be used.

Refinement: Researchers must implement measures to mitigate any potential pain, suffering or distress experienced by the animals.

In response to whether any of the "3Rs" could be applied in this area of research, Prof Chittka suggested replacing live insects with robotics.

"Drones are already being used by some for surveying disaster areas. And the question would be – could you not replace insects, for example, with relatively small robots that you could build to crawl into tiny crevices? Much more efficient than trying to manipulate the nervous system of a live insect."

While Prof Chittka is not advocating for the complete abandonment of any invasive insect work, he is encouraging researchers to at least take welfare concerns seriously and to minimise suffering where possible.

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Public service upskilling, adapting: Chan Chun Sing

Govt committed to retraining, redeploying its 152,000 officers to keep them relevant

Krist Boo
Senior Business Correspondent

The opportunity offered by the public service to shape Singapore's future remains in demand, said Minister-in-charge of the Public Service Chan Chun Sing.

He said in a podcast interview with The Straits Times on June 28 that while technological changes may have upended jobs in the private sector, the Government is committed to retraining and redeploying its 152,000 officers to keep

them relevant.

"I must say that I am more fortunate than many of my counterparts overseas, because today, the Singapore Public Service is still the pride of our nation and people want to join us," Mr Chan said.

But as the world gets increasingly shaped by contestations, and with more Singaporeans holding diverse views and aspirations, local public servants must hone new skills.

Expanding their horizons to geopolitical developments beyond the country, and being able to pull dis-



Minister-in-charge of the Public Service Chan Chun Sing in the ST Podcast studio talking on the topic: "Who wants to be a public servant?" ST PHOTO: KUA CHEE SIONG

parate parties together to benefit Singapore, are examples.

He said: "How can we gather the coalition of the willing so that we can find like-minded partners to work together, to build up that network that allows Singapore to survive and thrive."

These partners are not only individuals or countries, but also companies, he added.

While artificial intelligence is replacing workers worldwide, Mr Chan would not be drawn in to say if layoffs could occur in the Singapore public service.

He said: "We will always ask ourselves, how can we upskill the officers to do the new jobs? And for those officers who cannot be upskilled to do that job, how can we try to reskill them in other jobs?"

There will not always be a perfect match, and some would choose to leave. "And that's perfectly fine," he said. Some leave and return.

Mr Chan, who is also Minister for Education, urged a reframing of perspectives for scholarship holders who find themselves bonded but not liking jobs they cannot quit without making financial recourse.

"When I first took up the scholarship, I had absolutely no idea what

I was going into," he said. "It was a very practical consideration. I needed to complete my studies, and I was hoping for a job."

"But as I went into the public service, starting with the military, I realised that it's not just what the organisation gives me that matters. It is also what I put in."

As with any organisation, work in the public sector has its ups and downs.

Mr Chan said: "We all have bosses that are nice, bosses that are not so nice. We all have work environments that are sometimes challenging, sometimes a joy."

"But through it all, when we are determined to contribute, to give and to improve, then I think we will make for a better world."

"If you join the Singapore Public Service, it's not just about the top line or the bottom line. You are part of a team that will shape the future of our country to deliver a better quality of life for our people."

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Straits Times Index stocks

| 52-WEEK HIGH | LOW | COMPANY | LAST SALE | +OR- | VOL '000 | GROSS YIELD % | P/BV |
|--------------|--------|----------------------|-----------|------|----------|---------------|------|
| 305 | 247 | CapLand Ascendas REI | 256 | +3 | 57610 | 5.9 | 1.1 |
| 208 | 168 | CapLand IntCom T | 198 | +4 | 93170 | 5.4 | 0.9 |
| 348 | 244 | CapitalandInvest | 266 | -1 | 38313 | 4.5 | 1 |
| 750 | 516 | CityDev | 516 | -15 | 13123 | 2.3 | 0.5 |
| 3617 | 2774.6 | DBS Grp | 3579 | +34 | 22097 | 5.4 | 1.7 |
| 297 | 175 | DFIRG USD | US190 | -2 | 2077 | 1.6 | - |
| 233 | 201 | Fraser's Cpt Tr | 213 | unch | 12611 | 5.7 | 0.9 |
| 130 | 94 | Fraser's L&C Tr | 95 | -1 | 44732 | 7.4 | 0.8 |
| 106 | 81.5 | Genting Sing | 86.5 | -15 | 89349 | 4 | 1.3 |
| 399 | 278 | HongkongLand USD | US323 | -3 | 8411 | 6.8 | 0.2 |
| 5234 | 3492 | JMH USD | US3538 | -165 | 1437 | 6.1 | 35.4 |
| 3490 | 2376 | Jardine C&C | 2660 | -240 | 5865 | 5.8 | 1 |
| 746 | 615 | Keppel | 647 | -5 | 12644 | 5.3 | 1.1 |
| 253 | 210 | Mapletree Ind Tr | 211 | -3 | 41845 | 6.4 | 1.2 |
| 129 | 101 | Mapletree Log Tr | 129 | -1 | 84969 | 7 | 0.9 |
| 170 | 118 | Mapletree PanAsia Co | 122 | unch | 54341 | 7.3 | 0.7 |
| 1458 | 1200 | OCBC Bank | 1443 | +27 | 24851 | 5.7 | 1.2 |
| 299 | 240 | SATS | 285 cd | -1 | 20426 | 0.5 | 1.8 |
| 998 | 887 | SGX | 948 | +2 | 8571 | 3.4 | 6 |
| 760 | 587 | SIA | 690 cd | +14 | 30798 | 7 | 1.3 |
| 439 | 354 | ST Engineering | 433 | +29 | 47050 | 3.7 | 5.5 |
| 294 | 136 | Seatrium Ltd | 138 | -14 | 189496 | - | 14.5 |
| 610 | 450 | Sembcorp Ind | 481 | -24 | 21430 | 2.7 | 1.9 |
| 278 | 225 | Singtel | 275 cd | +11 | 236105 | 5.5 | 1.8 |
| 615 | 45 | ThaiBev | 45 | -2 | 110862 | 5 | 15 |
| 3135 | 2682 | UOB | 3133 | +76 | 12177 | 5.4 | 1.2 |
| 714 | 507 | UOL | 520 | +3 | 3991 | 3.8 | 0.4 |
| 1525 | 1136 | Venture Corp | 1422 | +5 | 2823 | 5.3 | 1.4 |
| 393 | 307 | Wilmar Intl | 310 | -3 | 34486 | 5.5 | 0.7 |
| 253 | 137 | YZJ Shipbldg SGD | 246 | -2 | 66431 | 2.6 | 2.5 |

FTSE ST Small-Cap Index stocks

| 52-WEEK HIGH | LOW | COMPANY | LAST SALE | +OR- | VOL '000 | GROSS YIELD % | P/BV |
|--------------|------|---------------------|-----------|------|----------|---------------|------|
| 393.1 | 173 | AEM SGD | 180 | -9 | 10937 | - | 1.2 |
| 135 | 117 | AIMS APAC Reit | 125 | -1 | 4808 | 7.5 | 1 |
| 107 | 69 | Aztech Gbl | 96.5 | -0.5 | 3003 | 4.7 | 2.1 |
| 220 | 160 | BRC Asia | 214 cd | unch | 72 | 7.5 | 1.3 |
| 252 | 144 | Best World | 249 | +2 | 2557 | - | 1.8 |
| 79.5 | 54 | Bumitama Agri | 70.5 | -15 | 677 | 1.8 | 0.9 |
| 105 | 65.5 | CapLand China T | 67 | unch | 11152 | 10.1 | 0.6 |
| 120 | 95 | CapLand India T | 98 | -5 | 13273 | 6.6 | 0.8 |
| 97.5 | 73 | China Aviation | 86 | unch | 1161 | 5.9 | 0.6 |
| 86 | 72.5 | Civmec | 82 | +0.5 | 232 | 5.5 | 1 |
| 176 | 10.8 | Cosco | 15.1 | -0.6 | 40457 | - | 0.7 |
| 162 | 112 | Cromwellreit EUR | 140 | -2 | 1423 | 11.2 | 0.7 |
| 68 | 50 | Daiwa Hse Log Tr | 57 | +0.5 | 964 | 9.2 | 0.8 |
| 139 | 85 | Delfi | 86.5 | -0.5 | 697 | 6.6 | 1.5 |
| 67.5 | 43.5 | DigiCore Reit USD | 57 | -2.5 | 8737 | 6.5 | 0.9 |
| 42.5 | 20 | Dyna-Mac | 41.5 | +0.5 | 17766 | 2 | 6.2 |
| 32.5 | 28 | EC World Reit | 28 | susp | - | 131 | 2.2 |
| 68 | 56 | Far East HTrust | 62 | +0.5 | 4622 | 6.6 | 0.7 |
| 27 | 20.5 | First Reit | 24.5 | +0.5 | 5972 | 10.1 | 0.8 |
| 147 | 100 | Food Empire | 100 | -1 | 3622 | 10 | 1.4 |
| 53.5 | 41.5 | Fraser's HTrust | 41.5 | -0.5 | 1262 | 5.9 | 0.6 |
| 174 | 80.5 | Frencen | 163 | +4 | 17813 | 1.4 | 1.7 |
| 101 | 80 | Hong Fok | 83.5 | +2 | 1321 | 12 | 0.2 |
| 35 | 17.6 | Japfa | 33.5 | unch | 5206 | - | 0.7 |
| 38.5 | 12.2 | KeppelPacOakReitUSD | 13.4 | -0.2 | 4859 | 18.7 | 0.2 |
| 68.5 | 49 | Lendlease Reit | 56 | -1 | 12539 | 8.4 | 0.7 |
| 174 | 4 | ManulifeReit USD | 6.4 | -0.2 | 6029 | - | 0.2 |
| 141 | 59.5 | Nanofilm | 74.5 | +2 | 16087 | 0.9 | 1.3 |
| 26.5 | 8.7 | Prime US REIT USD | 11.7 | +0.2 | 3650 | 23.2 | 0.2 |
| 108 | 78.5 | PropNex | 83.5 | -0.5 | 733 | 7.2 | 4.9 |
| 103 | 56.5 | Riverstone | 97 | -4 | 12224 | 5.2 | 2.9 |
| 107 | 56.5 | SamuderaShipping | 105 | +3 | 10716 | 10.5 | 0.8 |
| 73 | 61 | Sassex Reit | 67.5 | +1.5 | 2917 | 9.3 | 4.3 |
| 52 | 37 | SingPost | 43 cd | -2.5 | 2721 | 1.7 | 0.7 |
| 53 | 44 | StarhillGbl Reit | 48.5 | +0.5 | 2966 | 7.8 | 0.7 |
| 214 | 134 | Straits Trading | 135 | -7 | 1155 | 5.9 | 0.4 |
| 158 | 102 | UMTS | 118 cd | -5 | 14592 | 2.9 | 2 |
| 53 | 34.5 | UtdHampshReitUSD | 39.5 | unch | 2467 | 12.1 | 0.5 |
| 65.5 | 49.5 | Valuetronics | 63.5 cd | +1 | 6171 | 6.8 | 1.1 |
| 37 | 28.5 | YZJ Fin Hldg | 35 | unch | 19520 | 6.3 | 0.3 |
| 82 | 39 | Yanlord Land | 44 | -1 | 13163 | - | - |
| 12.9 | 3.9 | Yoma Strategic | 12.3 | +0.8 | 226615 | - | 0.6 |

Gainers

| | CLOSE | UP | % | 52w high/low |
|----------------|-------|------|-----|--------------|
| UOB | 3133 | 76.0 | 2.5 | 3135/2682 |
| DBS Grp | 3579 | 34.0 | 1.0 | 3617/2774.6 |
| ST Engineering | 433 | 29.0 | 7.2 | 439/354 |
| UOL | 669 | 28.0 | 4.4 | 669/583 |
| OCBC Bank | 1443 | 27.0 | 1.9 | 1458/1200 |

| | CLOSE | % | UP | 52w high/low |
|-------------|-------|-------|-----|--------------|
| Pavillon | 3.5 | 118.8 | 1.9 | 5.5/0.9 |
| ES Gro | 4.9 | 104.2 | 2.5 | 5.6/1.9 |
| Hoe I Leona | 0.2 | 100.0 | 0.1 | 0.3/0.1 |
| Sinia Land | 1.9 | 72.7 | 0.8 | 3.5/1.1 |
| Figtree | 4.7 | 56.7 | 1.7 | 9.1/1.4 |

Losers

| | CLOSE | DOWN | % | 52w high/low |
|----------------|-------|--------|-------|--------------|
| Jardine C&C | 2660 | -240.0 | -8.3 | 3490/2376 |
| JMH USD | 3538 | -223.9 | -4.5 | 5234/3492 |
| Serial Achieva | 22 | -130.0 | -85.5 | 25/19.5 |
| Sembcorp Ind | 481 | -24.0 | -4.8 | 610/450 |
| IFAST | 720 | -16.0 | -2.2 | 851/440 |

| | CLOSE | % | DOWN | 52w high/low |
|-----------------|-------|-------|--------|--------------|
| Serial Achieva | 22 | -85.5 | -130.0 | 25/19.5 |
| Jovas Intl | 0.1 | -50.0 | -0.1 | 0.3/0.1 |
| Polaris | 0.1 | -50.0 | -0.1 | 0.3/0.1 |
| BACUI TECH | 0.3 | -40.0 | -0.2 | 0.8/0.2 |
| World Precision | 24.5 | -34.7 | -13.0 | 50/21.5 |

Most active

| | VOLUME | VALUE(\$) |
|------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Singtel | 236,105,700 | 790,831,237 |
| Yoma Strategic | 226,615,000 | 638,025,118 |
| Seatrium Ltd | 189,496,500 | 377,620,562 |
| Jasper Inv | 130,699,000 | 357,801,706 |
| ThaiBev | 110,862,300 | 272,850,323 |
| MarcoPolo Marine | 106,711,000 | 215,539,804 |
| CapLand IntCom T | 93,170,600 | 200,062,187 |
| Genting Sing | 89,349,000 | 182,321,749 |
| Mapletree Log Tr | 84,969,700 | 164,518,149 |
| Wilton Resources | 78,609,000 | 161,135,375 |

Government securities

| Period | Issue code | Coupon rate(%) | Maturity | Close Bid | High | Day's Low |
|---------|------------|----------------|-----------|-----------|-------|-----------|
| 2-Year | NS21100V | 1.250% | 01-Nov-26 | 3.34 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| 5-Year | NS24100X | 3.000% | 01-Apr-29 | 3.19 | 99.17 | 99.15 |
| 10-Year | NX24100T | 3.375% | 01-May-34 | 3.21 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| 15-Year | NZ19100S | 2.375% | 01-Jul-39 | 3.21 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| 20-Year | NA16100H | 2.750% | 01-Mar-46 | 3.11 | 94.30 | 94.25 |
| 30-Year | NA24300E | 3.250% | 01-Jun-54 | 3.04 | 0.00 | 0.00 |

Bonds

| Company | Lasts sale | +or- | Vol ('000) |
|---------------|------------|------|------------|
| CityDev NCCPS | 98 | +1 | 30 |
| Hyflux 6% CPS | 6537 | susp | - |
| UE Pref | 190 | - | - |

SGX derivatives trading

| | OPEN | HIGH | LOW | SETT | VOL | OP/INT |
|----------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|--------|--------|
| SGX MSCI Singapore Index Futures | | | | | | |
| Jun24 | | | | | 0 | 0 |
| Jul24 | 317.35 | 318.30 | 315.20 | 316.35 | 22255 | 213492 |
| SGX FTSE China A50 Index Futures | | | | | | |
| Jul24 | 11920.00 | 11995.00 | 11869.00 | 11902.00 | 215077 | 934476 |
| Aug24 | 11930.00 | 11991.00 | 11876.00 | 11900.00 | 878 | 728 |
| SGX FTSE China H50 Index Futures | | | | | | |
| Jun24 | | | | | 0 | 0 |
| Jul24 | 11800.00 | 11875.00 | 11670.00 | 11745.00 | 2238 | 3920 |
| SGX FTSE Taiwan Index Futures | | | | | | |
| Jul24 | 1918.50 | 1942.00 | 1915.25 | 1928.75 | 57155 | 99831 |
| Aug24 | 1919.00 | 1935.00 | 1916.75 | 1925.00 | 56 | 1 |
| SGX FTSE Indonesia Index Futures | | | | | | |
| Jul24 | 3392.000 | 3473.000 | 3385.000 | 3443.000 | 1782 | 912 |
| Aug24 | | | | 3460.000 | 0 | 290 |

FTSE ST Large & Mid-Cap Index stocks

| 52-WEEK HIGH | LOW | COMPANY | LAST SALE | +OR- | VOL '000 | GROSS YIELD % | P/BV |
|--------------|--------|----------------------|-----------|------|----------|---------------|------|
| 124 | 93 | CDL HTrust | 95 | -1 | 2508 | 6 | 0.7 |
| 305 | 247 | CapLand Ascendas REI | 256 | +3 | 57610 | 5.9 | 1.1 |
| 113 | 84 | CapLand Ascott T | 87.5 | -1 | 28444 | 7.5 | 0.9 |
| 208 | 168 | CapLand IntCom T | 198 | +4 | 93170 | 5.4 | 0.9 |
| 348 | 244 | CapitalandInvest | 266 | -1 | 38313 | 4.5 | 1 |
| 750 | 516 | CityDev | 516 | -15 | 13123 | 2.3 | 0.5 |
| 150 | 115 | ComfortDelGro | 134 | -3 | 24678 | 5 | 1.1 |
| 3617 | 2774.6 | DBS Grp | 3579 | +34 | 22097 | 5.4 | 1.7 |
| 297 | 175 | DFIRG USD | US190 | -2 | 2 | | |



SINGAPORE TELECOMMUNICATIONS LIMITED
(Incorporated in the Republic of Singapore)
Company Registration Number: 199201624D

Notice of Annual General Meeting

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the 32nd Annual General Meeting of Singapore Telecommunications Limited (the "Company" or "Singtel") will be held at the Cassia Main Ballroom, Level 3, Sands Expo & Convention Center, 10 Bayfront Avenue, Singapore 018956 on Tuesday, 30 July 2024 at 10.00 a.m. to transact the following businesses:

Routine Business

- To receive and adopt the Directors' Statement and audited Financial Statements for the financial year ended 31 March 2024 and the Auditors' Report thereon. **Resolution 1**
- To declare a final dividend of 9.8 cents per share, consisting of (a) a Core Dividend of 6.0 cents per share, and (b) a Value Realisation Dividend of 3.8 cents per share, in respect of the financial year ended 31 March 2024. **Resolution 2**
- To re-elect the following Directors who retire by rotation in accordance with article 100 of the Constitution of the Company and who, being eligible, offer themselves for re-election:
 - Mr Gautam Banerjee (Independent member of the Audit Committee) **Resolution 3**
 - Mr Lim Swee Say **Resolution 4**
 - Mr Rajeev Suri **Resolution 5**
 - Mr Wee Siew Kim **Resolution 6**
 - Mr Yuen Kuan Moon **Resolution 7**
- To approve payment of Directors' fees by the Company of up to S\$4,600,000 for the financial year ending 31 March 2025 (2024: up to S\$4,600,000; increase: nil). **Resolution 8**
- To re-appoint the Auditors and to authorise the Directors to fix their remuneration. **Resolution 9**

Special Business

- To consider and, if thought fit, to pass with or without amendments the following Resolutions which will be proposed as Ordinary Resolutions:
 - That authority be and is hereby given to the Directors to:
 - issue shares of the Company ("shares") whether by way of rights, bonus or otherwise; and/or
 - make or grant offers, agreements or options (collectively, "Instruments") that might or would require shares to be issued, including but not limited to the creation and issue of (as well as adjustments to) warrants, debentures or other instruments convertible into shares, at any time and upon such terms and conditions and for such purposes and to such persons as the Directors may in their absolute discretion deem fit; and
 - (notwithstanding the authority conferred by this Resolution may have ceased to be in force) issue shares in pursuance of any Instrument made or granted by the Directors while this Resolution was in force,

provided that:

- the aggregate number of shares to be issued pursuant to this Resolution (including shares to be issued in pursuance of Instruments made or granted pursuant to this Resolution) does not exceed 50% of the total number of issued shares (excluding treasury shares and subsidiary holdings) (as calculated in accordance with sub-paragraph (ii) below), of which the aggregate number of shares to be issued other than on a *pro rata* basis to shareholders of the Company (including shares to be issued in pursuance of Instruments made or granted pursuant to this Resolution) does not exceed 5% of the total number of issued shares (excluding treasury shares and subsidiary holdings) (as calculated in accordance with sub-paragraph (ii) below);
- (subject to such manner of calculation as may be prescribed by the Singapore Exchange Securities Trading Limited ("SGX-ST")) for the purpose of determining the aggregate number of shares that may be issued under sub-paragraph (i) above, the percentage of issued shares shall be based on the total number of issued shares (excluding treasury shares and subsidiary holdings) at the time this Resolution is passed, after adjusting for:
 - new shares arising from the conversion or exercise of any convertible securities or share options or vesting of share awards which were issued and are outstanding or subsisting at the time this Resolution is passed; and
 - any subsequent bonus issue or consolidation or subdivision of shares,

and, in sub-paragraph (i) above and this sub-paragraph (ii), "subsidiary holdings" has the meaning given to it in the Listing Manual of the SGX-ST;

- in exercising the authority conferred by this Resolution, the Company shall comply with the provisions of the Listing Manual of the SGX-ST and the rules of any other stock exchange on which the shares of the Company may for the time being be listed and quoted ("Other Exchange") for the time being in force (unless such compliance has been waived by the SGX-ST or, as the case may be, the Other Exchange) and the Constitution for the time being of the Company; and

- (unless revoked or varied by the Company in general meeting) the authority conferred by this Resolution shall continue in force until the conclusion of the next Annual General Meeting of the Company or the date by which the next Annual General Meeting of the Company is required by law to be held, whichever is the earlier.

- That approval be and is hereby given to the Directors to grant awards in accordance with the provisions of the Singtel Performance Share Plan 2012 ("Singtel PSP 2012") and to allot and issue from time to time such number of fully paid-up ordinary shares as may be required to be delivered pursuant to the vesting of awards under the Singtel PSP 2012, provided that:
 - the aggregate number of new ordinary shares to be issued pursuant to the vesting of awards granted or to be granted under the Singtel PSP 2012 shall not exceed 5% of the total number of issued ordinary shares (excluding treasury shares and subsidiary holdings) from time to time; and
 - the aggregate number of new ordinary shares under awards to be granted pursuant to the Singtel PSP 2012 during the period commencing from the date of this Annual General Meeting of the Company and ending on the date of the next Annual General Meeting of the Company or the date by which the next Annual General Meeting of the Company is required by law to be held, whichever is the earlier, shall not exceed 0.5% of the total number of issued ordinary shares (excluding treasury shares and subsidiary holdings) from time to time,

and in this Resolution, "subsidiary holdings" has the meaning given to it in the Listing Manual of the SGX-ST.

- That:
 - for the purposes of Sections 76C and 76E of the Companies Act 1967 (the "Companies Act"), the exercise by the Directors of all the powers of the Company to purchase or otherwise acquire issued ordinary shares of the Company ("Shares") not exceeding in aggregate the Maximum Limit (as hereafter defined), at such price or prices as may be determined by the Directors from time to time up to the Maximum Price (as hereafter defined), whether by way of:
 - market purchase(s) on the SGX-ST and/or Other Exchange; and/or
 - off-market purchase(s) (if effected otherwise than on the SGX-ST or, as the case may be, Other Exchange) in accordance with any equal access scheme(s) as may be determined or formulated by the Directors as they consider fit, which scheme(s) shall satisfy all the conditions prescribed by the Companies Act,

and otherwise in accordance with all other laws and regulations and rules of the SGX-ST or, as the case may be, Other Exchange as may for the time being be applicable, be and is hereby authorised and approved generally and unconditionally (the "Share Purchase Mandate");

- unless varied or revoked by the Company in general meeting, the authority conferred on the Directors of the Company pursuant to the Share Purchase Mandate may be exercised by the Directors at any time and from time to time during the period commencing from the date of the passing of this Resolution and expiring on the earliest of:
 - the date on which the next Annual General Meeting of the Company is held;
 - the date by which the next Annual General Meeting of the Company is required by law to be held; and
 - the date on which purchases and acquisitions of Shares pursuant to the Share Purchase Mandate are carried out to the full extent mandated;

- in this Resolution:

"Average Closing Price" means the average of the last dealt prices of a Share for the five consecutive market days on which the Shares are transacted on the SGX-ST or, as the case may be, Other Exchange immediately preceding the date of the market purchase by the Company or, as the case may be, the date of the making of the offer pursuant to the off-market purchase, and deemed to be adjusted, in accordance with the listing rules of the SGX-ST, for any corporate action which occurs during the relevant five-day period and the date of the market purchase by the Company or, as the case may be, the date of the making of the offer pursuant to the off-market purchase;

"date of the making of the offer" means the date on which the Company makes an offer for the purchase or acquisition of Shares from holders of Shares, stating therein the relevant terms of the equal access scheme for effecting the off-market purchase;

"Maximum Limit" means that number of issued Shares representing 5% of the total number of issued Shares as at the date of the passing of this Resolution (excluding treasury shares and subsidiary holdings (as defined in the Listing Manual of the SGX-ST)); and

"Maximum Price" in relation to a Share to be purchased or acquired, means the purchase price (excluding brokerage, commission, applicable goods and services tax and other related expenses) which shall not exceed, whether pursuant to a market purchase or an off-market purchase, 105% of the Average Closing Price of the Shares; and

(iv) the Directors of the Company and/or any of them be and are hereby authorised to complete and do all such acts and things (including executing such documents as may be required) as they and/or he may consider expedient or necessary or in the interests of the Company to give effect to the transactions contemplated and/or authorised by this Resolution.

By Order of the Board

Lim Li Ching (Ms)
Assistant Company Secretary
Singapore, 1 July 2024

Notes:
No Vouchers or Door Gifts

- Singtel will not be distributing any vouchers or door gifts at the 32nd Annual General Meeting.

Format of Meeting

- The 32nd Annual General Meeting will be held, in a wholly physical format, at the Cassia Main Ballroom, Level 3, Sands Expo & Convention Center, 10 Bayfront Avenue, Singapore 018956 on Tuesday, 30 July 2024 at 10.00 a.m. Shareholders, including investors holding Singtel shares under the Central Provident Fund Investment Scheme (CPFIS) and Supplementary Retirement Scheme (SRS) ("CPFIS/SRS investors") and investors holding discounted Singtel shares offered under the Special Discounted Shares (SDS) Scheme in Singtel's initial public offering in 1993 and/or in Singtel's second offering in 1996 in their CPF ordinary accounts ("SDS investors"), and (where applicable) duly appointed proxies and representatives will be able to ask questions and vote at the 32nd Annual General Meeting by attending the 32nd Annual General Meeting in person. **There will be no option for shareholders to participate in the AGM proceedings virtually.**

Printed copies of this Notice, the accompanying Proxy Form and the Request Form will be sent by post to members. These documents will also be published on the Company's website at the URL <https://www.singtel.com/about-us/investor-relations/annual-reports> and the SGX website at the URL <https://www.sgx.com/securities/company-announcements>.

Appointment of Proxy(ies)

- (a) A member who is not a relevant intermediary is entitled to appoint not more than two proxies to attend, speak and vote at the 32nd Annual General Meeting. Where such member's instrument appointing a proxy(ies) appoints more than one proxy, the proportion of the shareholding concerned to be represented by each proxy shall be specified in the instrument.
- (b) A member who is a relevant intermediary is entitled to appoint more than two proxies to attend, speak and vote at the 32nd Annual General Meeting, but each proxy must be appointed to exercise the rights attached to a different share or shares held by such member. Where such member's instrument appointing a proxy(ies) appoints more than two proxies, the number and class of shares in relation to which each proxy has been appointed shall be specified in the instrument.

"Relevant intermediary" has the meaning ascribed to it in Section 181 of the Companies Act 1967.

A member who wishes to appoint a proxy(ies) must complete the instrument appointing a proxy(ies), before submitting it in the manner set out below.

- A proxy need not be a member of the Company. A member may choose to appoint the Chairman of the Meeting as his/her/its proxy.
- The instrument appointing a proxy(ies) must be submitted to the Company in the following manner:
 - if submitted personally or by post, be lodged at the office of the Company's Share Registrar, Boardroom Corporate & Advisory Services Pte. Ltd., at 1 Harbourfront Avenue, #14-07 Keppel Bay Tower, Singapore 098632; or
 - if submitted electronically, be submitted via email by attaching and sending a clear PDF scanned copy of the instrument to the Company's Share Registrar at Singtel2024agm@boardroomlimited.com,

and in each case, must be lodged or received (as the case may be) by 10.00 a.m. on 27 July 2024 (being 72 hours before the time appointed for holding the 32nd Annual General Meeting).

- CPFIS/SRS investors:
 - may vote at the 32nd Annual General Meeting if they are appointed as proxies by their respective CPF Agent Banks/SRS Operators, and should contact their respective CPF Agent Banks/SRS Operators if they have any queries regarding their appointment as proxies; or
 - may appoint the Chairman of the Meeting as proxy to vote on their behalf at the 32nd Annual General Meeting, in which case they should approach their respective CPF Agent Banks/SRS Operators to submit their votes by 5.00 p.m. on 18 July 2024.

- SDS investors:
 - may vote at the 32nd Annual General Meeting as proxies of the CPF Board, and are required to register at the Company's website at the URL <https://www.singtel.com/about-us/investor-relations/aggm-2024> by 5.00 p.m. on 18 July 2024 if they wish to do so; or
 - may appoint the Chairman of the Meeting as proxy to vote on their behalf at the 32nd Annual General Meeting, in which case they should complete and submit the SDS voting instruction form to the Company by 5.00 p.m. on 18 July 2024. The SDS voting instruction form may be accessed at the Company's website at the URL <https://www.singtel.com/about-us/investor-relations/aggm-2024> and the SGX website at the URL <https://www.sgx.com/securities/company-announcements>.

Submission of Questions

- Shareholders, including CPFIS/SRS investors and SDS investors, may submit substantial and relevant questions related to the Resolutions to be tabled for approval at the 32nd Annual General Meeting in advance of the 32nd Annual General Meeting:
 - by post to the Company's Share Registrar, Boardroom Corporate & Advisory Services Pte. Ltd., at 1 Harbourfront Avenue, #14-07 Keppel Bay Tower, Singapore 098632; or
 - via email to the Company's Share Registrar at Singtel2024agm@boardroomlimited.com.

When submitting questions by post or via email, shareholders should also provide the following details: (i) the shareholder's full name; (ii) the shareholder's address; (iii) the number of Singtel shares held; and (iv) the manner in which the shareholder holds shares in the Company (e.g., via CDP, CPFIS/SRS, SDS Scheme and/or scrip), for verification purposes.

All questions submitted in advance must be received by 5.00 p.m. on 19 July 2024.

- The Company will address all substantial and relevant questions received from shareholders by the 19 July 2024 deadline by publishing its responses to such questions on the Company's website at the URL <https://www.singtel.com/about-us/investor-relations/stock-exchange-announcements> and the SGX website at the URL <https://www.sgx.com/securities/company-announcements> at least 48 hours prior to the closing date and time for the lodgement/receipt of instruments appointing a proxy(ies). The Company will respond to questions or follow-up questions submitted after the 19 July 2024 deadline either within a reasonable timeframe before the 32nd Annual General Meeting, or at the 32nd Annual General Meeting itself. Where substantially similar questions are received, the Company will consolidate such questions and consequently not all questions may be individually addressed.

Access to Documents

- The Annual Report 2024 and the Letter to Shareholders dated 1 July 2024 in relation to the proposed renewal of the share purchase mandate may be accessed at the Company's website as follows:
 - the Annual Report 2024 may be accessed at the URL <https://www.singtel.com/about-us/investor-relations/annual-reports> by clicking on the links for "Annual Report [Web]" or "Annual Report [PDF]" under "Full Annual Report 2024"; and
 - the Letter to Shareholders dated 1 July 2024 may be accessed at the URL <https://www.singtel.com/about-us/investor-relations/annual-reports> by clicking on the link for "Letter to Shareholders" under "Annual General Meeting Documents".

The above documents will also be made available on the SGX website at the URL <https://www.sgx.com/securities/company-announcements>. In line with the Company's commitment to sustainability, hard copies of the Annual Report 2024 and the Letter to Shareholders dated 1 July 2024 will only be printed on request. Members may request for printed copies of the Annual Report 2024 and the Letter to Shareholders dated 1 July 2024 by completing and submitting the Request Form sent to them by post together with printed copies of this Notice and the accompanying Proxy Form, or otherwise made available on the Company's website at the URL <https://www.singtel.com/about-us/investor-relations/annual-reports> and the SGX website at the URL <https://www.sgx.com/securities/company-announcements>, by 16 July 2024.

Explanatory notes:

- Resolution 2** – the proposed final dividend of 9.8 cents per share consists of (a) a Core Dividend of 6.0 cents per share, and (b) a Value Realisation Dividend ("VRD") of 3.8 cents per share. The VRD will be paid in two tranches of 1.9 cents per share in August 2024 and December 2024 to shareholders whose names appear on the Register of Members or, as the case may be, the Depository Register, as at each respective record date. The record date for the Core Dividend and the first tranche of the VRD is 5.00 p.m. on 2 August 2024 and, subject to shareholders' approval, payment of the Core Dividend and the first tranche of the VRD will be made on 20 August 2024 (see, further, the section on "Notice of Books Closure" below). The record and payment dates for the second tranche of the VRD will be disclosed at the appropriate time.

"date of the making of the offer" means the date on which the Company makes an offer for the purchase or acquisition of Shares from holders of Shares, stating therein the relevant terms of the equal access scheme for effecting the off-market purchase;

"Maximum Limit" means that number of issued Shares representing 5% of the total number of issued Shares as at the date of the passing of this Resolution (excluding treasury shares and subsidiary holdings (as defined in the Listing Manual of the SGX-ST)); and

"Maximum Price" in relation to a Share to be purchased or acquired, means the purchase price (excluding brokerage, commission, applicable goods and services tax and other related expenses) which shall not exceed, whether pursuant to a market purchase or an off-market purchase, 105% of the Average Closing Price of the Shares; and

(iv) the Directors of the Company and/or any of them be and are hereby authorised to complete and do all such acts and things (including executing such documents as may be required) as they and/or he may consider expedient or necessary or in the interests of the Company to give effect to the transactions contemplated and/or authorised by this Resolution.

By Order of the Board

Lim Li Ching (Ms)
Assistant Company Secretary
Singapore, 1 July 2024

Notes:
No Vouchers or Door Gifts

- Singtel will not be distributing any vouchers or door gifts at the 32nd Annual General Meeting.

Format of Meeting

- The 32nd Annual General Meeting will be held, in a wholly physical format, at the Cassia Main Ballroom, Level 3, Sands Expo & Convention Center, 10 Bayfront Avenue, Singapore 018956 on Tuesday, 30 July 2024 at 10.00 a.m. Shareholders, including investors holding Singtel shares under the Central Provident Fund Investment Scheme (CPFIS) and Supplementary Retirement Scheme (SRS) ("CPFIS/SRS investors") and investors holding discounted Singtel shares offered under the Special Discounted Shares (SDS) Scheme in Singtel's initial public offering in 1993 and/or in Singtel's second offering in 1996 in their CPF ordinary accounts ("SDS investors"), and (where applicable) duly appointed proxies and representatives will be able to ask questions and vote at the 32nd Annual General Meeting by attending the 32nd Annual General Meeting in person. **There will be no option for shareholders to participate in the AGM proceedings virtually.**

Printed copies of this Notice, the accompanying Proxy Form and the Request Form will be sent by post to members. These documents will also be published on the Company's website at the URL <https://www.singtel.com/about-us/investor-relations/annual-reports> and the SGX website at the URL <https://www.sgx.com/securities/company-announcements>.

Appointment of Proxy(ies)

- (a) A member who is not a relevant intermediary is entitled to appoint not more than two proxies to attend, speak and vote at the 32nd Annual General Meeting. Where such member's instrument appointing a proxy(ies) appoints more than one proxy, the proportion of the shareholding concerned to be represented by each proxy shall be specified in the instrument.
- (b) A member who is a relevant intermediary is entitled to appoint more than two proxies to attend, speak and vote at the 32nd Annual General Meeting, but each proxy must be appointed to exercise the rights attached to a different share or shares held by such member. Where such member's instrument appointing a proxy(ies) appoints more than two proxies, the number and class of shares in relation to which each proxy has been appointed shall be specified in the instrument.

"Relevant intermediary" has the meaning ascribed to it in Section 181 of the Companies Act 1967.

A member who wishes to appoint a proxy(ies) must complete the instrument appointing a proxy(ies), before submitting it in the manner set out below.

- A proxy need not be a member of the Company. A member may choose to appoint the Chairman of the Meeting as his/her/its proxy.
- The instrument appointing a proxy(ies) must be submitted to the Company in the following manner:
 - if submitted personally or by post, be lodged at the office of the Company's Share Registrar, Boardroom Corporate & Advisory Services Pte. Ltd., at 1 Harbourfront Avenue, #14-07 Keppel Bay Tower, Singapore 098632; or
 - if submitted electronically, be submitted via email by attaching and sending a clear PDF scanned copy of the instrument to the Company's Share Registrar at Singtel2024agm@boardroomlimited.com,

and in each case, must be lodged or received (as the case may be) by 10.00 a.m. on 27 July 2024 (being 72 hours before the time appointed for holding the 32nd Annual General Meeting).

- CPFIS/SRS investors:
 - may vote at the 32nd Annual General Meeting if they are appointed as proxies by their respective CPF Agent Banks/SRS Operators, and should contact their respective CPF Agent Banks/SRS Operators if they have any queries regarding their appointment as proxies; or
 - may appoint the Chairman of the Meeting as proxy to vote on their behalf at the 32nd Annual General Meeting, in which case they should approach their respective CPF Agent Banks/SRS Operators to submit their votes by 5.00 p.m. on 18 July 2024.

- SDS investors:
 - may vote at the 32nd Annual General Meeting as proxies of the CPF Board, and are required to register at the Company's website at the URL <https://www.singtel.com/about-us/investor-relations/aggm-2024> by 5.00 p.m. on 18 July 2024 if they wish to do so; or
 - may appoint the Chairman of the Meeting as proxy to vote on their behalf at the 32nd Annual General Meeting, in which case they should complete and submit the SDS voting instruction form to the Company by 5.00 p.m. on 18 July 2024. The SDS voting instruction form may be accessed at the Company's website at the URL <https://www.singtel.com/about-us/investor-relations/aggm-2024> and the SGX website at the URL <https://www.sgx.com/securities/company-announcements>.

Submission of Questions

- Shareholders, including CPFIS/SRS investors and SDS investors, may submit substantial and relevant questions related to the Resolutions to be tabled for approval at the 32nd Annual General Meeting in advance of the 32nd Annual General Meeting:
 - by post to the Company's Share Registrar, Boardroom Corporate & Advisory Services Pte. Ltd., at 1 Harbourfront Avenue, #14-07 Keppel Bay Tower, Singapore 098632; or
 - via email to the Company's Share Registrar at Singtel2024agm@boardroomlimited.com.

When submitting questions by post or via email, shareholders should also provide the following details: (i) the shareholder's full name; (ii) the shareholder's address; (iii) the number of Singtel shares held; and (iv) the manner in which the shareholder holds shares in the Company (e.g., via CDP, CPFIS/SRS, SDS Scheme and/or scrip), for verification purposes.

All questions submitted in advance must be received by 5.00 p.m. on 19 July 2024.

- The Company will address all substantial and relevant questions received from shareholders by the 19 July 2024 deadline by publishing its responses to such questions on the Company's website at the URL <https://www.singtel.com/about-us/investor-relations/stock-exchange-announcements> and the SGX website at the URL <https://www.sgx.com/securities/company-announcements> at least 48 hours prior to the closing date and time for the lodgement/receipt of instruments appointing a proxy(ies). The Company will respond to questions or follow-up questions submitted after the 19 July 2024 deadline either within a reasonable timeframe before the 32nd Annual General Meeting, or at the 32nd Annual General Meeting itself. Where substantially similar questions are received, the Company will consolidate such questions and consequently not all questions may be individually addressed.

Access to Documents

- The Annual Report 2024 and the Letter to Shareholders dated 1 July 2024 in relation to the proposed renewal of the share purchase mandate may be accessed at the Company's website as follows:
 - the Annual Report 2024 may be accessed at the URL <https://www.singtel.com/about-us/investor-relations/annual-reports> by clicking on the links for "Annual Report [Web]" or "Annual Report [PDF]" under "Full Annual Report 2024"; and
 - the Letter to Shareholders dated 1 July 2024 may be accessed at the URL <https://www.singtel.com/about-us/investor-relations/annual-reports> by clicking on the link for "Letter to Shareholders" under "Annual General Meeting Documents".

The above documents will also be made available on the SGX website at the URL <https://www.sgx.com/securities/company-announcements>. In line with the Company's commitment to sustainability, hard copies of the Annual Report 2024 and the Letter to Shareholders dated 1 July 2024 will only be printed on request. Members may request for printed copies of the Annual Report 2024 and the Letter to Shareholders dated 1 July 2024 by completing and submitting the Request Form sent to them by post together with printed copies of this Notice and the accompanying Proxy Form, or otherwise made available on the Company's website at the URL <https://www.singtel.com/about-us/investor-relations/annual-reports> and the SGX website at the URL <https://www.sgx.com/securities/company-announcements>, by 16 July 2024.

Explanatory notes:

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- In relation to the retirement of Directors by rotation at the 32nd Annual General Meeting, Ms Teo Swee Lian is also due to retire by rotation and she has given notice to the Company that she does not wish to be re-elected to office thereat. Ms Christina Hon Kwee Fong (Mrs Christina Ong) has also given notice to the Company that she wishes to step down as a Director of the Company at the conclusion of the 32nd Annual General Meeting.

- Resolutions 3 to 7** – Mr Gautam Banerjee will, upon re-election, continue to serve as Lead Independent Director, Chairman of the Audit Committee and the Corporate Governance and Nominations Committee and a member of the Risk and Sustainability Committee. Mr Lim Swee Say will, upon re-election, continue to serve as Chairman of the Technology and Resilience Committee and a member of the Finance and Investment Committee. Mr Rajeev Suri will, upon re-election, continue to serve as a member of the Executive Resource and Compensation Committee and the Technology and Resilience Committee. Mr Wee Siew Kim will, upon re-election, continue to serve as a member of the Finance and Investment Committee. Mr Yuen Kuan Moon will, upon re-election, continue to serve as Group Chief Executive Officer and a member of the Technology and Resilience Committee. Mr Banerjee, Mr Lim, Mr Suri and Mr Wee are considered independent non-executive Directors. Mr Yuen is considered a non-independent and executive Director.

Detailed information on these Directors (including information as set out in Appendix 7.4.1 of the Listing Manual of the Singapore Exchange Securities Trading Limited ("SGX-ST")) can be found under "Board of Directors", "Corporate Governance", "Further Information on Board of Directors" and "Additional Information on Directors Seeking Re-election" in the Annual Report 2024.

- Resolution 8** is to facilitate payment of Directors' fees of up to S\$4,600,000 for the financial year ending 31 March 2025 ("FY24/25") (up to S\$4,600,000 for the financial year ended 31 March 2024 ("FY23/24")). The remuneration framework for the non-executive Directors (including the Chairman) remains unchanged from the framework for FY23/24.

All-in Chairman's Fee

Under the remuneration framework for the non-executive Directors, the all-in Chairman's fee is S\$1,150,000. However, Mr Lee Theng Kiat has requested to receive the lower amount of S\$960,000 in Chairman's fees for FY24/25. Mr Lee has also requested to receive, and was paid, the lower amount of S\$960,000 in Chairman's fees for FY23/24.

The proposed all-in Chairman's fee for FY24/25 takes into account:

- the significant leadership role played by the Chairman of the Board, and in providing clear oversight and guidance to management;
- the amount of time the Chairman spends on Singtel matters, including providing input and guidance on strategy and supporting management in engaging with a wide range of other stakeholders such as partners, governments and regulators, as well as travelling to visit the Groups key associates in the region. In this regard, the Board has agreed with the Chairman that he will commit a significant proportion of his time to his role as Chairman of the Singtel Board and will manage his other time commitments accordingly; and

(c) comparable benchmarks from Singapore listed companies.

Additional information on the role of the Chairman can be found under "Corporate Governance" in the Annual Report 2024.

The proposed all-in Chairman's fee will be paid approximately two-thirds in cash and approximately one-third in Singtel shares to be delivered in the form of a share award to be granted under the Singtel Performance Share

How can I approach job redesign as a way to grow my career?

askST
Jobs

In this series, manpower reporter Tay Hong Yi offers practical answers to candid questions on navigating workplace challenges and getting ahead in your career. Get more tips by signing up for The Straits Times' HeadStart newsletter.

Q I was told my job is being redesigned. What should I be prepared for?

A Job redesign involves restructuring the tasks, responsibilities and processes associated with a particular role, says Mr Aslam Sardar, chief executive of the Institute for Human Resource Professionals.

These changes are made to let the role match up with organisational goals, technological advancements or changing market conditions, he adds.

Ms Evelyn Chow, managing director of strategic human resources consultancy DecodeHR, says job enrichment, job enlargement and job rotation are three common ways to redesign jobs.

She says job enrichment means expanding the scope of an employee's role and providing the employee with more tasks, and the authority needed to complete them.

Meanwhile, job enlargement involves adding on more relevant tasks, but is more limited and does not come with the additional authority vested through job enrichment.

Job rotation entails moving employees between different roles in a company.

Ms Chow says: "Job rotation gives them a broader perspective on how the company operates, gives them a better understanding of what their co-workers do, and provides them with a chance to expand their skill sets."

She notes that during challenging economic times, job redesign can help preserve jobs.

"If there is a drop in demand for certain types of services in the company, job redesign allows the job holder to focus on other responsibilities within the company that could still be important."

She adds: "The term 'job redesign' may sound intimidating to some, but, on the contrary, it tends to improve talent retention by creating more fulfilling roles and fostering a more motivated workforce."

Similarly, Mr Sardar says job redesign is not inherently meant to displace workers, but to equip them with valuable new skills to perform more meaningful tasks.

Both experts advise workers to view job redesign as an opportunity for professional growth.

Workers could undergo training to acquire new skills, adapt to new processes or technologies, and collaborate with management and colleagues to integrate changes smoothly as part of the redesign process, Mr Sardar notes.

He adds: "Workers can ensure a smooth job redesign process by being proactive in learning new skills, providing feedback on the changes and remaining adaptable."

"Engaging in open dialogue with their managers and supervisors, participating in training programmes and maintaining a positive attitude towards the redesign process are key success factors."

Ms Chow says that, at the same time, employers should transparently explain why the changes are necessary, how the changes will be implemented and what outcomes are expected.

She adds: "Companies should seek input from their employees, as this helps to foster ownership and buy-in."

This also ensures that firms consider the needs and capabilities of employees when redesigning roles and, where needed, provide staff with the necessary training and support, Ms Chow says.

While there should be a clear action plan with realistic timelines, companies also need to build in flexibility to respond to feedback and changing circumstances, she adds. "They need to set aside time to observe the redesigned job roles and to assess if further changes need to be made."

When deciding whether to accept an impending redesign or resign, Ms Chow advises workers to think about how the redesigned role meets their long-term career aspirations.

"Perhaps it may provide more opportunities for career advancement, which you have been seeking."

Another factor to consider is job satisfaction.

Ms Chow urges workers to contemplate: "Do the new responsibilities inspire you, and are they aligned with your personal inter-

ests, values and work-life balance?"

She adds: "You may also want to think about how the redesign may impact current team dynamics and your relationships with colleagues and supervisors."

Lastly, workers should assess the company's commitment to the redesign process through providing adequate training, with suitable mechanisms in place to address employees' concerns or challenges.

As for older workers, Ms Chow notes that they can contribute to, and benefit from, job redesign.

"For example, the redesign may include adjustments to reduce physical strain or improve work-life balance."

She adds: "It's also worth pointing out that older workers have a wealth of experience and expertise, which can enable them to provide valuable feedback and to shape the changes in a more effective and practical manner."

• Have a question? Send it to askst@sph.com.sg

Where have the Chinese IPOs gone?

Wall Street has not seen anything close to a blockbuster share offer in three years

TAIPEI - There was a time when a Chinese internet company's initial public offering (IPO) was the hottest thing on Wall Street.

As the e-commerce giant Alibaba prepared to go public on the New York Stock Exchange a decade ago, the world's biggest banks competed fiercely to underwrite the offering. When the opening bell rang on Sept 19, 2014, traders cheered, wearing hoodies in Alibaba's signature orange over their suits.

The IPO raised US\$25 billion (S\$33.9 billion), the biggest listing ever at the time. Scores of other Chinese companies raised billions in the US over the next few years.

Those days are firmly in the past. Wall Street has not seen anything close to a blockbuster Chinese IPO in three years. In fact, the drought is getting worse. So far this year, Chinese firms have raised about US\$580 million in US listings, almost all of it in May from one IPO by electric vehicle maker Zeekr.

As geopolitical ties between China and the United States deteriorate, it has become increasingly difficult for Chinese companies to find a foreign market where a listing might not be jeopardised by political scrutiny.

Things are hardly looking better in China. As part of a push by Beijing to assert greater control over the Chinese market, regulators have made it harder for firms to go public, drastically slowing the pace of domestic listings.

Around 40 Chinese companies have gone public at home in 2024. They have raised less than US\$3 billion, a fraction of the value typically raised by this point in the year, according to data from Dealogic. If the current pace continues, 2024 will bring the fewest Chinese IPOs worldwide in more than a decade.

The slowdown is a major shift from a period when multibillion-

dollar listings by Chinese tech companies helped fuel a Gilded Age of private business in China. The former bounty in public listings reshaped how start-ups raised money, attracting more private capital from outside the country while allowing foreign and domestic investors to move money out of the country.

The shift shows how China's top leader, President Xi Jinping, has remade private business, bringing it firmly under government and Chinese Communist Party control. Officials have forced successful companies off the public stock markets, jailed entrepreneurs and abruptly barred booming industries from making profits.

"A lot of these uses of capital that were going through the private sector and the stock market were a potential risk to the party's influence," said Mr Andrew Collier, managing director of Orient Capital, an economic research firm in Hong Kong.

The uncertainty generated by Mr Xi's crackdown has wiped billions of dollars in value from China's tech industry and prompted US venture capital firms to sharply roll back their investments in China.

At the same time, Chinese companies are uncertain about the scrutiny they could face if they try to go public in the US as tensions escalate between Washington and Beijing. "Nobody really wants to test the waters," said Ms Murong Yang, managing director at Future Capital Discovery Fund in Beijing.

In February, after reports that Shein, a Chinese-founded online shopping company, sought to go public in the US, Florida Senator Marco Rubio urged the head of the Securities and Exchange Commission to block the listing if the company refused to share information about ties to the Chinese government.



ILLUSTRATION: NYTIMES



Mr Jack Ma, founder of the Alibaba Group, holding the gavel after ringing the ceremonial opening bell at the New York Stock Exchange just before the company's initial public offering on Sept 19, 2014. But the days of bumper Chinese IPOs in the US are now firmly in the past. PHOTO: NYTIMES

"The market a Chinese company chooses to list in today is influenced by factors in addition to its fundamental business value - it's a product of geopolitical considerations," said Ms Linda Yu, a US-based investor who previously worked with SoftBank, a Japanese technology giant, and Warburg Pincus to invest in China.

Four or five years ago, a successful Chinese company with a hold

on a big market was a promising candidate to sell stock. "The question asked at the time was 'Why haven't you listed abroad yet?'" Ms Yu said. "But now it has flipped to 'Why would you?'"

Most of the Chinese companies currently listed on US stock exchanges went public between 2018 and 2021, when investors scrambled for stakes in start-ups like Full Truck Alliance, whose apps con-

nect freight customers and truck drivers, and Kanzhun, which runs a job-hunting platform.

The boom years ended midway through 2021 when the Chinese ride-hailing company Didi Chuxing went public on the New York Stock Exchange without a green light from Chinese regulators. At the time, Didi had more customers in China than Uber had in the rest of the world. Two days after it went

The uncertainty generated by Mr Xi's crackdown has wiped billions of dollars in value from China's tech industry and prompted US venture capital firms to sharply roll back their investments in China. At the same time, Chinese companies are uncertain about the scrutiny they could face if they try to go public in the US as tensions escalate between Washington and Beijing.

public, the authorities in China forced Didi to stop registering new users and to undergo a cyber security review over concerns that the listing could mean the company would have to transfer data about Chinese people to the US.

Within six months, Didi had taken steps to delist, or remove itself from the stock market. No Chinese company has tried such a high-profile listing on an overseas stock exchange since, and Chinese regulators have made stricter standards for companies looking to do so. In 2024, Alibaba called off a plan to spin off one of its business units, focused on logistics, through a Hong Kong listing.

Private businesses in China have long had to figure out how to operate without being crushed by the authorities.

China's main stock exchanges in Shanghai and Shenzhen were established in the early 1990s as part of reforms that transformed the country's economy, but public offerings were mostly limited to companies controlled by the state.

Between 2011 and 2018, China had about the same number of IPOs as the US. In 2019, China launched the Star Market in Shanghai to encourage tech companies to go public there. But Chinese investors and company founders preferred to list in New York if they could.

Since Didi delisted, Beijing has made it clear that the power and the profits of China's private industry should be directed towards the country's push for technological self-reliance. Investment has poured into cutting-edge fields like semiconductors, artificial intelligence and data centres.

In May, the government registered a US\$47.5 billion fund dedicated to semiconductor development, sending a signal to entrepreneurs and investors that while some industries may be riskier, these have the seal of approval.

In April, Beijing released a plan outlining higher standards for companies that want to go public, including more disclosures and closer oversight.

At least 100 companies have withdrawn plans to list this year on exchanges in Beijing, Shanghai and Shenzhen, according to the regulator's public records. Venture capital investment is at its lowest point in four years.

"China's securities regulator has been traditionally draconian when it comes to letting companies list - and this plan is even tighter," Mr Collier said. "A lot of companies are worried about listing in China or feel they can't squeeze themselves through the eye of the needle." NYTIMES

Markets remain northbound, despite some nervousness

Hope of rate cuts to offer markets some support; short-term volatility to persist

Market Watch



Ven Sreenivasan
Senior Columnist



Donald Trump and US President Joe Biden during the presidential election debate on June 27 in Atlanta, Georgia. The wobbly performance of Mr Biden during the debate has sent market strategists scrambling to work out the potential impact of another term in office by former president Trump. PHOTO: AFP

A weak presidential debate in the US and continuing geopolitical uncertainties aside, market sentiment last week remained generally stable, enabling stocks to make some gains.

Semiconductor plays on Wall Street, which had gone through a bout of turbulence lately, regained their footing, though brokers cited a perceptible rotation to other megacaps and midcaps as well.

Both the Dow Jones Industrial index and the broader S&P 500 ended the week 0.08 per cent lower at 39,188.86 points and 5,460.48 points respectively, while the tech-heavy Nasdaq edged up 0.24 per cent to 17,732.60 points. Hopes of at least two Federal Reserve rate cuts were boosted somewhat by the latest May inflation numbers showing prices cooling further.

The personal consumption expenditures (PCE) price index, which the Fed watches closely, remained unchanged at 2.6 per cent year on year during the month, while core PCE edged up just 0.1 per cent during the month and 2.6 per cent year on year.

Meanwhile, consumer spending edged up 0.2 per cent, while personal incomes rose 0.5 per cent. These numbers are critical as consumer demand has been a key driver of the US economy over the past two years.

In Singapore, the Straits Times Index ended at 3,332.8 points, up 0.8 per cent from the previous week's close at 3,306.02 points, helped largely by Singtel's 4.2 per cent gain to \$2.75 - its highest levels in a year. The telco stock is now up 11.3 per cent year to date.

Also boosting the index was UOB, which hit a new high at \$31.33 last week.

But beyond these index stocks, there is a group of mid and small

caps which has been steadily outperforming the market.

Workers' dorm specialist Centurion is up 49 per cent in 2024 in terms of total returns, while offshore player Beng Kuang is up 267 per cent. Other notable second-line gainers include the likes of Grand Banks, Frencken Group, Wee Hur, Willas-Array, Broadway Industrial, IsoTeam, Japfa and Oiltek.

Anyone invested in these and a slew of other "quiet performers" would be sitting on total gains in excess of 40 per cent year to date. Their performance underscores the importance of savvy stock picking, and staying invested with a medium-term outlook. But one must also do dollar-cost averaging and keep a diversified portfolio to hedge against uncertainties, geopolitical risks, and short-term market volatility.

The hope of significant rate cuts over the next two years should continue to offer markets support in the medium term, although Fed rhetoric and volatile US economic data mean that investors must brace themselves for a bumpy ride in the short term.

That said, not everyone is uniformly upbeat on the prospects of a US economic soft landing. Mr Peter Berezin, BCA Research's chief global strategist, believes that the consensus US soft-landing narrative is wrong.

Citing weakening consumer demand in the United States, falling household savings, high effective interest rates, potential mortgage defaults and rising unemployment, he and his team reckon the US could fall into a recession in late 2024 or early 2025.

"We were tactically bullish on stocks last year, turned neutral earlier this year, and are going underweight today," the June 26

report said. "We conservatively expect the S&P 500 to drop to 3750 during the coming recession."

That translates to a 31 per cent drop from current levels.

The Canadian independent research agency also cited what it called the unsustainable trajectory of US federal government debt: "No matter what option is taken to address the debt overhang, the impact on growth will be negative. On the one hand, if the Fed is forced to effectively inflate away the debt by keeping rates artificially low, long-term bond yields will spike, crippling the housing market. On the other hand, if the government is forced to undertake austerity measures, aggregate demand will weaken, which will also cause growth to slow."

The Congressional Budget Office sees the federal deficit hitting 7 per cent of gross domestic product by 2024.

If BCA Research's outlook pans out, markets could be in for some volatility later in 2024.

Also adding volatility will be the outcome of the US presidential elections in November.

The wobbly performance of Mr Joe Biden in June 27's presidential election debate has already sent market strategists scrambling to work out the potential impact of a Donald Trump presidency. Most analysts fear another round of inflation if Trump's tariffs and tax cuts are adopted.

Across the pond in Europe, markets will be driven in the near term by the outcome of the two-round French elections on June 30 and July 7.

Mr Vasu Menon, managing director for investment strategy at OCBC Bank, reckons European markets are especially worried about the fiscal implications of a

potential far-right victory on France's budget deficit and debt dynamics.

"Investors are concerned that if the far-right National Rally party wins a majority in the French Parliament, this could set the stage for France to clash with the EU, which could disrupt Europe's markets and the euro sharply," he noted. "This is because a far-right government may prove to be anti-establishment, populist and euro-sceptic."

This fear is also reflected in the extra yield that investors currently demand to hold French debt over its German peers, which is already hovering near a seven-year high.

But as Mr Scott Hayward, chief executive officer of global fund manager GMO, put it, investors must look beyond the noise and short-term newswflows to identify value in times of volatility.

"One must have the discipline to look through the market and identify attractive valuation in assets and countries before they appreciate," he said. "Volatility can often create investment opportunity."

As I've mentioned many times in this column, there is a massive US\$6 trillion (S\$8.14 trillion) sitting idle in US money market funds currently. Once the Fed starts cutting rates, money market funds will start losing some shine. Investors should become more receptive to moving money out and taking on more investment risk in equity and corporate bond markets for better returns. So, the firepower from liquidity should not be underestimated, and it offers a reason for investors to remain positive on the medium-term market outlook.

This week will mainly feature US data, as well as euro zone's confidence indexes and Japan's retail sales, industrial production,

and Tokyo inflation figures.

On July 1, the US will release the Dallas Federal Reserve Manufacturing Activity Index for June through which the market will assess the country's latest manufacturing momentum. On July 2, the US will release the May Chicago National Activity Index and June Richmond Federal Reserve Index. We will also see the release of the Federal Housing Finance Agency Housing Price Index for April to gauge the latest trend in US home prices. The Conference Board Consumer Confidence Index will also be released, where the market expects a dip to 100 in June from 102 in May.

On July 3, the US will release its new home sales figure where the market expects a 2.5 per cent monthly gain in May, reversing from a 4.7 per cent contraction in April. On July 4, there will be the release of the US preliminary durable goods orders for May, where the market expects a slight moderation to 0.4 per cent monthly gain. On July 5, there will be the release of the June Chicago Purchasing Manager Index, as well as the personal income and personal spending growth figures for May where the market expects an up-tick to 0.4 per cent and 0.3 per cent from the prior month, respectively.

On July 4, the euro zone will release its Services, Industrial and Economic Confidence Indexes for June.

Japan will also release its retail sales growth figure for May. On July 5, Japan will report its preliminary industrial production growth estimate for May as well as Tokyo's Consumer Price Index inflation and core inflation for June.

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Fuel spend growth hit by hybrid work, EV demand

FROM A22

discounts in 2010. Its flagship Maybank Family & Friends card currently offers 8 per cent cash-back on petrol and transport globally.

Ms Er said demand for pooled car services and EV usage rose by more than 10 times in 2023, compared with before the pandemic. "In Singapore, we have EV-charging promotions in the pipeline to be rolled out this year."

Mr Sanjay Nambiar, head of international cards and unsecured lending at Citi Global Wealth, said the bank has seen muted growth in fuel spend since the Covid-19 pandemic, amid hybrid work arrangements and greater popularity of EVs.

Citi card benefits on fuel at Shell and Esso have been in place for over a decade and are available to all of the bank's credit cards. On top of the fuel discounts, the Citi Cashback card gives an additional 8 per cent cashback on petrol spend worldwide.

Besides cards, banks have in recent years taken other steps to encourage the use of EVs, including loans that offer lower interest rates for EVs compared with petrol and diesel cars. In April, OCBC expanded the range of EVs that can be financed under its Eco-Care car loan scheme to include used EVs of up to 10 years old.

DBS also collaborates with automotive partners on EV discovery sessions that include longer distance test drives and address common concerns such as range anxiety about EV charging.

But Singapore still has some way to go in its adoption of EVs.

SMU's Prof Liang said existing petrol-related financial products may still have a market for a while due to the legacy vehicle fleet and customer preferences.

NUS' Prof Loh said banks can only do so much through credit card rewards, and there are other factors like a lack of charging infrastructure and range anxiety that deter motorists from switching to EVs.

Singapore aims to have 60,000 EV-charging points by 2030. As at the end of December 2023, there were nearly 6,000 charging points in public and private spaces islandwide.

Costs are another big consideration for motorists, even as the authorities have introduced incentives and rebates to narrow the upfront cost gap with ICE cars.

Army regular Tristen Kian, 28, bought a second-hand hybrid car with a couple of years left on its certificate of entitlement in 2023. He drives for about one to two hours almost every day, and uses a DBS Esso credit card for 18 per cent petrol discounts.

He said: "While owning an EV is a dream because of its positive environmental impact, the cost is currently too high for me."

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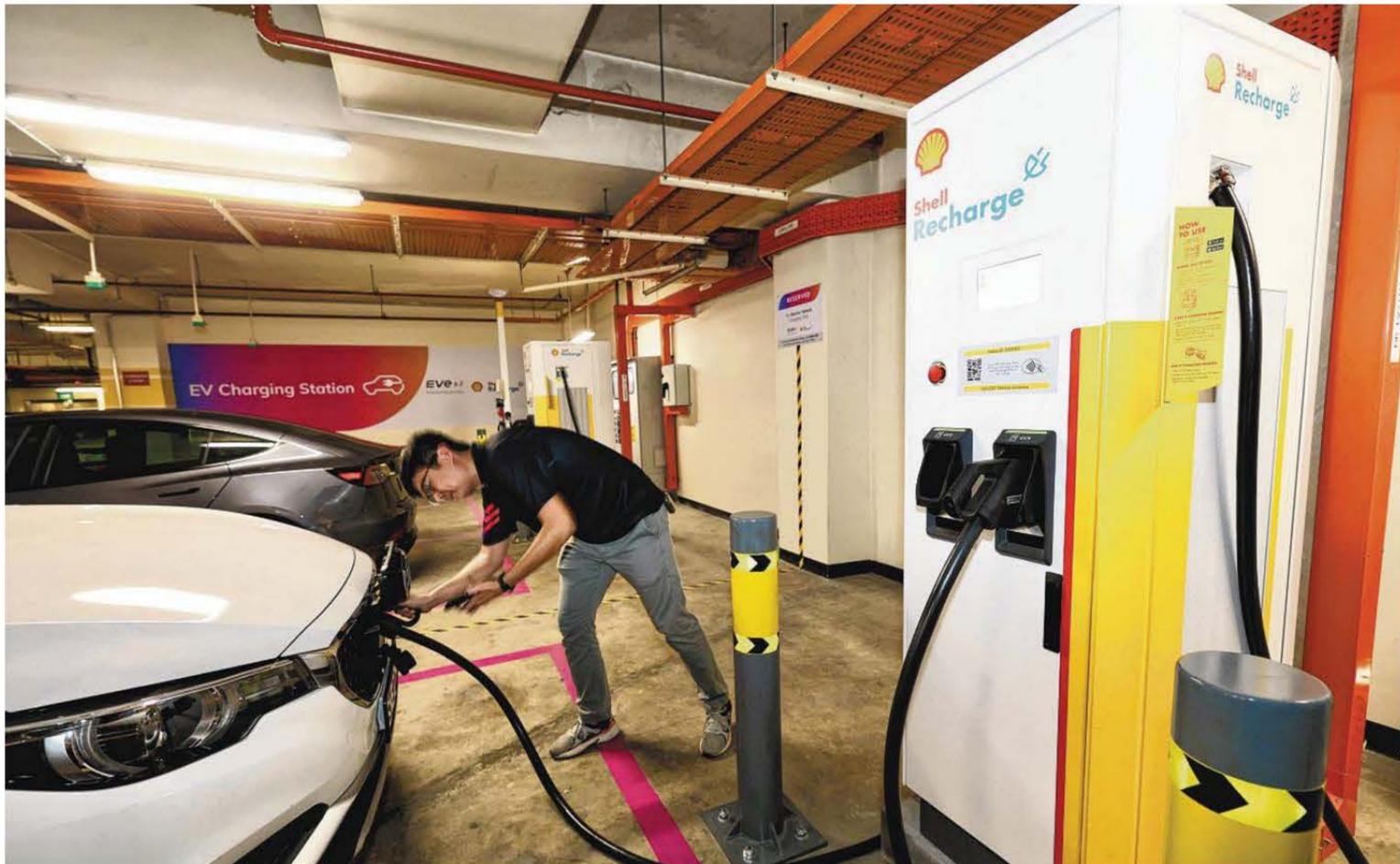
MARK TO MARKET

OCBC-GE deal: Here's what I got wrong

Today in THE BUSINESS TIMES

BUSINESS

Credit card perks could help spur switch to electric vehicles



An electric vehicle (EV) charging point in a public carpark. Credit cards can significantly influence consumer behaviour, and banks can play a pivotal role in facilitating the transition through incentives such as rewards for electric vehicle charging and discounts on green products and services, says Singapore Management University associate professor of finance Liang Hao. LIANHE ZAOBAO FILE PHOTO

Observers say banks should relook incentives to help promote sustainability

84%

Proportion of total cars that petrol and diesel cars accounted for in Singapore as at the end of May.

13%

Proportion of petrol-electric hybrids in Singapore.

3%

Proportion of electric vehicles and plug-in hybrids.

Prisca Ang
Business Correspondent

Your credit cards that come with petrol discounts might soon have more perks for electric vehicle (EV) charging and other sustainable products, as banks drive towards their net-zero commitments.

Financial institutions can align more closely with their sustainability goals by adjusting their products for individual customers to encourage the use of cleaner energy, observers told The Straits Times. When it comes to institutional and corporate clients, a few banks have set out decarbonisation targets for sectors such as power, automotive, and oil and gas. Singapore Management University associate professor of finance

Liang Hao noted that many motorists still rely on petrol, and until cleaner-energy vehicles become more widespread, banks need to continue supporting their current customer base.

"Transitioning too abruptly could alienate customers and limit the effectiveness of sustainability initiatives," said Prof Liang, who is co-director of the Singapore Green Finance Centre.

But he added that credit cards can significantly influence consumer behaviour, and banks can play a pivotal role in facilitating the transition through incentives such as rewards for EV charging and discounts on green products and services.

Petrol and diesel cars accounted for nearly 84 per cent of total cars in Singapore as at the end of May, while petrol-electric hybrids made up 13 per cent.

EVs and plug-in hybrids contributed to just 3 per cent of total cars, but their number had risen to 18,173 as at the end of May, up from about 13,300 as at the end of 2023.

From 2030, all new car registrations here will have to be of cleaner-energy models, including electric, hybrid or hydrogen fuel cell cars.

Banks have continued with long-running perks for motorists who use petrol, but they are also increasingly catering to EV drivers.

UOB offers fuel savings at Shell of up to 24 per cent for UOB One credit card holders, and up to 20 per cent for those who have the UOB Reserve Card. All other UOB credit and debit cards offer fuel discounts of up to 17 per cent. The bank also has a similar tie-up with the Singapore Petroleum Company (SPC).

Petrol-related billings on the UOB One credit card rose by over 30 per cent from 2021 to 2023, and nearly 10 per cent on the UOB Reserve card.

Ms Jacquelyn Tan, UOB's head of group personal financial services, said: "We are seeing a continuation of this upward trend in the first quarter of 2024."

Rising prices are also contribut-

ing to motorists' growing expenditure on petrol. For example, national data in May showed that petrol prices increased at a faster pace and contributed to higher private transport inflation.

Meanwhile, Ms Tan said that while petrol-related spending remains strong, UOB has also observed a growing popularity of EVs and EV charging.

EV-related billings on the UOB One credit card and UOB Evol card doubled from 2022 to 2023. The number of card holders spending on services related to EV charging increased by more than 130 per cent.

At DBS Bank and POSB, card holders receive discounts at SPC and Esso stations. POSB Everyday Card customers can access higher fuel savings, of up to 20.1 per cent, at SPC, while DBS Esso card customers can save up to 23 per cent at Esso stations.

The POSB Everyday Card also gives 3 per cent cash rebates when card holders charge their EVs with SP Group.

OCBC 365 card members get 6 per cent cashback on fuel spend at all petrol service stations, and up to 23 per cent off fuel at Caltex, Esso and Sinopec.

The card also offers 3 per cent cashback at all EV-charging stations in Singapore. The bank saw a 400 per cent increase in EV-related transactions from 2022 to 2023 across OCBC 365 card holders, said Ms Chan Sow Han, OCBC Bank's head of group lifestyle financing.

The three local banks have in the past two years mapped out decarbonisation targets in carbon-intensive sectors they finance, as they strive to meet their net-zero commitments.

A Monetary Authority of Singapore spokesperson said: "Our supervisory focus in relation to environmental risk is for banks to have a sound transition planning process, to build climate resilience and to facilitate robust climate mitigation and adaptation measures by their customers."

The authority added that it expects banks' business strategies to be consistent with internal risk appetite and publicly communicated climate-related plans and commitments.

NUS Business School professor Lawrence Loh said incentivising customer expenditure on fossil fuel products such as petrol needs to be "fundamentally relooked", as the practice does not square with banks' broader plans to decarbonise their portfolios.

Cars with internal combustion engines (ICEs), running mainly on petrol and diesel, release carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases into the atmosphere.

Prof Loh, who is director of the school's Centre for Governance and Sustainability, said the issue needs to be addressed together with oil companies.

"But I think banks can actually make the first move. If one bank does not get into the picture (of offering petrol discounts), another bank will, so I think, collectively, some banks will have to set the standard."

An ExxonMobil spokesperson noted that Esso has introduced Esso Renewable Diesel R20, made with at least 20 per cent renewable content, at four retail service stations in Singapore. The fuel has an estimated 15.4 per cent lower lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions compared with conventional diesel.

There are also EV-charging points operated by CDG Engie at Esso Pioneer, Esso East Coast and Esso Upper Aljunied.

A Chevron spokesperson noted that customers can access a voluntary carbon offset programme via the CaltexGO app.

Instead of earning reward points, customers can use the points from their fuel purchase to offset a portion of certain carbon dioxide equivalent emissions from the combustion of the fuel purchased.

Ms Tessa Er, Maybank Singapore's head of cards and personal loans, said petrol spend among card holders has grown year on year but risen at a slower pace in recent years, likely due to a shift towards EVs.

Maybank started offering petrol

CONTINUED ON PAGE A21



Market Watch • Markets stay northbound amid lingering nervousness | A21

AskST Jobs • My employer is redesigning my job: What should I do? | A20



Public service • Govt committed to retraining its 152,000 officers to keep them relevant: Chan Chun Sing | A18

Online



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OPINION

Sayonara to the Japanese salaryman

The ranks of the iconic corporate warrior are thinning as society and the economy evolve.



Walter Sim
Japan Correspondent

TOKYO - Mr Tatsufumi Asayama has a CV that many would deem unconventional in Japan.

At a youthful 31 years of age, he has already chalked up a diversity of job experiences, first at a listed company (top pharmaceutical firm Chugai) and in government service (as a bureaucrat at the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, or Meti), before joining a start-up where he works now.

"It has traditionally been seen as positive to be 'part of the crowd' in Japan, but I always wanted to chart my own path," the vice-president of operations at medical data start-up Yuimedi tells The Straits Times.

He was also frank in admitting that he would consider job-hopping again, if he feels he has peaked at the company.

Mr Asayama's story is fast becoming common in Japan, where both society and the job market have dramatically changed in recent years.

This has endangered the "salaryman", a word native to the Japanese lexicon that would conjure up images of dark-suited white-collar men who work obscenely long hours, show unwavering loyalty to a single company until retirement, and prioritise work over everything else.

He was once a ubiquitous and iconic species - so legendary that there are even Barbie-like salaryman dolls in their honour.

But the salaryman is fast becoming obsolete, his decline precipitated by work-style reforms driven by former prime minister Shinzo Abe in 2017 following a public outcry over a series of high-profile *karoshi* (death from overwork) cases. Among other things, he wrote into law limits to severely curtail overtime.

The Labour Ministry now annually names and shames so-called "black companies" by listing their violations of manpower standards, including excessive overtime and unpaid work.

Official measures aside, the "habitat" of the salaryman also



Changes in Japan's society and job market have endangered the "salaryman", an icon of Japan Inc, who can be credited for helping transform the country from its post-war ruins. PHOTO: REUTERS

underwent changes.

One change grew out of a growing crusade against what is termed "power harassment" - essentially workplace bullying. Where once the junior ranks took harsh treatment by bosses as part of the norm, that is no longer acceptable. Employee allegations have blemished glittering careers through corporate suspensions, pay cuts, and even military demotions, while at least two mayors have been forced to step down. If unstinting loyalty to the company was once the hallmark of the salaryman, employees these days see no reason why they should stay on if workplace conditions fail to meet expectations.

A more dramatic change came via the Covid-19 virus. Japanese businesses that used to place a premium on in-person meetings could no longer do so. "Face time" now meant something done via video link. Restrictions on large gatherings forced companies to reorganise workplace practices. The pandemic opened the eyes of Japan Inc and its colonies of worker bees to the wonders of remote work and flexible work arrangements, practices that were unthinkable prior to the outbreak. There's no going back now even if the pandemic is over.

There is yet another



Mr Tatsufumi Asayama, 31, has always wanted to chart his own path and has already chalked up a diversity of job experiences.

fundamental workplace change. As more women enter the workforce, with some taking on more prominent roles, the term "salaryman" has become increasingly archaic.

The label at its core reeks of historical gender bias - it is based on the notion that men are the breadwinners and, for them, work comes before family; "work" for the salaryman carries on after office hours. It includes taking part in mandatory *nomikai* (drinking parties) with their bosses, colleagues and clients that ends up with him returning home inebriated late at night.

There is, however, no word for "salarywoman". The Japanese vocabulary is telling in how it classifies two broad categories of female employees. There is the "OL" (office lady), who is typically low in the pecking order and submissive in demeanour, and the "career woman". The latter is considered so career-driven that her family suffers. Both terms are implicitly negative. One is

inconsequential while the other is selfish.

But times are changing. "There is now a lot more diversity in workplaces," says Ms Akiko Hosokawa, an executive officer at human resources consultancy Pasona Group. The idea of lifelong employment is also fading. "This has created an increasingly individualistic workforce, with employees feeling less susceptible to peer pressure and are not afraid to choose careers and work styles that meet their lifestyle preferences."

'WORKING LIKE A HORSE'

This 180-degree contrast is the subject of the hit Japanese dramedy *Extremely Inappropriate!* (2024), which can now be streamed on Netflix.

The time travel musical comedy juxtaposes two different eras: old-fashioned Showa in 1986, and modern-day Reiwa in 2024. Its star - a caricature of the "salaryman" - is middle school baseball coach Ichiro Ogawa (played by Sadao Abe). He is a foul-mouthed serial smoker who passes lewd comments at his female colleagues, spans his students with a bat, and devotes himself entirely to work.

In a twist of fate, he ends up in

contemporary Japan where he muses: "What the hell is a 'work style' anyway? What other work styles exist, other than working like crazy or like a horse?"

He proudly proclaims: "I'm a product of the Japanese economic miracle. I work from morning till night, I work even in my dreams."

This "economic miracle" refers to Japan's rapid and sustained growth from 1945 to 1991, as it quickly rose from the ashes of World War II to become an economic superpower. The bursting of the bubble in 1991, however, resulted in the so-called "lost decades". Wages stagnated as Japan Inc became risk-averse even as it held on to practices that hark back to its lost glory.

"Processes may be outdated and less effective than before, but changing them is time-consuming and challenging," notes Dr Parissa Haghirian, a professor of international management at Sophia University in Tokyo.

REDISCOVERING ANIMAL SPIRITS

Mr Asayama was dressed casually in T-shirt and jeans when he met ST on a humid early summer day at a co-working space shared by start-ups in life sciences. He says his career choices were informed by a desire for self-improvement. "I don't think it's necessarily a

virtue to stay in a single company for life," he explains, but quickly adds: "This is not to pass any judgment on work styles, as everyone has a different idea of what fits them best."

He chose Chugai for his first job because the firm was hiring fresh graduates to fill roles in its medical affairs department in what he said was rare for the industry. There, he planned and promoted clinical studies for the cancer drug atezolizumab.

He moved on to Meti after 1½ years, initiating the Asia Digital Transformation project which supported Japanese companies that were keen to engage fledgling Asian start-ups.

After 2½ years in civil service, he quit to join Yuimedi, in a way coming full circle as he now tries to fix a problem he first noticed at Chugai: the inefficiencies of disorganised clinical data.

Society is, clearly, now less shackled to the norms of what companies ought to be and how employees ought to behave. And with that, Japan is slowly but surely rediscovering its animal spirits.

Many conglomerates are diversifying beyond their primary businesses by investing in innovation, as a form of insurance

CONTINUED ON PAGE B2



Battle of the sexes • Rising anti-feminism in East Asia | B2



Amaravati • Should Singapore have a second bite at controversial project? | B3

Jealousy • It's possible to tame this monster and let it work for you | B4

Online



INTERACTIVE
The day the sea turned black

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str.sg/oil-spill-cleanup



Meet the incels and anti-feminists of Asia

They threaten to make the region's demographic decline even worse.

Mr Kim Woo-seok, a 31-year-old chef in Seoul, grew up questioning the way society treats women. He felt sorry for his stay-at-home mother. He considered himself a feminist. But over the past few years, his opinions have shifted.

When he came across women activists online, he was shocked to see that some of them were making demeaning comments about men, including making fun of small penises. "I felt like my masculinity was under attack," says Mr Kim. He believes that,

since the 2010s, South Korean society has become more discriminatory against men than women. Although he has a girlfriend, many of those who share his beliefs in the region do not.

In advanced countries, the gap between the sexes has widened, with young men tending to be more conservative and young women tending to be more liberal. The trend is particularly striking in East Asia. Men are not adapting well to a society where women are better educated,

compete with them for jobs and do not want to have babies with them.

According to one survey in 2021, 79 per cent of South Korean men in their 20s believe they are victims of "reverse discrimination". In neighbouring Japan, a survey the same year found that 43 per cent of men aged 18 to 30 "hate feminism".

At first glance, this may not seem that unusual. Much of East Asia has tended to be rather patriarchal. Japan and South Korea are the worst performers in The Economist's glass-ceiling index, a measure of how women-friendly the working environment is in 29 well-off countries. In the Organisation for

Economic Cooperation and Development, a club of mostly rich countries, South Korea has the biggest gender pay gap. Women earn 31 per cent less than men. In Japan, that gap is 21 per cent. In a survey in 2023 by Ipsos, a pollster, 72 per cent of South Koreans agreed that "a man who stays home to look after his children is less of a man", the highest rate in the 30 countries surveyed.

Even so, women's lives in much of the region have improved. East Asia's "son preference" is fading, with boys and girls alike expected to do well in school. The college enrolment rate for girls is now higher than that of boys in South Korea, mainland China and

Taiwan. In Japan, it is still higher for boys, but by only 3 percentage points. Women are increasingly entering the workforce: In Japan, the employment rate for women aged 25 to 39 surpassed 80 per cent for the first time in 2022. In South Korea, 74 per cent of women aged 25 to 29 are employed.

This success is the first cause of the backlash. Young men are "surrounded by women who do better in school or excel in work", says Professor Lee Hyun-jae of the University of Seoul. Many men feel that "gender equality has already been achieved", says Prof Lee. In a world they believe is already egalitarian, many young men feel that extra policies to uplift women are unfair. Most do not wish to confine women to the home. But they are frustrated all the same.

Another factor is that East Asian men are living in less optimistic economic times than their fathers. Japan witnessed the burst of its "bubble economy", an end to decades of remarkable growth, in 1991. South Korea was hit hard by an economic crisis in 1997. Young people born since then have lived in an era marked by slow growth.

The full-time "salarymen" work model has eroded, with more precarious or part-time jobs on the rise. In 2023, inflation in Japan hit a four-decade high (of around 3 per cent, so still low by current rich-world standards). Real wages have fallen for the past two years. In South Korea, the share of young men not in education, employment or training (Neet) has surged from 8 per cent in 2000 to 21 per cent. By contrast, the share of female Neets has fallen from 44 per cent to 21 per cent over the same period.

Meanwhile, the dating market is becoming more brutal. Fewer people are getting married: More than 60 per cent of Japanese women in their late 20s are unmarried, double the rate in the mid-1980s. In Japan, the age at which men lose their virginity has always

ST ILLUSTRATION: CEL GULAPA



been high. It has remained so: In 2022, 42 per cent of men in their 20s said they had never had sex, while 17 per cent of those in their 30s were virgins, too. A government report from 2022 found that 40 per cent of men had never been on a date. Marriage trends are similar in South Korea and Taiwan, while childbirth outside of wedlock remains rare. This means that the countries are ageing, and not enough babies are being born to support the population. South Korea's fertility rate is the lowest in the world, at 0.72. Taiwan's is 0.87, while Japan's is 1.2. In South Korea, some women have sworn off heterosexual relationships altogether. In 2019, a

fringe "4B" movement emerged there. It involves women abstaining not just from marriage and childbirth, but also dating and sex with men. They believe a life with a man is a life without freedom. "I'm not even fighting the patriarchy - I've decided to walk out of it," says Ms Kim Jina, a 4B practitioner.

Another factor is that anger towards women is being stoked online. Mr Kim, the chef, follows Mr Bae In-gyu, an influencer on YouTube who leads "New Men on Solidarity", a men's rights group. Mr Bae claims that "feminism is a mental illness". In South Korea, a popular online slur among men is *kimchinyeo*, or "kimchi bitch", a term that implies young Korean women are materialistic, controlling and willing to live parasitically off men. In Japan, *tsui-femi*, which is short for "Twitter feminists", has become a derogatory term.

Similar to incels (or involuntary celibates) in the West, a group of Japanese men known as *jakusha-dansei* or "weak men" have emerged. "When it comes to dating, women overwhelmingly have decision-making power," says Mr Horike Takeshi, a 25-year-old Japanese man who has never had a girlfriend. He identifies as a "weak man" because of his low income and lack of sex appeal to women.

South Korea's politicians are pandering to these young, angry male voters. Current President Yoon Suk-yeol campaigned two years ago on a pledge to abolish the Gender Equality Ministry. He claimed feminism is hurting "healthy relationships between men and women".

The country's gruelling, 18-month mandatory military service is a particular flashpoint. Unlike their fathers, who served in the military without question, young South Korean men are increasingly disenchanted. According to a survey in 2021 by Hankook Research, a market research outfit, 62 per cent of South Korean men aged 18 to 29, the prime age for conscription, feel military service is a "waste of time".

Neighbouring Taiwan faces similar challenges. Its men must also serve in the military, though for a much shorter stint. But an organised anti-feminist movement is notably absent there, says Professor Huang Chang-ling of the National Taiwan University. Young Taiwanese men's frustration, unlike South Koreans, "hasn't become strong enough for any politician to want to exploit", says Prof Huang. Similarly, in Japan, where there is no mandatory military service, politicians have not yet decided to stoke up the incel vote.

The rise in anti-feminist sentiment bodes badly for the region's birth rates. In South Korea, a government survey showed that over 60 per cent of South Korean men in their late 20s believe getting married and having children is "necessary" in their lives. Only 34 per cent of women in the same age group agreed.

But can East Asian men and women find common ground? A survey by a dating app in 2023 found that, among divorced singles, 37 per cent of South Korean women said that a "patriarchal" man would be their least favourite date. A similar share of men said they didn't want to date feminists. © 2024 THE ECONOMIST NEWSPAPER LIMITED. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

Salaryman army fades into history

FROM B1

against an economic downturn while also giving employees the freedom to pursue their ideas. It is also, increasingly, a means to invest in and retain valuable talent.

Among others, Japanese coin locker giant TIS has ventured into the realm of edible insects while telecommunications conglomerate NTT is working on sleep technology.

Over at Pasona, Ms Hosokawa says the firm runs annual pitch contests where employees can present ideas directly to top management, who will then invest in promising ideas.

As a result, Pasona now also has businesses in such areas as telemedicine and even *koshu*, or vintage sake.

While it is headquartered in Tokyo, Pasona offers employees the option to work from its office on the western Japanese island of Awaji, where they can also try their hand at agriculture or hospitality-related work, Ms Hosokawa adds.

Meanwhile, Japan Airlines (JAL) also runs the JAL Innovation Lab through which it invests in start-ups and explores promising technology that may not be aviation-related. Areas of interest include food security, mobility and space.

The lab's general manager Yusuke Yabumoto, 47, joined JAL after graduation - given his interest in the industry - but says his motivation now stems from discovering solutions to societal problems that will have a lasting impact for 100 years.

A reflection of the fluid job market, his lab comprises mid-career talent who may not necessarily have a background in aviation.

He says: "Open innovation means incorporating different cultures to develop new businesses, which JAL employees may not come up with on their own internally. Mid-career hires are a 'new wind'."

SMASHING THE IRON RICE BOWL

In a tight labour market, employers who are slow to keep up with the times are finding it harder to woo and retain top-tier talent. Look no further than the bureaucratic nerve centre of Kasumigaseki, where the civil service has been forced to look in the mirror in its battle to fill positions.

Civil servants are quitting in droves while fresh graduates are shunning the bureaucracy, which ironically suffers from a bad reputation for not living up to the workplace standards it set for the private sector. Earlier in 2024, a record low 13,599 people sat the national civil service examination, down 40 per cent a decade ago.

According to the National Personnel Authority, starting

salaries for fresh graduates in national government jobs stood at an average 222,240 yen (\$1,870) a month. Japan Inc across many industries can trump this offer - with the promise of better working conditions to boot.

"As the lifetime employment system begins to fade, more active job switching can help workers find better jobs where they're more productive, better paid, and bring expertise to a new role," says Dr Stefan Angrick, senior economist at Moody's Analytics.

To be sure, these are early days and societal change takes time. The salaryman army is fewer in number but he is not entirely gone. When it is finally time to say sayonara to the salaryman, is it with sorrow or relief?

The answer depends on how one views this icon of Japan Inc.

Yes, he has become a butt of jokes on screen, his values, rigidities and excesses mined for entertainment. Yet he could also be seen as a heroic cog in the wheel that drove the Japanese economic miracle. But the sacrifices that come with national resurgence - his health, his family life - also make him a tragic figure.

As he fades into history, neatly suited with briefcase in hand, the salaryman can be credited for helping transform Japan from its post-war ruins. In Japan's next chapter, his demise as a corporate icon is only a good thing if it catalyses positive change in society - be it in risk appetite, wages, or working environment - and ultimately, inspires society to rediscover its verve.

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Artist's impression of Amaravati, the proposed new capital city for the southern Indian state of Andhra Pradesh, to be built on the banks of the Krishna River. The project, modelled on Singapore, was cancelled in 2019 when a new leadership took over. But now that Mr N. Chandrababu Naidu is back in what he has said will be his last term as state chief minister, his singular priority seems to be to build Amaravati within the next 36 months. PHOTO: SURBANA JURONG

Singapore on the Krishna? Tempting, but no reason to rush on Amaravati

Controversial Andhra Pradesh project is being revived. As before, a welter of political factors comes with it.



Ravi Velloor
Senior Columnist

Without question, one of the misjudgments Singapore made on the India account in the past quarter century was for Changi Airport Management and Partners (Champs) to shy away from bidding for the modern airport for New Delhi that the Manmohan Singh government completed just before the 2010 Commonwealth Games.

The Indian government had been keen on Singapore participation in the national capital airport project and the potential partners were strong ones. They included the Bharti group that is behind India's No. 2 telecoms provider Airtel, and giant developer DLF. However, Singapore was not sure if the stringent project conditions could be met, and, fearing a loss of reputation if it fell short, decided to pull out.

Ultimately, Indra Gandhi International Airport was built by India's GMR Group in collaboration with Germany's Fraport.

Then, along came Amaravati – an all-new state capital city dreamed up in 2015 by then-as-now chief minister of Andhra Pradesh N. Chandrababu Naidu – following the bifurcation of the state the previous year into Telangana and the rump state of Andhra Pradesh.

With Telangana getting the prosperous Hyderabad city, Andhra needed a new capital, and Mr Naidu's vision was to build a brand-new settlement along the banks of the Krishna River, modelled on Singapore. The Singapore Consortium, which included Ascendas Singbridge and Sembcorp Development, was appointed by the Andhra government in 2017 to help

master-develop the 6.84 sq km "Start Up Area" of its new capital. That Singapore lost a few million dollars and, more importantly, suffered embarrassment, when Mr Naidu was voted out in 2019 and the new leadership cancelled plans for Amaravati, has been well chronicled.

But now, Mr Naidu is back again in what he has said will be his last term as state chief minister, and his singular priority seems to be to build Amaravati within the next 36 months.

NAIDU'S PRICE

His big political say in New Delhi – the Narendra Modi government requires his support to stay in power, now that Mr Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) no longer has a majority by itself in Parliament – suggests his influence with the federal government is strong. It looks as though Mr Naidu has been assured of federal support for the new state capital as part of the deal-making that preceded government formation in New Delhi.

People close to Mr Naidu say he has made two key project demands to New Delhi: top of the list is resuming work on Amaravati. The other is the Polavaram irrigation and hydroelectricity project along the Godavari River – meant to provide for current and future water demand of a significant section of his state.

On Amaravati, the project cost has escalated. The current demand is for 150 billion rupees (\$2.4 billion). Mr Naidu apparently also plans to rebrand but retain some of the fiscally costly welfare schemes implemented by his predecessor, Mr Jagan Mohan Reddy. All that needs much federal funding.

The formal announcements from New Delhi on the money sought by Andhra Pradesh are likely to come in the delayed national budget, now expected to be announced in the last week of July. A White Paper on Amaravati is expected shortly thereafter.

Once he gets the green light from New Delhi, Mr Naidu is expected to waste no time. Already, Mr Naidu, who was installed on June 22, has made site visits to both Amaravati and Polavaram. He also has been meeting potential investors, including real estate developers, over Amaravati.

As for Singapore, there have been several congratulatory calls between Mr Naidu, his principal associates, and key figures in Singapore. Mr Naidu's people say the chief minister's interest in persuading Singapore to participate in the project remains undiminished.

Should the Republic then have a second bite at the Andhra chilli?

If and when firm invitations are made, this is a matter for deep consideration. In an interview with The Hindu on June 6, Foreign Minister Vivian Balakrishnan sketched out Singapore's thinking on the question.

Acknowledging Mr Naidu as an "old friend", Dr Balakrishnan noted the importance of long-term projects to have "bipartisan support, demonstrable benefits to locals and to give investors an assurance that the rules are predictable, the playing field is level, and that agreements entered into in good faith are fulfilled".

He went on to say that Singapore would look at Amaravati with "fresh pairs of eyes" – even if there are to be "new developments in that area". That is the way it should be.

POLITICAL STRAWS IN THE WIND

One of the big disappointments of the Jagan Reddy government's move to cancel Amaravati was that it overturned decades of precedence. Generally, successive Andhra chief ministers have not reversed the work of predecessors in government, even if they belonged to rival parties.

The overt politicisation of Amaravati, the Reddy crowd's mobilisation of farmers to protest against plans for the city, and unfounded accusations of graft – all of which could be revived by a Reddy on the ropes, smarting with just 11 lawmakers in the 175-seat state legislature dominated by Telugu Desam's 135 members – also advise caution.

Artfully, Mr Reddy has extended support to Mr Modi's party in New Delhi, even as the BJP is in a



Construction at a standstill in Amaravati in 2019. ST FILE PHOTO

By instinct, Mr Modi probably likes the vision for Amaravati, given his own penchant for smart cities and urban infrastructure. At the same time, he also is intensely bottom-line-driven; critically, the question in his mind will be whether Amaravati is emblematic of Mr Naidu's "edifice complex" or does it make economic sense?

coalition with Mr Naidu in Andhra Pradesh. Mr Reddy possibly has future political opportunities in mind, fully aware that the BJP would like to extend its influence in southern India, and Andhra would be a key catch.

Federal-state ties are also a factor.

Although Prime Minister Modi laid the foundation stone for Amaravati, it was also well known that the national government had misgivings about Mr Naidu's grand plans for the city from the start.

This time, Mr Naidu's influence with Mr Modi is much stronger, because Mr Naidu's 16 MPs are key to his survival.

At the same time, crucial state elections are due in India, including in the big state of Maharashtra that has to elect a new state assembly before October. The results could weigh on Mr Modi's own political fortunes.

If the BJP suffers reverses in Maharashtra, as it did in the national polls, there could be fresh uncertainties around the Indian

political landscape. Indeed, Mr Modi may face pressure from within the BJP itself.

For all his newfound influence in New Delhi, Mr Naidu has not seemed to get his way on a slew of demands his Telugu Desam Party (TDP) had apparently made to Mr Modi. That included a change of home ministers, a Speaker picked from the wider coalition partners, and, critical for his Amaravati purpose, a TDP partyman in the Housing and Urban Development Ministry. Instead, the TDP got civil aviation in the national Cabinet.

Mr Naidu is not without his own options. In a speech shortly after the June 4 announcement of results, he was careful to also praise Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari, thought to be potential rival power centres in the Modi Cabinet, and within the BJP.

Under the circumstances, it would seem that Mr Naidu should comfortably hold power until the next state election due in 2029 – by which time Amaravati could be

a done deal.

By instinct, Mr Modi probably likes the vision for Amaravati, given his own penchant for smart cities and urban infrastructure. At the same time, he is also intensely bottom-line-driven; critically, the question in his mind will be whether Amaravati is emblematic of Mr Naidu's "edifice complex" or does it make economic sense?

But then, in an earlier era, Malaysia's Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad was accused of the same when he built the Petronas Twin Towers and the new KL International Airport.

In Dr Mahathir's case, both ultimately turned out to be good decisions.

Mr Naidu's developmental track record is strong; as chief minister of undivided Andhra he was credited with placing the then state capital Hyderabad on the global IT map – "Cyberabad" – and he liked to describe his people as "Andhra-preneurs", a tribute to their sense of industry.

There is a final reason to keep an open mind on Amaravati.

Southern India is the region powering the Indian economic boom. It is also the most globalised; it happens that with the exception of Telangana, all southern provinces are sea-facing. Mr Naidu's vision encompasses upgrading and building ports – infrastructure that plays to Singapore's strengths, and worth participating in under the right conditions. With 975km of coastline, Andhra Pradesh has the second-longest coastline of any Indian state after Gujarat.

It would serve Singapore's interest, given its own profile as a globalised city state, to be plugged in even more tightly into such a region, and a new metropolis.

Perhaps if Mr Naidu can convince the federal government to be a full participant in Amaravati, and if collaboration offers thus come on a so-called G-to-G (government-to-government) basis, it may be worth Singapore's while to give the proposal a very close examination.

A Tianjin Eco-city on the Krishna is an attractive thought, if not a Singapore on the Krishna itself.

For now, though, caution must be the prevailing sentiment before proceeding.

velloor@sph.com.sg

When someone close to you is happy – and it eats away at you

Jealousy is a natural instinct that can blind you and harm others. But it is possible to tame this monster and even make it work for you.



Chong Siow Ann

For most of his married life, Mr R, a 60-year-old technician who worked in the petrochemical industry was reasonably happy. He married when he was 29 years old and subsequently had a daughter who continued to stay with Mr R and his wife after she married.

Things changed shortly after Mr R's 60th birthday. He started noticing what he thought were rather unsettling changes in his wife: she seemed to be talking more to their 29-year-old son-in-law and spending more time on the phone. He became convinced that his wife had been cheating on him, and not just with their son-in-law, but with his various friends. He could tell from the "way she looks at them" as he was to tell me later.

Riven with jealousy, he rummaged through clothes in her closets for evidence of infidelity, demanded to check her handphone, and confronted her about this on numerous occasions which she angrily denied. When she moved out of their bedroom to the spare bedroom, he took it as confirmation that she was

having an affair with their son-in-law. He was brought by the police for a psychiatric evaluation after he brandished a kitchen knife at his son-in-law.

Mr R was diagnosed to have what in our archaic psychiatric lexicon we call Othello syndrome, which is a psychotic disorder where there is an unshakeable delusion of a partner's infidelity.

The literary source of this label was Shakespeare's Othello – that classic cautionary play on jealousy. The titular hero (or antihero) was a Christian Moor and a much respected general in the Venetian army. Married to Desdemona, a beautiful younger woman, he was made to believe that she was cheating on him by his malign deputy Iago, who was resentful because he was passed over for a promotion. With his mind poisoned with jealousy, Othello killed his wife with his own hands.

Patients with Othello syndrome are simultaneously the tormented and the tormentor. They compulsively engage in a range of frenetic and unceasing behaviour to verify the truth of the way they are feeling – surreptitiously tailing the partner, listening in on phone calls, installing recording equipment to detect clandestine liaisons, scrutinising e-mails and posts on social media.

The long-suffering partner, exasperated and exhausted by repeated cross-examination and accusations of infidelity, may buckle and give a false confession, provoking a violent rage which could lead to physical harm to the partner, or to the suspected paramour. (There have been at least three cases of grisly murders driven by pathological jealousy in Singapore in the past two decades.)

Jealousy, especially sexual jealousy, is – according to

evolutionary psychologists – innate in us, and is a behavioural mechanism to ensure the sole possession of a mate for "genetic replication". Other scholars contend that jealousy is an integral part of normal human development arising from an individual's fear of being excluded from "the circle of love and esteem" that we all crave.

A HUMAN CONSTANT

Research suggests that jealousy emerges very early in life. Infants showed signs of distress when their mothers focused their attention on a lifelike doll. A study on three-month-old babies found that if an infant was excluded from conversation between its mother and the experimenter, it "reacted with

I have learnt now to quell those infrequent pangs of jealousy with thoughts of the people who matter to me, the good fortune that I have had, the joy and dignity of small pleasures, and the realisation that one should require less in order to find contentment.

much agitation... infants might also cover their faces with their arms... or kick their legs and put their feet in their mouth" – findings which could explain why children and infants show distress when a sibling is born and may be a harbinger for subsequent sibling rivalry.

And that complex emotion that is aroused when we think that we are losing what we have or should have, is ubiquitous if not universal. We could feel jealous not just when the shadow of an interloper falls on our romantic relationship, but potentially and possibly in almost every type of human relationship.

We may feel it when the birth of a new sibling suddenly diverts all the parental attention away from us; when parents are busy with their work or other activities and don't give us as much time and attention as we want; when a parent seems to favour another sibling; when a classmate does better in school, gets into a better university or is more successful socially; when a friend has a bigger house and or a more expensive car; when a colleague gets the promotion or a bigger bonus... the list goes on.

Looking back at my professional life to that time when I was much younger and hence possessing a shaky sense of self-esteem, I realised that I was rather competitive and anxiously – albeit quietly – striving. It wasn't an entirely bad thing because it drove me to do many things which I still think are worthwhile. But I will also readily admit that this hard-driving competitiveness came with the occasional surges of jealousy when I felt that I had been bested by someone – galling when it was someone I disliked, and I felt guilty when it was a friend. ("Every time a friend succeeds, I die a little," the American writer Gore Vidal used to say.)

According to the psychologist Abraham Tesser, people are indeed unhappier when a close friend succeeds in a personally relevant domain than when a stranger does. Our friends are a lot like us. That realisation hits closer to home – and hurts because their successes seem within our reach, too.

Unchecked, it could result in what psychologists call "the state of relative deprivation" – that sense of inferiority when comparing yourself with others, and thinking that you are worse off than them. It could make us lose focus on our own life and turn instead to the life and accomplishments of another

which is, of course, energy sapping and self-diminishing.

A GOOD THING

But is that really always the case? Or can jealousy – which is, after all, an experience that is a human constant, however painful – have some positive effects?

Not all jealousy is created equal, and while most may leave a bad aftertaste, and some may have disastrous even deadly consequences, other forms of jealousy may motivate us to be better and accomplish more.

A little bit of romantic jealousy could be a good thing in a relationship – beyond that atavistic purpose of passing down our own genes to subsequent generations. It tells us something about intimacy and relationships. A touch of jealousy attests to the value that one places on a relationship and the concomitant fear of losing something or someone. It could galvanise us to take stock and take the necessary and appropriate action to protect that love. And it may just well strengthen and improve that once-threatened relationship.

Jealousy can also be edifying. I've learnt that it is how we choose to deal with it that matters. The passage of time, the vicissitudes of life, the lessons learnt from others, and big doses of self-reflection have taught me that I shouldn't allow myself to feel like I'm not good enough – otherwise this feeling would persist, no matter what I have achieved.

And the best antidote of all to jealousy is that cultivated sense of gratitude and appreciation for whatever good I'd done and whatever I have been given. I have learnt now to quell those infrequent pangs of jealousy with thoughts of the people who matter to me, the good fortune that I have had, the joy and dignity of small pleasures, and the realisation that one should require less in order to find contentment.

And as for Mr R: he was started on some antipsychotic medication, and he stayed in the hospital for a few weeks. That knot of delusion gradually became undone, and he was discharged to the care of his family. It has been many years since I last saw him, and I reckon that it means that he has stayed well. I hope that he is as happy as he can be.

• Professor Chong Siow Ann is a senior consultant psychiatrist at the Institute of Mental Health.

Central banks have done their part, now others must step up

Taming inflation is not enough. Governments need to focus on rising debt and ready their economies for the future.

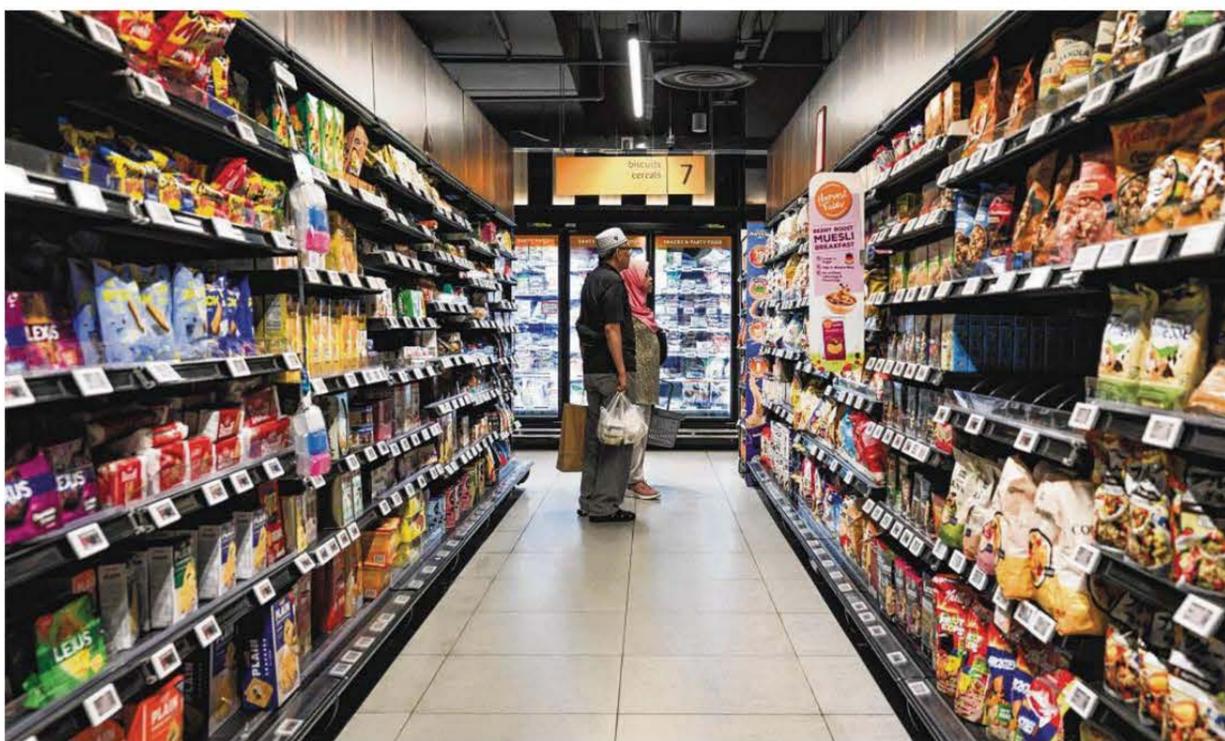
Agustín Carstens

Central banks have shown they can take forceful action to head off the most dramatic increase in inflation in a generation. They took steps to protect the purchasing power of people and firms. Although the last mile to return to price stability is not yet complete, the end is well in sight.

Inflation hurts most those who are least able to hedge against it. Intervention was needed to remedy what seemed a relentless surge in the cost of living. To restore price stability, central banks unleashed the biggest and most synchronised global monetary policy tightening in decades.

This episode has shown the value of having independent institutions outside the political process as the guardians of price stability. Central banks' ability to operate at arm's length from governments helps them take what can be unpopular and politically unpopular decisions in the interests of wrangling inflation down.

To be sure, circumstances helped. Recovering trade logistics and falling commodity prices supported disinflation. However, we saw in the 1970s how a burst of inflation, if not countered, can trigger a shift to a high inflation mindset. By acting with determination, in line with their mandates, central banks have



In the long run, structural reforms are key to sustainably lift the standard of living, improve economic well-being and give people a sense of security, says the writer. This means taking lasting measures such as promoting competition, enhancing flexibility, and spurring innovation. ST PHOTO: GIN TAY

prevented high inflation from becoming entrenched. Without prompt and decisive central bank action, restoring price stability could have come at a significant hit to growth and jobs.

Now is not the time to let down our guard. Inflation is lower, yet not low enough in some places. Upsets can come in the final minutes of any game. The cost of services and take-home pay are both lagging behind pre-pandemic trends and a rapid catch-up could see renewed upward pressure on inflation. Central banks must stay the course.

The post-pandemic inflation spike was only the latest in a series of tests for central bank policies. In our latest annual economic report, we at the Bank for International Settlements look at the tumultuous period since the turn of this century, including major financial crises and the unprecedented experiment in turning the global economy on and off again due to the pandemic.

We reflect on the lessons learnt and the implications for the future. Above all, our analysis shows that a key lesson from the past quarter-century is the need

to recognise what monetary policy can and cannot do.

This period demonstrated the power of monetary policy. It showed that central bank emergency actions, deploying their firepower to ensure liquidity keeps flowing, can stabilise the financial system, support the flow of credit to firms and households and prevent the economy from going into a tailspin. We've learnt that central banks are important players for financial as well as price stability.

However, we've also learnt that monetary policy cannot fine-tune inflation. It is vital that central

banks act when inflation overshoots. But such measures are less warranted, and may even be counterproductive, when inflation sits a few fractions of a per cent below central bank targets. Inflation targets should be a guide, not an obsession.

Exceptionally strong and prolonged monetary easing aimed at stimulating too-low inflation becomes less effective the longer it lasts and can generate unwelcome side effects. These include a build-up of debt, now at historic peaks, and distortions to markets and investments. It also narrows

central banks' room for policy manoeuvre, making it harder to exit from stimulus measures and detangle central bank and government policies.

Policies work better as part of a coherent whole. Even now, with central banks still trying to ensure inflation stays under control, we see that around the world, budget giveaways brought in during the pandemic are at risk of acting at cross-purposes by stimulating the economy and stoking inflation.

A final lesson is that central banks alone cannot deliver a durable increase in economic growth and prosperity. Laying the foundation for a brighter economic future requires actions from other policymakers, especially governments.

To reap benefits in the longer term, governments must act with haste to put budgets on a sound footing and ready their economies for the future. They must cut short the rise in public debt and accept that interest rates may not return to super low pre-pandemic levels. Debt sustainability is key for both price and financial stability as well as keeping the value of the currency steady.

In the long run, structural reforms are key to sustainably lift the standard of living, improve economic well-being and give people a sense of security. This means taking lasting measures such as promoting competition, enhancing flexibility, and spurring innovation.

Scarce public funds should support the economy's adjustment to new realities such as climate and technological change, including the artificial intelligence revolution. Only a solid foundation allows us to build for the future.

• Agustín Carstens is general manager of the Bank for International Settlements.

FORUM

Letter of the day

Building a better S'pore together

I refer to the article "Influencers, cause champions, businessmen: The new Friends of the PAP" (June 22).

The People's Action Party (PAP) has from its beginning 70 years ago sought to establish links with various segments of society – trade unions, cultural groups, clan associations, community organisations.

What is new is that there are now more diverse groups – cause-based NGOs, digital media creators, influencers and so on. The PAP therefore has to step up its engagement with these groups.

We expect other political parties to do the same. All this is normal politics everywhere in the world.

But in Singapore, we have our own rules to keep our system clean and free from money politics. For example, all political parties must list their election expenses. All support from foreign sources must be disclosed. Other entities supporting candidates and parties also have to declare their



Prime Minister Lawrence Wong with attendees at the Refresh PAP event on June 8. As there are now more diverse groups – cause-based NGOs, digital media creators, influencers and so on – the PAP has to step up its engagement with these groups, says the party. PHOTO: PAP

expenditure. There is therefore no reason to worry that being a Friend of the PAP somehow confers improper benefits on the person or entity.

The PAP wants to work with all Singaporeans who share our vision to build a better Singapore. We are grateful the Friends of the PAP have given us a chance to

work with them. **Alex Yam**
Assistant Organising Secretary and Executive Director
People's Action Party

Condos • Conduct study into well-being of managing agent staff

The Building and Construction Authority (BCA) should be commended for conducting a pilot study in November 2023 to understand the service performance of accredited managing agent (MA) firms and individuals.

Its media release on June 24 said this study indicated that management corporations (MCSTs) have reported encouraging satisfaction levels from accredited MA firms and individuals, as compared to non-accredited ones. It was also reported that BCA will explore introducing a performance-rating survey for MCSTs to rate their MAs.

I would like to suggest that BCA conduct a study to better understand the welfare and well-being of MA staff. Anecdotal evidence suggests high staff turnover in the MA industry due to reasons like poor working conditions, and physical and mental abuse from residents or management council members.

Over the years, cases of condominium managers being abused have been reported, and Forum letters have also been written on the need to protect managing agent staff.

A study on the working conditions, abuse faced at work and the turnover rate of MAs would better guide BCA and industry partners on building a more holistic framework to improve performance of MAs, as poorly treated and abused workers cannot provide professional and quality service in the long run.

This would not only benefit MAs but also contribute to the better management of strata-titled properties, making them safer and more harmonious environments for residents, tenants and visitors alike.

Benjamin C.K. Ng

Voices of Youth

Vigilant community • Let's be vocal and help others when we can

Like many, I was deeply disturbed by the article "4 years of 'weird' activities, but ex-neighbours of convicted 'spiritual leader' say no one asked questions" (June 24).

Despite hearing chanting late at night, and noting strange interactions with the woman's followers, the neighbours did not report those odd behaviours.

Some of the neighbours were reported to have said that they did not want to be seen as "busybodies".

I believe that this may stem from the non-confrontational attitudes Singaporeans generally have. Many worry about being perceived as being nosy or

CALLING YOUNG READERS

If you are 21 years or below and want to share your opinion, e-mail your letter to stforum@sph.com.sg with the subject header "Voices of Youth". Include age, contact details and school level if you are a student. Please keep your letter to 300 words.

overdramatic, and will not always speak up or go out of their way to help.

As a student, I see similar

behaviour in school. Students do not always readily offer their opinions and hesitate to speak up in class, instead waiting for the teacher to call on them.

However, this does not mean Singaporeans always ignore such dire situations.

The article reported that some neighbours did approach the followers to inquire if they were all right.

Similarly, in school, when my classmates notice something wrong, they too will privately reach out to teachers for help.

I believe that it would be beneficial for more Singaporeans to speak out and offer help where

we can. This could help to create a more vocal and vigilant community.

Naomi Tan En Lea, 15
Secondary 3



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WRITE IN

Letters should be for exclusive publication in The Straits Times. Letters to be considered for the following day's publication must reach Forum by 1pm and must include the writer's full name, address and phone number. The Forum Editor reserves the right to edit the letters. E-mail your letter to stforum@sph.com.sg

Productivity • Be cautious when using staff well-being as marker

I refer to the Opinion piece "Want workers to be productive? Think of their well-being too" (June 20), which rightly recognises the importance of well-being and its impact on productivity.

The piece also encourages companies to consider well-being while evaluating productivity – for example, incorporating the mental well-being of team members as a factor in determining the right managers.

While the recognition of mental well-being in the workplace is a positive step forward, it is

important to also consider possible unintended impacts on both managers and workers.

One concern is the possibility of under-reporting of mental health issues, with workers or managers hesitant to disclose work stressors for fear of jeopardising performance indicators.

In addition to the impact of workplace culture on mental well-being, it is important to take into consideration how well-being depends on other factors such as physical health. For example, workers with

poorly controlled chronic diseases such as diabetes may feel easily fatigued at work, affecting work performance. It is, therefore, important to look at the well-being of employees holistically.

Companies should focus also on the prevention of work-related illnesses, and the detection and control of chronic diseases, as these factors do contribute to well-being and productivity.

Medical practitioners can play a key role in advancing both physical and mental well-being.

This includes providing clinical management of medical conditions, appropriate job modifications for workers and the development and evaluation of programmes to improve and monitor workers' well-being.

Chua Kee Leng (Dr)

Replies

Students • Measures in place to protect their safety and well-being

We would like to assure Forum writer Hana Alhadad that the Ministry of Education (MOE) has systemic measures in place so that our schools remain safe learning environments for all our students (Critical need for comprehensive child protection policy to ensure students' safety and well-being, June 19).

Before school staff are hired, MOE conducts stringent pre-employment background checks on all prospective employees for teaching and non-teaching staff positions in schools.

MOE has a Code of Professional Conduct for Educators, which sets out clear expectations for proper teacher-student relationships and the standards

for appropriate conduct in schools.

The code also includes guidelines for teachers to exercise peer vigilance and report any known misconduct. All educators are expected to abide by the code and there are regular discussions in schools to remind educators of what is set out in the code.

All schools have processes in place for staff and students to report wrongful practices or behaviour. Our teachers are trained to look out for signs of distress in students, support them and refer them to school counsellors where necessary.

Through the curriculum, students learn about personal safety and protection from abuse from a young age, and these

lessons are reinforced throughout their schooling years. Students also learn how to seek help and are provided with resources and community helplines to alert trusted adults when their personal safety is threatened or compromised.

These systemic measures are in place to protect the safety of our students. MOE takes a very serious view of any suspected case of staff misconduct and will investigate every case fully, including reporting it to the police where necessary.

Schools and teachers work hand in hand with parents to protect the safety and well-being of our students.

Parents with any concerns about their child's safety or well-being should reach out to their child's teachers, principal or MOE.

Tan Chen Kee
Deputy Director-General of Education (Schools) and Director of Schools
Ministry of Education

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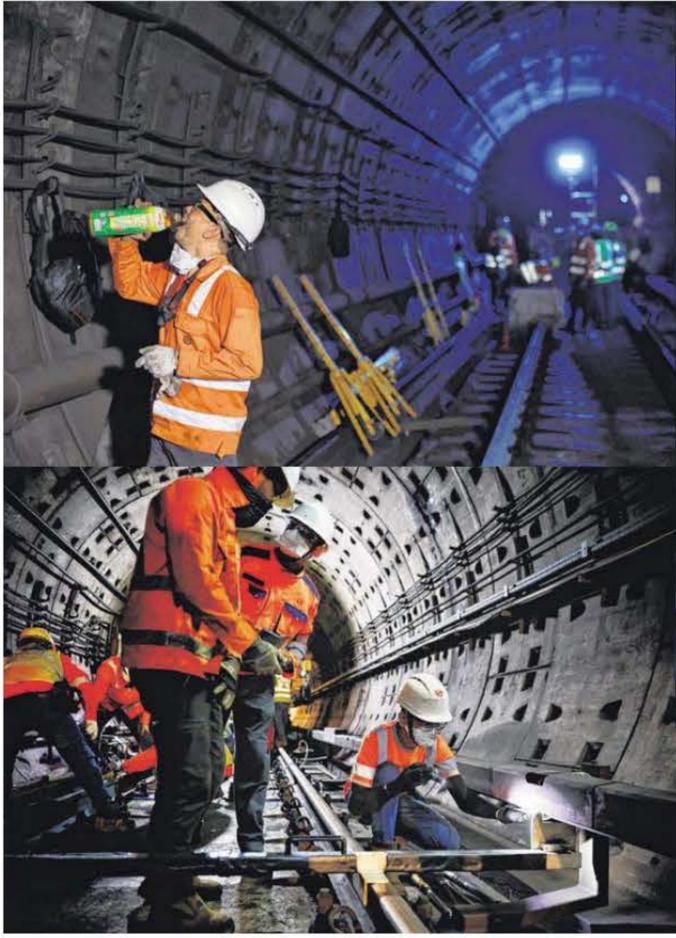
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HOME IN FOCUS

The little-seen side of Singapore



BY KOK YU FENG & JASON QUAH

Staying on track | How SMRT does rail maintenance while Singapore sleeps

Every night, workers race against time to replace worn or defective sections of the running rails, which trains travel on.



str.sg/smart-sg



BY GIN TAY & NEO XIAOBIN

The more we camp together | Pre-school without walls: Kids go on camping adventure

How does this pre-school help its six-year-olds learn resilience and teamwork? By taking them on a camping trip in the great outdoors.



str.sg/camp-kids



BY DESMOND FOO

Twilight tails

What goes on after hours at the Singapore Zoo?



str.sg/zoo-sg

The Straits Times Home in Focus is a weekly online interactive and two-page print photo feature that shares different facets of Singapore with its readers. Through still and moving images that range from personal portraits to vistas of hidden corners of the island, Home in Focus offers a peek into little-seen lives, places and events.



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Memory wanders
as shadows fall
Back to the days
of happiness,
Days beyond recall.
A vision comes before us,
So calm, so dear,
so sweet,
Of her lips now silent
And whose lids are
closed in sleep.



Om Shanti Hari Om Jai Shree Krishna
Nikhil Kumar Shah
1940 - 2024
S/O Late Bansilal & Ramila Shah

"It is with a heavy heart we inform all Relatives & Friends on the passing of Nikhil Kumar Shah on 29th June 2024"

Dearly & Deeply missed by:-
Beloved Wife: Gira Nikhil Shah
Family:
Ronak, Ushma & Aarav Shah,
Purnima Akhil Shah;
Niskey Anil Shah;
Late, Akhil & Anil Shah;
Dita & Late, Rajen Choksi;
Rita & Ashok Chudgar
Prayer Meet:
1 July 2024, 6pm- 7pm at
SJRS, 18 Jalan Yasin, S417991.

HP: Ronak(96456805)/ Ushma(92210514)

In Loving Memory of



Koh Lai Chua
Age: 67

Was called home to be with the Lord on 29 June 2024.
Dearly missed and fondly remembered by loved ones.

Wife: Phyllis Tan

Daughters: Gracelina Koh
Son-in-law: Benjamin Tay
Melissa Koh

Granddaughter:
Alison Tay

Siblings, in-laws, nephews, relatives and friends

Wake is held at Block 427 Serangoon Central, Singapore 550427.
Memorial service on Wednesday 3 July 2024 at 8.00pm.
Casket closing service on Thursday 4 July 2024 at 10.15am, thereafter cortege leaves at 10.30am for Mandai Crematorium Hall 4 for cremation at 11.25am.

In Loving Memory of



WONG LIANG TECK
Departed: 4.4.1987

TAY SAM CHOON
Departed: 1.7.2013

Years come and go
Like how ebbing tides flow
Relentlessly to and fro
As our ages grow
But our memories of you
Firmly etched and in clear view
So vivid in our minds
Until the end of time

Dearly missed & remembered by

Sons & Daughters-in-law: Hong Wai & Christine
Hong Meng & Shirley

Grandchildren & Grandson-in-law: Kaixian Keith, Lixian Claire & David
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Obituaries

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STClassifieds



It is the secret of the world that all things subsist and do not die, but only retire from sight and afterwards return again.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Man may be a mere mortal, but his legacy lives on forever. Pay tribute to the life of a loved one through the memories he has left behind. Honour him in an In Memoriam advertisement. Call **6289 9988** to find out more.

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And in the sweetness of friendship let there be laughter, and the sharing of pleasures. For in the dew of little things the heart finds its morning and is refreshed.

Kahlil Gibran

Pay tribute to a beautiful relationship with a loved one who has passed on. Remember the little things that make memories so precious. Keep the memories alive in an In Memoriam advertisement. Call **6289 9988** to find out more.

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RACING



Lim's Saltoro (Marc Lerner, No. 3) beating Bestseller (Vlad Duric, No. 2) by a short head with Makin (Manoel Nunes, No. 4) third in the Group 2 Stewards' Cup (1,600m) on June 30. ST PHOTO: SHAHRIYA YAHAYA

MEAGHER LOCKS IN DERBY AFTER STEWARDS' CUP WIN

Lim's Saltoro passes sit-and-wait test in G2 race, hits 300-win mark for Aussie trainer

Michael Lee

Favourite Lim's Saltoro came from the jaws of defeat to score a gutsy win in the \$150,000 Group 2 Stewards' Cup (1,600m) on June 30. The outstanding run by the son of Shamexpress also marked trainer Daniel Meagher's 300th win at Kranji since his 2016 debut. Lim's Saltoro, who also took out

the first four-year-old feature, the Group 3 Silver Bowl (1,400m), was actually losing his grip on the second leg at the 400m, but his sheer will to win saw him poke his head in front where it mattered. While the short-head margin might be a jittery result for a \$11 pop, the Meagher-Marc Lerner duo always backed their game plan. By default, barrier No. 1 was an open invitation for the speedy cus-

tommer to dictate terms, but they had made the bold decision to eschew that option. With the fleet-footed Aniki expected to dash to the front, there could not have been a better time for Lim's Saltoro to learn how to sit-and-sprint, which would be an asset for the Group 1 Singapore Derby (1,800m) on July 21. The plan worked a treat until he got buffeted for a run at the 400m. With Aniki (Ruan Maia) predictably running on fumes, Lerner was ready to angle Lim's Saltoro out. But they were suddenly denied galloping room when Bestseller (Vlad

Duric) came sidling up on the outside to keep the doors shut. A game of dodgem cars then ensued, with only the weakening January (Ryan Curatolo) getting spat out of the scrummage. Bestseller and Makin (Manoel Nunes) were going a touch better while Lim's Saltoro looked on the ropes. But such is Meagher's ward's never-say-die attitude that he picked himself off the canvas to outbust Bestseller on the line. Makin ran third another 1/2-length away. The winning time was 1min 35.03sec for the 1,600m on the long course. Unflappable as ever, Lerner said

that the hold-up run was a good Singapore Derby dress rehearsal, even with its hairy moments. "I wish there were many more big-race wins like that until the end. But seriously, I'm very happy with today's win," said the French jockey, who was at his fifth 2024 silverware in the Lim's Stable colours, a purple patch that began with Lim's Kosciuszko in the 2023 Singapore Gold Cup in November. "He was the best horse in the race, but we also wanted to teach him the proper way of sitting off the lead and chase. We took the risk and it's paid off.

"For sure we got a bit scared at the 400m when I saw Vlad come on the outside of January to keep us in a tight pocket. "It's only fair competitive riding, I would've done the same, if Vlad doesn't do that, he wins easy." Fair play or not, Lerner still had to have the horsepower underneath him to get out of this pickle. "It's only when he saw horses in front of him that he pinned his ears back. He was very strong to the line," he said. "Like Lim's Kosciuszko, he has an amazing will to win. From the way he ran today, the Derby will be no issue to him. Bring on the Derby." Both Lerner and Meagher already have their names on the roll of honour of the prestigious classic - Lerner with Hard Too Think in 2021 and Meagher with Lim's Kosciuszko in 2022. But, by coincidence, it was with his Derby-winning jockey that Meagher had a short pow-wow with before Lim's Saltoro's Stewards' Cup triumph. "I spoke to Danny Beasley earlier, told him that Lim's Saltoro does what other horses don't," said the Australian conditioner. "He did it again today, he fought through the gap, went through the line as good as anything. "He's a good horse, isn't he? It's onwards and upwards towards the Derby - the 1,800m will be no problem for him." Already not a fan of all the fuss over the Lim's Lightning v Lim's Kosciuszko debate, Meagher was just as tight-lipped when it was stretched to the third generation. "They're both different individuals, they're of different sizes, but both are winners," he said aptly. On the other hand, he was a lot chattier about his landmark win. "It's very special to bring up 300. I know one person who would be extremely proud, and that is my dad, I wish he could be here to celebrate with me," said Meagher, whose father John trained with success at Kranji from 1999 to 2011. "There are so many people who've come on this journey and have been a part of it. I'd like to thank all of them - the owners and staff, but mainly my family for their love and support." Though Lim's Saltoro brings up Meagher's first Stewards' Cup win, it does loop the loop for the family as his father landed the event with another Lim's Stable galloper, Lim's Zerperb, in 2005. manyan@sph.com.sg

JUNE 30 SINGAPORE (LONG COURSE B AND POLYTRACK) RESULTS

Race 1

10 LOVER BOY 56 (57-15)
6 JULY 58 (28-11)
9 GOLDEN SENTENCE 56 (25-7)
3 KICK 58.5 (28-10)
8 BOSS NINE NINE 56.5 (12-6)
4 AFTERMATH 58 (52-11)
5 ENGINE START 58 (29-30)
7 GUN 57 c54 (111-26)
2 SMOKE AND MIRRORS 59 (180-37)
1 ELITE LEGEND 59 c58 (285-58)

C5 D1 (LC) 1200m

B Pinheiro (3) 2 2 1 (476) -
R Mala (8) 3 3 2 (451) Shd
D Moor (4) 1 1 3 (456) 1
C Schofield (1) 6 4 4 (528) 0.5
R Curatolo (6) 9 7 5 (538) 0.5
C Henrique (5) 5 5 6 (474) 0.75
M Lerner (2) 10 9 7 (478) 0.75
S Jamil (9) 4 6 8 (438) 2.75
TH Koh (7) 8 10 9 (457) 0.5
D Danis (10) 7 8 - (473) Fell

Race 2

2 LUCKY GOAL 56.5 (12-510)
7 HE'S MY HALO 56.5 (28-6)
3 LIMS FABER 56.5 (36-9)
5 TALKING TALKING GURU 56.5 (19-10)
9 CENTRAL LIZON 55 (28-8)
6 SILVER STAR 56.5 c54.5 (124-25)
4 PACIFIC DREAM 56.5 (252-47)
1 BEHIND PLAYER 57.5 (327-70)
10 FIGHT TO WIN 49 c49.5 (264-56)
8 MANILA DE BAY 56.5 c55.5 (474-81)

Open Maiden (LC) 1200m

M Nunes (9) 2 1 1 (553) -
B Pinheiro (5) 3 3 2 (460) 0.5
M Lerner (3) 1 2 3 (490) 1.75
V Duric (2) 7 5 4 (453) 1.25
D Moor (1) 4 5 5 (486) 0.5
PH Seow* (7) 9 6 6 (472) 2.5
D Moor (10) 10 8 7 (467) 0.75
TH Koh (8) 8 9 8 (463) Hd
I Amirul (6) 6 10 9 (452) 6.5
D Danis (4) 5 7 10 (493) Hd

Race 3

2 GREAT COMMAND 59 (13-510)
1 GOLDEN WAY 59 (19-10)
10 ANGEL BABY 51 c50 (211-45)
8 HANPEY RIDER 53.5 (52-9)
3 SALAMENCE 59 c58 (197-41)

C5 D2 1000m

B Pinheiro (1) 2 1 1 (510) -
C Henrique (3) 3 5 2 (475) Hd
PH Seow* (7) 9 9 3 (445) 1.25
TH Koh (6) 9 6 4 (527) Hd
I Amirul (2) 4 3 5 (495) Ns

Race 4

3 GREAT WARRIOR 53.5 c54 (36-11)
1 SUPER BABY 57 (23-6)
5 LIMS SMYTHE 53 (7-510)
7 PACIFIC STAR 51 (101-24)
6 ARYA PAKUAN 52.5 (113-22)
8 SPLIT SECOND 51 (319-59)
2 SACRED COMMAND 53.5 c52.5 (83-22)
4 IN ALL HIS GLORY 56.5 (50-14)

COR-1000m

Simon Miller (3) 55 3
Ms C Keatings (1.5) 55 4
Jessica Booth (3.0) 55 6

1:35PM Race 4 (AS27,000)

1 7633 Bellman --
2 3575 Bessler --
3 6148 Comanche North
4 6153 Star Blazer
5 5951 Smart Poppy
6 5227 Tizzo Favo
7 6691 Bonavolante
8 2412 Amen Brother
9 3711 New Jersey
10 1706 Coronation Drive
11 4107 Madame Meteor
12 4544 Saventino
13 5182 Wagunda
14 0696 Pammy Joy
15 5182 Wagunda
16 4971 Houdini Catarno
17 0170 Roch Dispute
18 5240 Griffinstown Girl
19 7561 Kerma Art
20 0060 Classic Fastnet

1:50PM Race 5 (AS27,000)

1 1300 Indifference
2 3550 Borellan Bandit
3 1331 Osman
4 9832 Foreign Brother

Race 5

5 THE WILD FIRE 56 (15-510)
6 CENTURION 55 (18-6)
4 COMPELLING 56 c52 (189-40)
2 BIG MAX 57.5 (13-6)

C4 (LC) 1600m

M Nunes (8) 6 4 1 (523) -
B Pinheiro (7) 3 3 2 (504) 2
B Queiroz (1) 5 5 3 (472) 2.25
TH Koh (6) 7 7 4 (488) 1.75
WH Koh (5) 2 2 5 (496) 2
I Saifudin (3) 8 8 6 (506) Nk
T Krisna (2) 4 6 7 (478) 0.5
C Schofield (4) 1 1 8 (554) 18.5

C5 D2 (LC) 1200m

TH Koh (8) 7 4 1 (453) -
B Pinheiro (4) 4 3 2 (503) Nk
R Sazali* (2) 6 3 3 (444) 3.5
B Queiroz (5) 2 1 4 (437) Hd
I Saifudin (7) 1 2 5 (490) 0.75
V Espindola (1) 3 5 6 (510) Hd
SW Chow* (5) 7 7 4 (454) 2.25
PH Seow* (3) 8 8 8 (510) 2.5

1:35PM Race 3 (AS30,000)

1 2005 Assiduly
A Bullock (14) 60.5 8
J Golden (1.5) 59 60.5
M Fitzgerald (2.0) 59 60.5
B Fitzgibbon (1.5) 59 60.5
Ms C Williams (2.0) 59 60.5
A Banks 59 60.5
Braith Nock (1.7) 59 12
Shae Wilkes (3.0) 59 13
Jack Baker (3.0) 58 15
S Ingelse (1.5) 47 15.6
Ms M Weir (3) 57 17
Wendy Peel (1.8) 56 18
Ms J Brookes (3.0) 55 19
S Lismy (9) 55 20
C J Hillier (1) 56 5
M Thompson (3.0) 55 7
-- (1) 55 1
-- (1) 55 2
-- (1) 55 3
J Golden (1.5) 55 4

Race 6

7 GREATHAM BOY 53.5 c54 (24-8)
5 MT NISEKO 55.5 c56 (22-6)
2 GOLD STAR 57 (220-34)
8 HURRICANE 53.5 c52.5 (339-50)
4 KNIPPENBERG 56 (48-11)
6 RODA ROBOT 54.5 c52.5 (291-44)
1 PACIFIC VAMPIRE 58 (19-510)
3 BOSS PHAN 56 (161-25)
9 STENMARK 53.5 c50.5 (97-15)

Race 7

9 LONHRO GOLD 55.5 (27-10)
7 PACIFIC SCOUT 56 (110-30)
11 MAZE 55 (83-24)
10 VGOR 55.5 c54.5 (52-18)
2 STAR VICTORY 58.5 (189-44)
8 WINS EIGHT 56 (35-13)
4 DIAZ 57 (41-12)
1 SMART GAMBIT 59 c58 (20-25)
3 SWEET N SOUR 58.5 (80-6)
6 MISTER DYNAMO 56 (21-7)
5 HEY BOSS 57 c55 (180-41)

Race 8

4 COOL SIXTY-ONE 55.5 (48-16)
1 PACIFIC PADRINO 55.5 (25-12)
8 PACIFIC COMMANDER 54 c52 (88-18)
12 CHARMINTON 53 (79-10)
9 STRIKE GOLD 54 (15-7)
2 DANCING SUPREMO 56 (40-11)
13 FIRE 51.5 c52.5 (45-13)
11 RUBIK KID 53.5 c52.5 (29-12)
5 PER INCROWNS 55.5 (255-53)
10 LIMS CRAFT 53.5 (178-36)

C3 (LC) 1200m

R Curatolo (1) 5 5 1 (484) -
C Schofield (6) 4 4 2 (558) 1
R Mala (5) 7 7 3 (504) Nk
D Danis (3) 2 2 4 (473) 0.75
B Pinheiro (2) 3 3 5 (497) 1.25
PH Seow* (9) 6 6 6 (469) 0.5
D Moor (7) 1 1 7 (504) Ns
TH Koh (8) 9 8 9 (519) 0.5
S Jamil (4) 8 8 9 (477) 1.25

C5 D1 1000m

B Queiroz (5) 1 1 1 (535) -
D Moor (6) 7 4 2 (554) 0.5
R Curatolo (7) 4 3 3 (442) 1.5
T Krisna (1) 11 10 4 (537) 0.5
TH Koh (10) 10 9 5 (557) Nk
M Lerner (4) 3 2 6 (478) 1.75
C Schofield (3) 9 8 7 (444) Shd
I Amirul (9) 6 7 8 (532) Hd
B Pinheiro (10) 5 6 9 (481) 0.5
M Nunes (8) 2 5 10 (489) 0.5
N Zyul (2) 8 11 11 (531) 4.25

C4 (LC) 1200m

D Moor (10) 5 5 1 (464) -
V Duric (3) 3 6 2 (487) Ns
PH Seow* (12) 1 4 3 (497) Shd
C Henrique (11) 10 10 4 (447) Hd
B Pinheiro (4) 8 5 4 (483) Shd
R Curatolo (13) 4 1 6 (500) Ns
B Queiroz (8) 9 7 (497) 0.75
T Krisna (7) 2 2 8 (470) 0.5
TH Koh (5) 6 7 9 (514) 1
WH Koh (1) 7 3 10 (490) Nk

Race 9

3 WAR STAR 56 (284-74)
6 BOOMBA 55 c51 (583-126)
14 FEBRUARY 50 c50.5 (206-50)

Stewards' Cup

3 LIMS SALTORO 57 (11-510)
2 BESTSELLER 57 (38-13)
4 MAKIN 57 (13-510)
9 LIGHTNING STRIKE 57 (43-13)
10 HOLE IN ONE 57 (195-34)
7 ANIKI 57 (27-39)
6 FLYING NEMO 57 (62-13)
11 CITY GOLD FAREWELL 57 (887-109)
1 PACIFIC EMPEROR 57 (162-25)
5 JANUARY 57 (356-63)
8 PACIFIC MV 57 (725-94)

Race 10

1 DANCING LIGHT 59 (18-8)
3 SURREY HILLS 56 c54 (22-8)
5 VINVICHELLE 53.5 c50 (110-29)
2 PACIFIC HERO 58 (42-12)
9 FAST AND FEARLESS 50 c51 (84-26)
4 BABY TWINS 53.5 (32-11)
7 PACIFIC CHARM 52 c54 (275-60)
6 CONDOR 52.5 c53.5 (18-510)
10 VICTORIA PERFETTA 50 c51 (670-129)
11 SOUTHERN SPEED 50 c49 (195-44)
8 WRITTEN TOWN 51.5 c53.5 (205-44)

C4 1000m

C Schofield (3) 3 5 1 (515) -
PH Seow* (5) 2 2 2 (498) 1
K Faiz* (4) 6 6 3 (500) 2
V Duric (8) 4 4 4 (467) 1.75
C Henrique (7) 9 11 5 (480) Hd
B Pinheiro (1) 5 3 6 (459) 1
D Moor (11) 7 7 7 (513) 1.25
R Mala (2) 1 1 8 (501) Hd
I Saifudin (9) 11 9 9 (541) 0.75
S Jamil (10) 8 10 10 (519) Ns
M Nunes (6) 10 10 11 (463) 2.5

1-7-24 MONDAY - AUSTRALIA RACE CARD

AUSTRALIA FEED: GUNNEDAH/ COROWA (MARK CODE 5)

| | | | |
|---------------------------|--------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| 12:35PM Race 1 (AS27,000) | GUH-1000m 9 | 0500 Credere | Simon Miller (3) 55 3 |
| 1 8126 Always A Saint | [6] 58 10 | 7402 Chipstar | Ms C Keatings (1.5) 55 4 |
| 2 6445 Calamity Fox | [11] 58 11 | 0050 Cracking Down | Jessica Booth (3.0) 55 6 |
| 3 1 Western Eagle | [12] 57.5 | | |
| 4 3603 Cumboogle | [9] 57 | | |
| 5 3321 Hercules Morse | [4] 57 | | |
| 6 6279 Rewarding Belle | [3] 57 | | |
| 7 0753 Gold Smiles | [10] 55.5 | | |
| 8 1645 Joyful Jink | [2] 55.5 | | |
| 9 6103 Look Closer | [10] 55.5 | | |
| 10 6511 Powerline | [8] 55.5 | | |
| 11 5568 Rinnero | [13] 55.5 | | |
| 12 6634 Via Rose | [7] 55.5 | | |
| 13 7315 Keitany | [1] 55.5 | | |
| 12:55PM Race 2 (AS30,000) | COR-1200m 11 | 4359 Outback Crumpet | M Fitzgerald (2.0) 55 6 |
| 1 8881 Magmettic | [4] 61 12 | 3174 Valadylum | A Bullock (14) 60.5 8 |
| 2 7243 Star Buyer | [7] 60 | 0690 Lady Cornelia | J Golden (1.5) 59 60.5 |
| 3 6641 Lunar Shoes | [8] 57 | 1343 World Atlas | S Lismy (9) 55 20 |
| 4 0549 Allrove | [10] 56 | 8960 Mellencamp | C J Hillier (1) 56 5 |
| 5 2101 Go Ellie Go | [2] 55.5 | 4452 Another Gift | M Thompson (3.0) 55 7 |
| 6 6507 Coopella | [9] 55 | 5474 Chowdah | -- (1) 55 1 |
| 7 1019 Gabbro's Mate | [11] 55 | 4238 Anzarali | -- (1) 55 2 |
| 8 5662 Mother Joy | [5] 55 | 4873 Klatten | J Golden (1.5) 55 4 |

| | | | |
|----------------------------|-------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1:35PM Race 3 (AS27,000) | GUH-1600m 6 | 5227 Tizzo Favo | Ms C Williams (2.0) 59 60.5 |
| 1 2005 Assiduly | [14] 60.5 8 | 6691 Bonavolante | A Banks 59 60.5 |
| A Bullock (14) 60.5 8 | | 2412 Amen Brother | Braith Nock (1.7) 59 12 |
| J Golden (1.5) 59 60.5 | | 3711 New Jersey | Shae Wilkes (3.0) 59 13 |
| M Fitzgerald (2.0) 59 60.5 | | 0696 Pammy Joy | Jack Baker (3.0) 58 15 |
| A Banks 59 60.5 | | 5182 Wagunda | S Ingelse (1.5) 47 15.6 |
| Braith Nock (1.7) 59 12 | | 4971 Houdini Catarno | Ms M Weir (3) 57 17 |
| Shae Wilkes (3.0) 59 13 | | 0170 Roch Dispute | Wendy Peel (1.8) 56 18 |
| Jack Baker (3.0) 58 15 | | 5240 Griffinstown Girl | Ms J Brookes (3.0) 55 19 |
| S Ingelse (1.5) 47 15.6 | | 7561 Kerma Art | S Lismy (9) 55 20 |
| Ms M Weir (3) 57 17 | | 0060 Classic Fastnet | C J Hillier (1) 56 5 |
| Wendy Peel (1.8) 56 18 | | | M Thompson (3.0) 55 7 |
| Ms J Brookes (3.0) 55 19 | | | -- (1) 55 1 |
| S Lismy (9) 55 20 | | | -- (1) 55 2 |
| C J Hillier (1) 56 5 | | | -- (1) 55 3 |
| M Thompson (3.0) 55 7 | | | J Golden (1.5) 55 4 |
| -- (1) 55 1 | | | |
| -- (1) 55 2 | | | |
| -- (1) 55 3 | | | |
| J Golden (1.5) 55 4 | | | |

| | | | |
|--------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| COR-1400m 5 | 2201 Rebel's Edge | -- | [13] 57 2 |
| [10] 64.5 6 | 4109 Not Too Bad | A Banks | [5] 56.5 3 |
| [18] 63.5 7 | 2241 Touch Of Navy | Shane S Arnold | [10] 56.5 4 |
| [5] 63 8 | 0710 Musical Affair | J P-Holmes | [6] 62.5 5 |
| [6] 62.5 9 | 6536 Watch Me Rumble | B Looker | [7] 55 6 |
| [7] 61.5 10 | 2005 Macleay | S Lismy (11) 55 | [7] 55 7 |
| [3] 61.5 11 | 4542 Tough Case | Ms M Weir | [6] 55 8 |
| [14] 60.5 13 | 6852 Heart Of Vancouver | Jack Baker (3.0) | [2] 55 9 |
| [16] 60.5 15 | 7312 Starliv | Jack Baker (3.0) | [2] 57.5 9 |
| [9] 59.5 1 | 1221 Hulm | Siena Grima (3.0) | [8] 55 10 |
| [19] 59 | 7930 Sheila | N Heywood | [11] 7315 Keitany |
| [2] 59 | 1309 Sojostokyo | S McDonough (3.0) | [3] 66.5 12 |
| [8] 58.5 3 | 4499 Brenly's Trooper | L King | [6] 62.5 13 |
| [1] 58 4 | 4000 Gaze Grise | -- | [10] 61 14 |
| [17] 56.5 5 | 7312 Starliv | Ms H Le Blanc (1.5) | [13] 61 15 |
| [13] 57.5 6 | 1221 Hulm | Ms C Keatings (1.5) | [5] 61 16 |
| [11] 55 7 | 7930 Sheila | Brittany Button (3.0) | [12] 60.5 17 |
| [2] 55 8 | 8573 Mighty Feat | N Heywood | [4] 59 18 |
| [12] 55 9 | 4480 Final Man | Jack Martin | [11] 58.5 19 |
| [1] 62.5 10 | 3284 Toronto Rain | H Durman (2.0) | [6] 62.5 20 |
| [4] 60.5 11 | 8397 Very Shamus | Amy O'Driscoll (3.0) | [9] 57 21 |
| [12] 58 12 | 2954 Crimoso | B Vale | [8] 55 22 |
| [12] 58 13 | 5114 Hiraishin | A Warren (2.0) | [1] 56 23 |

| | | |
|----------------------|---------------------|-------------|
| 5070 Panuara Boy | M Thompson (3.0) | [6] 61.5 1 |
| 5778 Zoom Outcome | M Stapleford (2.0) | [5] 61 2 |
| 3843 Sir Freddie | A Bullock | [9] 59.5 3 |
| 4980 Emphatic Bel | P Scorse | [7] 59 4 |
| 1949 Just Jacky | Ms J Taylor | [1] 59 5 |
| 7041 Sunday Bell | Ms J Preslits (1.5) | [8] 59 6 |
| 1387 Koondeman | -- | [13] 58.5 7 |
| 5170 Toongi Bound | Ms M Weir | [2] 57.5 8 |
| 4100 Wine Time | Shae Wilkes (3.0) | [10] 57 9 |
| 6294 Alaskan Aura | B Looker | [4] 55 10 |
| 9067 The Affirmative | A Banks | [14] 55 11 |
| 0582 Hampton Cove | C J Hillier | [11] 55 12 |
| 1570 Shooting Zaa | J P-Holmes | [15] 56 13 |
| 0030 Festiva | -- | [3] 55 14 |
| 7099 Ruby Factor | Jack Baker (3.0) | [12] 55 15 |

By Singapore Pools

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SPORT

ICONS TO HOST SPORTS STARS

Some of the most famous French venues will be used for events at the Paris Olympics

PARIS – The Paris Olympics have been designed to showcase the City of Light in all its splendour, with many events set to take place at some of its most iconic locations.

AFP looks at five sites set to wow ticket holders – and a global TV audience of billions – during the 17-day extravaganza starting on July 26.

EFFEL TOWER

The most famous of the Paris landmarks, the Eiffel Tower, will welcome one of the most popular Olympic events – beach volleyball.

The action will take place in a temporary venue near the foot of the “Iron Lady”.

The Champ de Mars park at the foot of the tower will host judo and wrestling.

Revealed by Parisians when it was unveiled in 1889 for the World's Fair by engineer Gustave Eiffel, the Eiffel Tower has since become the capital's crown jewel.

Besides being one of the world's top tourist attractions, pulling in seven million visitors a year, it is also a working telecoms tower, used for radio and TV transmissions.

Winners at the Paris Games will all go home with a small part of the iron colossus. Each medal will contain an 18g crumb of original iron, removed during various renovations, melted down and reformed.

GRAND PALAIS

Fencing and taekwondo battles will take place in the opulent setting of the Grand Palais art gallery, a glass-and-steel masterpiece created for the 1900 World's Fair.

Its distinctive feature is its beautiful glass domed roof, the largest of its kind in Europe, which covers a cavernous exhibition space of 13,500 sq m.

During World War I, the Grand

Palais put its art collection in storage and converted its galleries into a military hospital where soldiers were patched up before returning to the trenches.

In the 21st century, the airy nave has hosted giant installations commissioned from some of the world's leading artists.

It has also been flooded to make the biggest ice rink in the world.

PLACE DE LA CONCORDE

The vast paved square at the foot of the Champs Elysees avenue, where heads literally rolled after the French Revolution, will serve as an urban sports hub.

Skateboarding, 3x3 basketball, BMX freestyle and in its first Games appearance, breakdancing, will all take place in the square which lies just across the Seine river from the Invalides war museum where Napoleon Bonaparte is buried.

The square's harmonious name conceals a bloody past – King Louis XVI and his wife Marie Antoinette were among hundreds of people who were guillotined there in 1793 during the Reign of Terror that followed the 1789 French Revolution.

The largest square in Paris is defined by its huge gold obelisk, one of a pair erected by Ramses II outside the temple in Luxor, which was gifted to Paris in 1830.

PALACE OF VERSAILLES

Dressage, cross-country eventing and showjumping will take place in the royal park of Versailles Palace, some 20km from Paris, which will also feature on the marathon circuit, and host the modern pentathlon events.

Originally a hunting lodge, “Sun King” Louis XIV in the 17th century transformed Versailles into the home of French royalty, where he



The beach volleyball competition will take place at the foot of the Eiffel Tower from July 27 to Aug 10. The nearby Champ de Mars park will stage judo and wrestling events. PHOTO: AFP

resided with around 10,000 staff – enough to fill a town.

The vast palace gardens include a mile-long canal that once hosted his extravagant parties, complete with sailing gondolas.

Since 1979 it has been a world heritage site and is also a firm favourite on the Paris tourist trail.

MARSEILLE

Not all events will be held in the capital.

Sailing contests will take place in Marseille, France's boisterous second city, which is better known as the home of the Olympique Marseille football team.

Over 300 sailors from across the world will battle it out in the sapphire blue waters of the Mediterranean east of the city, where a new marina has been built on the Corniche coastal road – one of France's most scenic drives.

It is unlikely they will have Marseille's mighty mistral wind in

their sails, however – it usually blows in winter and spring.

Marseille was where the Olympic torch relay began in France on May 8. It will also host 10 football matches at the 67,394-capacity Marseille Stadium, France's second-largest arena after the Stade de France (over 80,000). AFP



Fencers and taekwondo exponents will compete under the glass roof of the Grand Palais. PHOTO: REUTERS



The Place de la Concorde will stage the urban sports of the Olympic Games. PHOTO: REUTERS



Palace of Versailles, France's first world heritage site, will host equestrian and modern pentathlon. PHOTO: AFP



The Olympic flame arriving in Marseille, which will host the sailing events and 10 football matches. PHOTO: REUTERS

Richardson's Olympic sprint double bid ends

EUGENE – Sha'Carri Richardson's dreams of an Olympic sprint double ended in disappointment at the US trials on June 29 as men's sprint star Noah Lyles blasted to victory in the 200m.

Richardson – the reigning world champion over 100m – looked poised to claim at least a top-three finish in the women's 200m after clocking a personal best of 21.92sec in the semi-finals on June 28.

But the 24-year-old never recovered after making a poor start in the final and was pipped to a top-three finish. Gabby Thomas won in 21.81sec, with Brittany Brown second (21.90sec) and McKenzie Long third (21.91sec). Richardson was fourth in 22.16sec.

The result means that Richardson will only have the 100m to focus on in Paris, in addition to her likely role in the 4x100m relay squad.

Thomas, 27, was delighted with a victory that gives her a possible tilt at the Olympic 200m crown. “This is incredible,” she said. “I

knew I needed to get today done and this is the first step – there's no gold medal in Paris without making the team today.”

Lyles was also buoyant after the men's final. The reigning 100m and 200m world champion served notice that he is ready to extend his dominance to the Olympic arena with victory in the men's 200m final in a world-leading 19.53sec, a new trials record.

Lyles, who won the 100m on June 23, reeled in Kenny Bednarek in the final 20m to take the tape. Bednarek finished in 19.59sec, while Erriyon Knighton was third in 19.77sec.

Lyles was quoted by ESPN as saying: “The US have been dominating. We've had two medallists at least at each world championships and Olympics since 2021. So the 200, we definitely have a strong, strong (chance of) sweeping it.”

Bednarek added: “We were supposed to (sweep) in Tokyo. But I'm feeling very confident that we can get the job done this time.

We've all got to make sure to execute when it matters most.”

But there was more disappointment for former 100m world champion Christian Coleman, who was squeezed into fourth place. The 28-year-old was also beaten out of the top three places in the 100m.

Over in Kingston, two-time reigning world 200m champion Shericka Jackson delivered the fastest time in the qualifying heats at the Jamaican Olympic trials on June 29. A day after winning the 100m crown to qualify for the Paris Olympics, the 29-year-old had the best heat time in a season-best 22.67sec.

Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce, who also qualified in the 100m, did not compete in the 200m heats and reigning Olympic champion Elaine Thompson-Herah is injured and will not defend her crown.

Shaunae Miller-Uibo will also not defend her title in Paris after suffering an injury, Bahamas athletics officials said. Miller-Uibo, the 2016 and 2020 Games 400m gold medallist, was chasing a hat-trick of Olympic titles in Paris.

France's 2012 Olympic pole vault champion and former world record holder Renaud Lavillenie, 37, will miss the Paris Games after failing to achieve the qualifying height in his final chance at the French championships on June 30.

Lavillenie needed to clear 5.82 metres. He passed at the opening height of 5.60m before failing three times at 5.72m. AFP



Frederick Richard was third in the floor exercise and topped the all-around at the US Olympic gymnastics trials on June 29. PHOTO: AFP

‘Deadly’ US men gymnasts eyeing gold

MINNEAPOLIS – Frederick Richard is heading to his first Olympics after an all-around victory at the US gymnastics trials on June 29, vowing the American men would deliver “some medals in Paris”.

The United States have not won an Olympic men's team gymnastics medal since their bronze in 2008.

Richard will spearhead the effort to end that drought alongside Brody Malone, Paul Juda, Asher Hong and Stephen Nedoroscik.

“I knew whatever team was chosen is a deadly team,” Richard, 20, said. “We shouldn't even be aiming for just a medal, we should be aiming for gold.”

To book an automatic spot, Richard also had to finish in the top three on at least three of the six ap-

paratus at the trials and he got the job done – wowing the Target Centre crowd in winning the high bar.

He was second on the parallel bars and third on floor exercise.

His all-around total of 170.50 was just two-tenths of a point better than Malone, who returned from a career-threatening knee injury in 2023 to win a third US national championship earlier in June.

Malone had his difficulties in Minneapolis, including a disappointing showing on pommel horse and a fall from the high bar – in which he won the world title in 2022.

But he never really looked in doubt of making a second straight Olympic team, which was filled out by selectors based on results of the US championships, as well as the

trials, in a complicated computation aimed at maximising scoring potential at the Games.

Third-placed all-around finisher Shane Wiskus, a Tokyo Olympian, missed out as fourth-placed Juda and fifth-placed Hong, who were both on the bronze medal-winning team at the 2023 world championships, made it.

The fifth spot went to pommel horse specialist Nedoroscik, the 2021 world champion and a four-time national champion in the event.

“This is an extremely fair process based on the results from two competitions,” men's programme director Brett McClure said. “The guys that performed at the level to make the team performed at the level to make the team.”

The trials conclude on June 30 with four-gold former Olympic champion Simone Biles poised to book a third trip to the Games.

The women's all-around winner gains an automatic spot on the team. Biles led the standings on 58.90 points after the opening night on June 28, with Jordan Chiles, part of the US silver medal-winning team in Tokyo, second on 56.400 and Tokyo all-around champion Sunisa Lee third on 56.025.

However, Shilese Jones withdrew on June 29, a day after she injured her left knee on a warmup vault. A member of the victorious US team at the last two world championships, she landed awkwardly shortly before the vault competition and limped off with the help of her coach. AFP

RUSSELL PICKS UP PIECES AND WIN

AUSTRIAN GRAND PRIX

LEADING RESULTS

- 1 George Russell (Gbr) Mercedes
1hr 24min 22.798sec
- 2 Oscar Piastri (Aus) McLaren
+1.906sec
- 3 Carlos Sainz (Esp) Ferrari
+4.533
- 4 Lewis Hamilton (Gbr) Mercedes
+23.142
- 5 Max Verstappen (Ned) Red Bull
+37.253
- 6 Nico Hulkenberg (Ger) Haas
+54.088
- 7 Sergio Perez (Mex) Red Bull
+54.672
- 8 Kevin Magnussen (Den) Haas
+1min 0.355sec
- 9 Daniel Ricciardo (Aus) RB
+1:01.169
- 10 Pierre Gasly (Fra) Alpine
+1:01.766

SELECTED

- 18 Fernando Alonso (Esp)
Aston Martin +1 lap *Fastest Lap
- 20 Lando Norris (Gbr) McLaren
DNF

DRIVERS' STANDINGS

- 1 Verstappen 237pts 2 Norris 156
- 3 Charles Leclerc (Mon) Ferrari
150 4 Sainz 135

CONSTRUCTORS' STANDINGS

- 1 Red Bull 355pts 2 Ferrari 291
- 3 McLaren 268 4 Mercedes 196

Briton swoops to Austrian GP victory after Verstappen and Norris collide late on

SPIELBERG — George Russell claimed a dramatic victory for Mercedes on June 30 after a sensational collision between series leader Max Verstappen of Red Bull and his nearest rival Lando Norris of McLaren in the closing laps of an action-packed Austrian Grand Prix.

It was the British driver's second career victory, cementing the improved form of the Mercedes team in recent races, as he made the most of Verstappen's impulsive and aggressive move against Norris, to finish 1.9 seconds clear of Oscar Piastri in the second McLaren.

"Incredible!" said Russell, who had registered Mercedes' last win in Brazil in 2022.

"I think it was a tough fight out there at the beginning of the race just to hold on to that third place and I saw on the TV that Max and Lando were getting pretty close — and I knew Lando would want to try to get that race win.

"The team has done an amazing job to put us in this fight and you've got to be there in the end to pick up the pieces."

Carlos Sainz finished third for Ferrari ahead of seven-time champion Lewis Hamilton in the second Mercedes. Verstappen was fifth despite collecting a 10-second penalty for causing the crash with Norris, who was forced to retire his damaged car.

Verstappen called the penalty "ridiculous" on team radio. The Dutchman later defended himself, saying: "From the outside, it's hard to see when I brake. I know in the past it was a bit of a complaint.

"Now I always move my wheel before I brake then you brake in a straight line trajectory. It's always



Mercedes driver George Russell hugging team principal Toto Wolff after winning the Austrian Grand Prix on June 30. It was his and Mercedes' first victory since the Brazilian Grand Prix in November 2022. Max Verstappen was fifth despite collecting a 10-second penalty for causing the crash with Lando Norris. PHOTO: REUTERS

easy to say on the outside that I'm moving under the braking. But I think the guy in the car knows best what he's doing."

On Norris he added: "His dive bombs, he's so late on the breaks. I think it's the shape of the corner that provides these issues sometimes. It is what it is."

However, Norris said: "He ruined his own race as much as he ruined mine... If he says he did nothing wrong, then I will lose a lot of respect for that.

"If he admits to being a bit stupid and running into me and being a bit

reckless in a way, then I will lose only a small amount of respect for him."

On a hot day in the Styrian Alps, with air temperatures touching 29 deg C and the track at 49 deg C, Verstappen made his now customary flawless start from pole.

Russell also made a good start from third and fought Norris for second on the opening lap.

Verstappen pitted on lap 23, followed by Norris and the rest, passing the race lead to Piastri until he pitted on lap 25. Piastri rejoined sixth and order was restored with

everyone on hard tyres, except Russell who took a second set of mediums.

"He launched straight into me — I couldn't turn right into the box," said Norris, complaining about Verstappen's alleged unsafe release by Red Bull.

"Yeah, we're on it," came the reply.

The battling pair eventually collided on lap 63 at Turn Three where Verstappen moved across to hit Norris' car and both suffered punctures, presenting the lead to Russell as they limped back to the pits.

Verstappen's front left was damaged and Norris' right rear, with sufficient damage for the McLaren to retire as Verstappen rejoined in fifth. The crash led to a brief Virtual Safety Car.

Nico Hulkenberg came home sixth for Haas ahead of Sergio Perez in the second Red Bull, Kevin Magnussen in the second Haas, Daniel Ricciardo of RB and Pierre Gasly of Alpine.

Charles Leclerc finished 11th in the second Ferrari after a race of four pit-stops following a first-lap incident. AFP

Tour de France 2024

Pogacar in front, as debutant takes Stage 2

BOLOGNA — Tadej Pogacar claimed the Tour de France overall lead with a late attack in the second stage on June 30, though the Slovenian may have been surprised by how easily defending champion Jonas Vingegaard followed him, despite his recent lack of racing.

While the 2020 and 2021 Tour winner's lightning attack on the ascent of San Luca left fellow favourites Primoz Roglic and Remco Evenepoel seemingly glued to the road, Vingegaard had no trouble keeping up, despite entering the race having not competed since he sustained a collapsed lung in a crash in April.

Tour debutant Kevin Vauquelin was the second French winner in the first two days after being the best of the breakaway in the ascent to San Luca as he gave his Arkea-B&B Hotels team their first win in the race.

"I've had so many tough times, in training, at the Tour de Suisse, at the French championships, and yesterday I got dropped. I was a bit at the end of my tether," Vauquelin said.

"But I had a sense of revenge and I knew the wheel was going to turn. I turned quickly."

Romain Bardet, who started the day in the leader's yellow jersey, finished 21 seconds behind Pogacar to lose the overall lead by six sec-



onds, while Evenepoel eventually managed to bridge the gap with Vingegaard and his rival.

Overall, Pogacar leads Belgian Evenepoel and Vingegaard of Denmark, who are second and third, respectively, on added places with no time difference. Roglic is now 21 seconds down on Pogacar.

Eleven riders broke away early but none of them posed a threat to Bardet's yellow jersey.

They opened a 10-minute gap and it became quickly obvious that they would battle it out for the stage win despite a late surge from the peloton.

In the leading group, Frenchmen

Jordan Jegat and Axel Laurance attacked on the San Luca climb in a stadium-like, deafening atmosphere.

It was the first of two ascents to San Luca up alongside the Portico which features 666 arches.

Vauquelin, Norwegian Jonas Abrahamson and Nelson Oliveira

Kevin Vauquelin, savouring his victory in the second stage of the Tour de France on June 30, was the second French winner in the first two days. PHOTO: REUTERS

of Portugal broke free in the flat part leading to the bottom of San Luca.

The Frenchman then upped the pace right away and did not look back. Abrahamson took second place, with another Frenchman, Quentin Pacher, finishing third.

Said Vauquelin: "It was really hard for me but I'm really happy. I had a perfect day out in the breakaway. I have to thank Christian (Rodriguez) for his role in the way he helped me get through to win the stage. He put me in the perfect position and I knew I was going to be able to attack..."

"I wanted to take part in the Tour, that was the original dream. To now win a stage... well that's amazing and for the team as well — it just makes me incredibly happy."

REUTERS

TOUR DE FRANCE
Stage 3: Singtel TV Ch116, 5pm

SportsWorld

Teh exits in US Open badminton semis

Singapore's No. 2 men's badminton player Jason Teh lost 21-15, 21-18 to Japan's world No. 54 Yushi Tanaka in the US Open semi-finals on June 29 in Fort Worth.

Tanaka faced China's Lei Lanxi in the final, which took place after press time. World No. 52 Teh took home US\$3,045 (S\$4,100) for his efforts.

The 23-year-old moves on to Calgary for the July 2-7 Canada Open.

Bowler Nu'man third in Macau event

Singapore bowler Nu'man Syahmi on June 30 finished third in the men's Open of the Macau-China International Open.

At Macau's Cotai Bowling Centre, the 24-year-old ended second in the field of 22 in the Masters to qualify for the top-six in the stepladder finals. In a three-man play-off to face South Korean top seed Park Tae-yeon in the final, Nu'man had 178 pinfalls, ahead of Korea's Han Seong-min (148) but behind Macau's Lei Hok Hin (193). Lei then beat Park in the final.

Pereira eyes third UFC title after KO

LAS VEGAS — A spectacular knockout victory by Alex Pereira over Jiri Prochazka helped him retain his Ultimate Fighting Championship light heavyweight belt in Las Vegas on June 29, possibly paving the way for a shot at heavyweight gold and a third UFC title.

The Brazilian landed a head kick in the second round and followed up with punches to knock out the Czech. REUTERS

Ex-Wallabies captain Hooper ends 'incredible' international journey

PARIS — Michael Hooper, who holds the record for the most caps as Australia captain, called time on his international rugby career on June 30 after missing out on selection for the Paris Olympics.

The 32-year-old, who played 125 Tests for the Wallabies — 69 of them as skipper — announced his immediate retirement on social media.

"What a ride! My Olympic journey has come to an end, and with it, my Australian rugby career," Hooper said in a statement via social media.

"To the Aussie Sevens team, I wish you all the best, you've been an awesome, helpful, and talented group of athletes to be part of.

"As for my time in Australian Rugby, I'm grateful to my family and friends for their unwavering support throughout.

"We've shared an incredible journey, filled with unforgettable experiences, challenges, and memories. Thank you."

Hooper became the Wallabies captain in 2014 at the age of 23. He went on to play in the side that won the 2015 Rugby Champion-



Michael Hooper played 125 Tests for the Australian rugby team, with 69 of them as skipper.

ship and reached the final of the World Cup the same year.

He also featured in the 2019 World Cup but missed two months in the summer of 2022 when he was treated for depression. He returned to play again for the

Wallabies, taking the field for the last time in his final Test in South Africa in 2023.

Hooper was jettisoned by incoming coach Eddie Jones for the 2023 World Cup, prompting the move to sevens in a bid to make it into the team for the Olympics.

"Michael has been an incredible player and ambassador for our sport," said Australia Rugby chief Phil Waugh in a statement.

With his club NSW Waratahs, where he spent 10 seasons after starting out at ACT Brumbies, he won the 2014 edition of Super Rugby.

Meanwhile, France's star scrum-half Antoine Dupont was omnipresent once again as his club Toulouse claimed a third Top 14 and Champions Cup double on June 28 but his mind now switches to this summer's home Olympic Games.

Dupont was unplayable at times as the aristocrats of French rugby cruised past Bordeaux Begles 59-3 in Marseille to add to May's Champions Cup success.

The 27-year-old scored two tries and set up another less than a month from the Olympic men's sevens final at the Stade de France.

A victory in Paris would be historic for Les Bleus, beating the women's silver medal in Tokyo in 2021.

"I have one week of holidays before I join up with the Olympics squad," Dupont told France Televisions after the victory.

"I will enjoy this, rest up to get there with a fresh mind and to be motivated to start again to win something else," the 2021 World Rugby Player of the Year added. REUTERS, AFP

Wimbledon 2024

SKIPPING WARMUPS IS 'SMARTER DECISION'

Swiatek is seeking her maiden Wimbledon title at her first grass-court event in 2024

LONDON – Iga Swiatek is approaching Wimbledon a little differently this time round after skipping all the tune-up tournaments, but the top seed thinks it is the best possible move for her as she bids to win her maiden crown at the All England Club.

For all her achievements over the last few seasons, the five-time Grand Slam champion remains largely unproven on grass, with none of her 22 singles titles coming on the surface.

Having been handed a quarter-final defeat by wild card Elina Svitolina in 2023, the 23-year-old Pole will look to improve on that when she begins her Wimbledon campaign against former world No. 4 Sofia Kenin on July 2.

"At the beginning, for sure it was tricky," Swiatek said, when asked on June 29 how she felt about her Wimbledon preparations.

"I'm happy that I came here early because there is a huge difference between the grass that we have in our own country, for example, and here.

"Day after day I felt like I'm getting more rhythm and I can really

feel the ball better. I feel good. For sure, we approached this year a little bit differently, basically because of the amount of matches that I played in the first part of the season."

Fresh off her fourth French Open crown, the world No. 1 withdrew from the Berlin WTA event in June, citing overall physical and mental fatigue after an intense nine weeks.

"I could probably squeeze in one more tournament before Wimbledon, but I don't know if I would be able to physically be in a good shape till the end of the year," she added.

"You kind of have to choose what's better also for the future. I think that was the smarter decision this year. Next year we're also



World No. 1 Iga Swiatek is looking to win her first career singles title on grass.

going to see how my results are going to look like before Roland Garros because it all comes up to the final decision."

Swiatek, whose father Tomasz is a former Olympic rower and competed in the men's quadruple sculls at the 1988 Olympics in Seoul, confirmed that she will participate in the Paris 2024 Games.

"It means a lot... We have kind of an Olympic tradition in my family.

Olympics were always this kind of tournament that was the most important, kind of above everything else," she said.

Meanwhile, second seed Coco Gauff said she went through a dark time after her first-round exit from Wimbledon in 2023, but the setback put her career in perspective as she turned her form around.

Gauff, 20, has since won the US Open and reached the semi-finals of the Australian and French Opens.

"I wish a year ago, me after that match could see me now," the American said on June 29. "That was a tough moment for me. I think the first two, three weeks after that, I was really in a dark place.

"It was tough for me to realise I have so much time. When that happens, you just feel the weight of everything on you. I think I had high expectations at that age. I still do."

Gauff said she did not feel any extra pressure ahead of playing fellow American Caroline Dolehide in the first round on July 1.

"With Wimbledon, I'm really relaxed going into this year. I didn't have a great Wimbledon last year. It's like it couldn't get any worse, it can only get better or the same," she said.

The other main contender, third seed Aryna Sabalenka, said she

was not fully ready for her first-round clash with Emina Bektas on July 1 as the two-time Australian Open champion continues to struggle with a rare shoulder injury.

Sabalenka, who also suffered a lower back injury earlier in 2024 and was down with a sickness during the French Open earlier in June, said her health was a reason she had chosen not to play at the Olympics.

"No, I'm not 100 per cent fit now. We are doing everything we can with my team to make sure I'll be able to play my first match here, but, no, I'm not 100 per cent ready," she said on June 29.

"It (the muscle) is teres major... it's really a specific injury, and it's really a rare one. Probably I'm just the second or the third tennis player who injured that muscle," the Belarusian said.

"The most annoying thing is that I can do anything, I can practise, I can hit my groundstrokes. I'm struggling with serving. That's really annoying. You don't feel like you're injured... but if you tell me to serve, I'm going to go through pain." REUTERS

WIMBLEDON
Day 1: Singtel TV Ch115 & StarHub Ch210, 8pm and Ch114 & Ch209, 8.30pm

India eye dominance after T20 World Cup triumph

NEW DELHI – The era of India's dominance in cricket may have kicked in with their spectacular seven-run triumph in the T20 World Cup on June 29, according to several former players.

India prevailed in a thriller against South Africa in Barbados to claim their second 20-over world title 17 years after winning the inaugural edition.

Virat Kohli's 76 led India to a strong 176-7 but after Heinrich Klaasen blasted a superb 52 from 27 balls, South Africa were closing in on victory, only to be halted by some outstanding Indian bowling at the end.

South Africa finished on 169-8 with Hardik Pandya taking 3-20 for India to the delight of the huge Indian following at Kensington Oval in Bridgetown.

It was India's first global title since winning the 2013 Champions Trophy, but their consistency in recent years was never in doubt.

India lost back-to-back finals at the World Test Championship in 2021 and 2023, while their only defeat in the 2023 50-over World Cup at home came in the decider against Australia.

They ended that barren streak in International Cricket Council (ICC) events on June 29 by becoming the first team to win the T20 World Cup unbeaten.

"I have a feeling that this is a breakout win for us," former India opener Virender Sehwag wrote on X.

"For years, we have played well, been consistent in a range, consolidated but not able to get past the finish line," he wrote.

"With this win, I think we would be winning many ICC trophies consistently in the years to come."

India's resurgence follows the demise of England's white-ball dominance, as the Jos Buttler-led side have now failed to retain two World Cup titles in eight months.

India appear to have inherited that mantle, believes former England fast bowler Steven Finn.

"India are formidable – they have got all bases covered in all conditions," he told the BBC. "This experience could see them go on to dominate now. It is an experience that will serve them very well."

Former India captain Sourav



India celebrating after winning the Twenty20 World Cup final against South Africa at Kensington Oval in Barbados on June 29. Their seven-run win secured their fourth World Cup title overall. PHOTO: AFP

Ganguly predicted "they will win many more" after the success in the Caribbean.

Batting great Sachin Tendulkar said India's overall fourth World Cup title in limited-overs cricket (they won the one-day international titles in 1983 and 2011) would

be a major motivation for young talent in the country.

"Every star added to the Team India jersey inspires our nation's starry-eyed children to move one step closer to their dreams. India gets the 4th star, our second in @T20WorldCup," he wrote on X.

India's domination in the 20-over format will have to be under a new leadership, though.

Captain Rohit Sharma and stalwart Kohli bowed out of T20 Internationals after winning the World Cup, while it was also coach Rahul Dravid's last match in charge of the

squad.

Kohli, 35, said: "It's time for the next generation to take over, some amazing players will take the team forward and keep the flag waving high."

The 37-year-old Sharma added: "There is no better time to say

goodbye to this format.

"I've loved every moment of this. I started my India career playing this format.

"This is what I wanted, I wanted to win the Cup. I wanted this badly... I was very desperate for this title." REUTERS, AFP

Bhatia, Rai share lead in tough, tricky conditions

DETROIT – Akshay Bhatia and England's Aaron Rai shot four-under 68s to remain co-leaders through the third round of the Rocket Mortgage Classic on June 29.

American Bhatia and Rai began the round sharing the lead, but the overall leaderboard in Detroit has tightened.

Rai had five birdies and a bogey, while Bhatia navigated his third consecutive round without a bogey on a day when a heavy storm delayed the start by two hours.

"Did a pretty good job," the 29-year-old Rai said. "It was tricky. Conditions were a little tougher. A lot of crosswinds. We handled the conditions pretty well overall.

"It's another good, solid day of golf to draw on going into tomorrow."

They are both at 17-under 199 going into the final round on June 30.

"It's pretty cool," Bhatia said. "I didn't play that great but I just hung in there, like the last couple of days. Should be a fun test tomorrow."

He won play-offs to capture both his PGA titles, at last July's Barracuda Championship and April's Texas Open.

"Hopefully everything is going great tomorrow, but if not then I can lean on other things," the 22-year-old said. "See how many birdies you can make and just keep



Aaron Rai playing his shot as Akshay Bhatia looks on during the third round of the Rocket Mortgage Classic on June 29. Rai had five birdies and a bogey, while Bhatia is the only player in the field without a bogey so far. PHOTO: AFP

plugging along." Compatriot Cameron Young (67), who birdied three of his last

five holes, and Australia's Cam Davis (66), with birdies on three of his first four holes for a bogey-free

round, are one shot back at 16 under.

Sam Stevens (66), who birdied

the final two holes, and South Africa's Erik van Rooyen (68), who did not have a bogey, are at 15 under.

So, there will be plenty of contenders on Detroit Golf Club's North Course.

Amateur Luke Clanton (65), Joel Dahmen (68) and Australia's Min Woo Lee (66) are tied for seventh at 14 under.

Clanton climbed to a share of second place by the time he finished his third round, before others took advantage of scoring chances in the early evening.

"It's my first PGA Tour event and to be in contention where I'm at right now is awesome," the 20-year-old said.

Clanton, a Florida State University student, had played earlier in June at the US Open in Pinehurst, making the cut and tying for 41st place. On June 29, he eagled the par-five 14th hole, just two holes after his only bogey of the round. REUTERS, AFP

Euro 2024

GRIEZMANN MUST FIND HIS FORM

Les Bleus can banish their scoring blues if off-colour attacking ace rediscovers spark

DUSSELDORF – Majestic at the 2022 World Cup, Antoine Griezmann's current struggles reflect that of a France side for whom the goals have worryingly dried up at Euro 2024, ahead of their last-16 clash with Belgium on July 1.

France emerged from their group unbeaten but they scored just twice in three matches – one an own goal which allowed them to beat Austria, and the other a penalty by Kylian Mbappe in a 1-1 draw with Poland.

In between, there was a 0-0 stalemate with the Netherlands, in which Griezmann notably squandered a couple of excellent opportunities.

Despite defending well, their laborious performances meant the best European team at each of the last two World Cups finished only second in Group D, behind Austria.

That has sent them into what is undoubtedly the tougher half of the draw in the knockout rounds, even if their next opponents also struggled during the group phase.

Griezmann, now 33 and playing at his sixth major international tournament for France, was extraordinary at the World Cup in Qatar.

He was converted by coach Didier Deschamps from a striker into a playmaker in a midfield that needed to be reconstructed after the loss of both Paul Pogba and N'Golo Kante to injury.

There, Griezmann combined creativity with a tireless work ethic and was his country's best player until the final, when Mbappe took over with an astonishing hat-trick as France eventually lost to Lionel Messi's Argentina on penalties.

The contrast between Qatar and the Euro so far for Griezmann has been striking.

He struggled playing behind the



France coach Didier Deschamps said Antoine Griezmann (second from near left) took his omission from the starting line-up against Poland with a smile. The veteran has scored just twice in his last 31 games for his country. PHOTO: AFP

frontman in France's last pre-tournament friendly, a 0-0 draw with Canada.

The Atletico Madrid star then reverted to a role on the left of a midfield three in the win against Austria, but the broken nose suffered by Mbappe in that game had a big impact on his vice-captain.

Griezmann, now wearing the captain's armband, was again asked to play behind the centre-

forward – in this case Marcus Thuram – against the Netherlands but endured an off-night.

So much so that he was dropped against Poland, only appearing as a substitute for the last half-hour.

"It was just a choice, that's all. There is no need to interpret anything," insisted Deschamps after that game.

He denied there was any problem between the pair and that

JULY 1

LAST 16

France v Belgium (11.59pm)

Portugal v Slovenia

(July 2, 3am)

Live on Singtel TV Ch141 & StarHub Ch251

Griezmann – who was handed his debut by Deschamps a decade ago and has won 132 caps – took being left out of the team "like a professional, with a smile".

Not since Euro 2016, where hosts France lost to Portugal in the final, had Griezmann been omitted from the starting line-up in a major tournament game with something on the line.

So now the question is what role

Griezmann will play against Belgium, the team France beat 1-0 in the semi-finals on the way to winning the 2018 World Cup.

The expectation is that he is recalled to the starting line-up where he can support Mbappe, who came back from his injury against Poland sporting a protective face mask.

With Mbappe available, there is a little less pressure on Griezmann to score, but he will be eager to improve his recent statistics.

The former Barcelona player has netted just twice in his last 31 games for his country.

Nevertheless, statisticians Opta put his Expected Goals (xG, a metric to measure the quality of a chance) at Euro 2024 at 1.84.

Only Mbappe (2.12 from two games), the tournament's three-goal joint top scorer, Georgia's French-born marksman Georges Mikautadze (2.26) and Germany's Kai Havertz (3.70 over four games), have a higher number.

Maybe the goals will eventually come, and in any case his influence on the France side is still enormous.

"He has missed chances but that will happen again, it happens all the time. He is a vital player for us," said midfielder Aurelien Tchouameni.

"He is the custodian of our way of playing. The ball always goes through him. He has that responsibility, but he is an exceptional player, as he showed all season long and as he shows every day, so there are no worries."

Now it is up to Deschamps to decide where Griezmann plays against Belgium. AFP

Portugal seek to break low-block challenge

FRANKFURT – Portugal's talented squad led by captain Cristiano Ronaldo will be under scrutiny when they step onto the pitch in Frankfurt to face underdogs Slovenia in their Euro 2024 last-16 clash on July 1.

Despite finishing top of Group F with six points, Portugal stumbled to an unexpected defeat by lowly Georgia that raised many questions, after they arrived in Germany with high expectations as one of the favourites to win the title.

However, vice-captain Pepe insisted: "I don't know if you've had the chance to look at the statistics

from the group stage – Portugal are one of the best teams in terms of statistics."

Even though the defeat came with Portugal fielding a second-string side, they were still led by Ronaldo and were never able to get a foothold against a Georgia team who seemed to enter every challenge as if it was their last.

Ronaldo, the only first XI player who was not rested for that match, has yet to find the net at Euro 2024.

But fellow elder statesman Pepe, 41, insisted: "Cristiano thrives on goals – that's a fact. But have you

seen how willing he is to help the national team on the pitch? It's incredible.

"He's the player with the most minutes in our team, aged 39. He's doing very well. He's going to be very good for this knockout phase."

Georgia played with a deep back five, a defensive style that has been causing headaches for Portugal coach Roberto Martinez.

It was reminiscent of the match against the Czech Republic in their Euro opener, when Portugal had to dig deep to fight back and snatch a 2-1 victory with a stoppage-time



Portugal forward Cristiano Ronaldo is still looking for his first Euro 2024 goal after starting three matches.

winner.

It is also similar to the approach Slovenia are expected to adopt – a disciplined, deep back five who offer little space, with explosive counter-attacks from long balls.

In March, Portugal struggled against Slovenia, who gave Marti-

nez his first defeat after 12 games in charge since taking over from Fernando Santos following a disappointing loss to Morocco in the 2022 World Cup quarter-finals.

Slovenia won 2-0 in Ljubljana in a friendly which saw Portugal have 65 per cent of possession but appear clueless on how to beat their rivals' back five. They ended up getting caught in quick counters, much like they did against Georgia.

Said Portugal midfielder Joao Palhinha: "They're a very competitive team, one of the greatest surprises of this Euro. We had the

chance to play a friendly match against them, so they're a team we know well."

Pepe added: "The most important thing is that when we attack against a team who are tough to break down, we have flexibility... It's very difficult to attack against a team with a low block, and it's up to us to... find the spaces in the game and exploit them."

Martinez led Belgium's golden generation of Kevin de Bruyne, Eden Hazard, Thibaut Courtois and Vincent Kompany to No. 1 in the world and third place at the 2018 World Cup in Russia.

Now, the Spaniard has a similar responsibility with Portugal and must help their skilled squad to reach their potential and shake off the underachiever tag that seems to dog them already. REUTERS

Coach expects more as Canada reach last eight

ORLANDO – Canada sealed last-eight qualification in their first-ever Copa America in a drab 0-0 draw with Chile on June 29, as coach Jesse Marsch praised his side

for playing intelligently and closing out the match against 10 men.

Despite having a man's advantage for over two-thirds of the contest in Orlando, Canada were cau-

tious in attack and worked hard to contain their opponents.

The draw moved Canada up to four points in Group A, five behind leaders Argentina, whose 2-0 win over Peru in the other match ensured Canada's progression.

"We could have made life so much easier on ourselves by finding a way to finish it off, but we knew Argentina scored at the beginning of the second half, so the key was to not give anything away," Marsch said.

"I tried to encourage them to stay stable and balanced... It's not just the goalkeeper and the defenders, the entire team have been very organised tactically, and disciplined.

"That has meant that we are very difficult to play against. We have looked athletic and strong in every match, and that's what has helped us move forward."

Chile assistant coach Sergio Santin, however, saw things differently. The 2015 and 2016 champions had not been eliminated earlier than the quarter-finals since 2004, but now became one of the first leading sides to be going home early.

"And all the way until the last minute, Canada were defensive. They were facing, of course, a result that was beneficial for them, and they defended that result," said Santin, who was filling in for suspended coach Ricardo Gareca.

Marsch, who took charge of the team in May, said Canada were not



Derek Cornelius celebrating with Moise Bombito (No. 15) after Canada's 0-0 draw with Chile sees them progressing to the Copa America quarter-finals on their debut. PHOTO: AFP

satisfied just with making it to the quarter-finals on their tournament debut.

"I'm challenging them to grow and get better and adapt to what I want them to become," said the American.

"Challenging them to be more savvy professionals, more savvy players, more mature players."

Canada will face the winners of Group B in their quarter-final on July 5 while Argentina will face the runners-up of the same group.

World Cup holders Argentina shrugged off the injury absence of Lionel Messi to maintain their perfect record against Peru in Miami, with Lautaro Martinez scoring twice.

With Messi sidelined after complaining of a sore right hamstring and coach Lionel Scaloni serving a one-game suspension, Argentina made nine changes to their starting XI.

But despite the makeshift line-up, they were always in control

against a disappointing Peru side, who managed just one shot on target during a one-sided encounter.

Said Martinez: "It was tough in the first half because they were defending deep, but the first goal opened up the game. There's a lot more to come from us." REUTERS, AFP

JAMAICA V VENEZUELA
StarHub Ch201, 8am

MEXICO V ECUADOR
Ch202, 8am

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Ruben Vargas, who scored Switzerland's second goal with a sizzling strike in the 2-0 victory over Italy, said their aggression caused problems for the defending champions. PHOTO: REUTERS

Euro 2024

SWISS CAN BOSS BIG TEAMS: YAKIN

Statement win over Italy shows Switzerland are on right track; Azzurri down but Spalletti stays

BERLIN – Switzerland coach Murat Yakin was thrilled with his team's deserved 2-0 win over reigning champions Italy at Euro 2024 on June 29, saying it was proof they "can go toe-to-toe" with Europe's heavyweights.

They reached the quarter-finals for the second time in their history, with goals from Remo Freuler and Ruben Vargas capping an impressive performance at the Olympiastadion in Berlin.

"There are only good sides at the Euro. We went unbeaten in the group stage and played well, and the Germany game showed we can go toe-to-toe with teams like that," said Yakin.

"We sent out an important signal

tonight with the game we played. We did not only defended as a unit and sat back, we showed we could attack and dominate proceedings."

Vargas added: "We caused problems for Italy because we were very aggressive, right from the word go. We had the better of every 50-50, we didn't give them any time to breathe, we were constantly breathing down their necks."

Italy made six changes for the game, but it was the settled and confident Switzerland side who came out deservedly on top, proving as reliable as a Swiss watch at this tournament.

Swiss fans celebrated jubilantly with the players after their first win over Italy since 1993. It was only Switzerland's ninth win over the Italians in 62 attempts.

"It really sends a tingle down your spine, gives you goosebumps, it's hugely gratifying," continued Yakin.

"All this support shows we're on

the right track and doing things the right way. We've earned the right to be here but we're not done yet."

Fabian Rieder added: "The spirit is incredible; everyone is happy, everyone runs for the other one, and I think we showed that on the pitch."

Vargas set up the first goal for Freuler and then curled home a sumptuous second himself, having been picked only due to Silvan Widmer being suspended, but played on the opposite flank.

Yakin joked he would "take an aspirin" to resolve any selection headache for the quarter-finals, against either England or Slovakia. The result of that last-16 tie was not available at press time.

While the Swiss are in the knockout stages of their sixth successive major tournament, the Azzurri head home after exiting before the quarter-final stage of the European Championship for the first time in 20 years.

On Italy's national broadcaster RAI, the verdict was swift and brutal: "Unacceptable", "slow and predictable", said disconsolate commentators.

Captain Gianluigi Donnarumma was Italy's only real bright spot at what was otherwise a miserable tournament and he was visibly upset at the nature of the four-time world champions' elimination.

"It hurts, it really hurts. We can only say sorry to everyone. We were disappointing today and they deserved to win," said Donnarumma. "It's difficult to digest but that's how it went, we can't do anything about it."

Coach Luciano Spalletti lamented to RAI how Vargas' goal "took our legs out from under us" and said that his players did not come into the tournament in the right physical condition to compete.

While the Italian media are already questioning Spalletti's position after less than a year in charge, the country's football chief said on June 30 that he will stay on.

"I'm pragmatic, it's impossible to resolve problems by abandoning a long-term project or by abandoning the coach and players who have accompanied us in this project," said Gabriele Gravina, head of Italy's football federation.

"Spalletti has our faith, he has to have our faith. He needs to get to work, as in 60 days the Nations League begins. We can't imagine that a (Kyllian) Mbappe or Cristiano Ronaldo will suddenly come on to the scene, so we need to be patient." REUTERS, AFP

Pressure not a problem for euphoric Germany

DORTMUND – Germany's first knockout victory at a major tournament in eight years will raise fans' expectations that the former football powerhouse are returning to their best at Euro 2024, but the players will not feel the pressure, coach Julian Nagelsmann said.

The hosts were scintillating at the start of their 2-0 win over Denmark on June 29, with Nagelsmann describing their first 20 minutes as "the best of the whole tournament", before the elements and the Danes dragged Germany into a tricky contest in Dortmund.

"I think we have no more pressure than usual," Nagelsmann said, ahead of a quarter-final clash against Spain or Georgia. "I think the fans and also the expectations of our fans is a big push for us."

"We can deal with the pressure... It's a privilege to play football games under pressure. All the players are used to dealing with it, so it's no problem."

Defender Nico Schlotterbeck added: "We've released something in this country. We're playing with euphoria, we're playing with fun and that's when football is the most beautiful."

At one point it looked as if the game could be abandoned as English referee Michael Oliver stopped play in the 35th minute and took the teams off the pitch while a violent storm passed overhead.

Torrential rain, hailstones, high winds, thunder and lightning caused a delay of 25 minutes before the action could resume.

Germany's victory was ultimately a comfortable one and they could have won by more than two goals but for good saves by Kasper Schmeichel and wastefulness in front of goal.

Player of the Match Antonio Rudiger told German broadcaster ZDF: "I think everybody who watched the match will be of the opinion that we were dominant from the start. The only criticism you can have is that we missed too many chances."

The hosts got the better of a second-half sliding doors moment, with Denmark's Joachim Andersen at the centre of it.

The defender thought he had given Denmark the lead but the goal was disallowed for a narrow offside against Thomas Delaney. Soon after, he conceded a penalty in the 53rd minute when a David Raum cross struck his arm. Kai Havertz scored from the spot before Jamal Musiala added a second on 68 minutes.

"The result was decided by two VAR (video assistant referee) decisions. I have the photo here – it was one centimetre," Denmark coach Kasper Hjulmand said, holding up his phone with a picture of the VAR decision for the offside.

"It doesn't make sense. This is not how we are supposed to be using VAR – it's one centimetre – and after a few minutes there was a penalty."

"I'm so tired of the ridiculous handball rules. We cannot require our defenders to be running with arms like this," he said, pressing his arms to his side.

Nagelsmann said: "I understand that Denmark are annoyed (by the penalty decision). It's quite harsh but that's how the rule is."

"Yes, (Andersen) did just run, he didn't do it intentionally, but that is the rule. So I would also be annoyed if it were the other way around, but I would have to accept the rule." REUTERS, AFP

ENTERTAINING THE FANS

We've released something in this country. We're playing with euphoria, we're playing with fun and that's when football is the most beautiful.



NICO SCHLOTTERBECK, German defender, on the hosts playing well at Euro 2024.

Set-piece specials set up Tampines victory

Lin Tianbao

It has been six years since Fahrudin Mustafic hung up his football boots, but the former BG Tampines Rovers centre-back and midfielder is still playing a crucial role in the Stags' attack.

The 43-year-old assistant coach, who is responsible for coming up with the team's set-piece strategies, received the plaudits after their 5-1 win over Hougang United on June 30 at the Jalan Besar Stadium, where right-back Irfan Najeeb netted twice from dead balls.

The result helped Tampines extend their unbeaten start to the Singapore Premier League (SPL) season to five matches as they rose to second with 13 points, level with league leaders Lion City Sailors but behind on goal difference.

The Cheetahs, meanwhile, are still winless and are rooted to the bottom of the nine-team league.

Irfan's first goal came from a Faris Ramli corner, while his second was off a Yasir Hanapi free kick.

The 24-year-old said: "My first goal was solely based on what we

practised during our training session yesterday.

"Credit to Farra, he's the one who tells everyone how to attack set pieces."

Coach Gavin Lee agreed, saying: "He's responsible for designing them and credit goes to him for helping the team..."

"We do a lot of work on that, but at the same time, it's a team effort."

These were not Tampines' first goals from dead balls this season, with defender Milos Zlatkovic also scoring from a corner kick in a 4-4 draw with Geylang International on May 17.

When approached, Mustafic said: "All credit goes to the players, as coaches we just try to prepare them the best that we can."

"Yes, we took a lot of time on the training ground practising set plays, and it's nice to see them deliver on that on game day."

The Stags took the lead after 10 minutes when Boris Kopitovic fired a low ball across goal from the right and Glenn Kweh was on hand to guide it home.

Dejan Racic equalised for Hougang 13 minutes later when he applied the finishing touch to Stjepan

STANDINGS

| | P | W | D | L | F | A | Pts |
|---------------|---|---|---|---|----|----|-----|
| 1 Sailors | 5 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 17 | 4 | 13 |
| 2 Tampines | 5 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 19 | 8 | 13 |
| 3 Geylang | 6 | 2 | 4 | 0 | 23 | 13 | 10 |
| 4 Balestier | 5 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 15 | 11 | 8 |
| 5 Brunei DPMM | 5 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 11 | 10 | 7 |
| 6 Young Lions | 6 | 2 | 0 | 4 | 11 | 19 | 6 |
| 7 Tg Pagar | 5 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 6 | 14 | 4 |
| 8 Albirex | 5 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 6 | 17 | 3 |
| 9 Hougang | 6 | 0 | 2 | 4 | 8 | 20 | 2 |

Plazonja's cross.

Tampines came out of the half-time break firing on all cylinders and restored their lead in the 46th minute after the ball fell kindly inside the box to an unmarked Faris, who made no mistake.

It was 3-1 eight minutes later when Faris' corner found Irfan, whose header looped over substitute goalkeeper Kenji Rusydi's outstretched arm.

Kopitovic joined in on the act in the 68th minute, finishing off a flowing team move. Yasir's free kick was then met by Irfan's diving

header in the 81st minute.

Irfan, who is 1.78m, said there was a different strategy for his second goal, adding: "We know Ensar Bruncovic is their tallest guy (1.96m) and we discussed that we just need to avoid him, and that's what we did."

Cheetahs coach Marko Kraljevic was left fuming after his side's lapses in defending. He said: "This is a professional game, we shouldn't concede twice from set pieces."

Irfan last scored twice in one season in 2018, and he was glad to record a brace this time round.

"I don't usually get high up the pitch much, so I have to take my chances," he said.

ANALYSIS

While the first half was evenly contested, Tampines capitalised on lacklustre defending at the start of the second half and never looked back. Their forward passing and switches overwhelmed the Cheetahs, who could not track their opponents well and allowed the Stags to attack freely.

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Tampines defender Irfan Najeeb scoring with a header against Hougang United on June 30. He finished the Singapore Premier League match with a brace – both from set-pieces masterminded by assistant coach Fahrudin Mustafic (above). ST PHOTO: AZMI ATHNI

SPORT



Team NiP Flash players Yeo Wee "Diablo" Lun (far left) and Adam "Adammir" Chong, also a coach, feel that their side can get a historic result at the Esports World Cup's Mobile Legends: Bang Bang competition. ST PHOTO: AZMI ATHNI

NIP FLASH AIM TO BE BANG ON

MLBB team target top-four finish at Esports World Cup and a slice of record prize pool

Melvyn Teoh

A beefed-up squad and recent form have given Singapore e-sports outfit NiP Flash confidence that they

can do well at the inaugural Esports World Cup in Riyadh.

Coach Adam "Adammir" Chong and new signing Yeo Wee "Diablo" Lun feel that the team have what it takes to finish in the top four of the

Mobile Legends: Bang Bang (MLBB) competition, which would land them a cool US\$200,000 (S\$270,000).

The July 2 to Aug 25 World Cup, previously known as Gamers8, is supported by Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund and will carry the largest prize pool in e-sports history, with around US\$60 million spread across 21 game titles.

Mobile Legends, a multi-player online battle arena game, will have its biggest prize purse for an international competition at US\$3 million. The winners of the 16-team main event will pocket US\$1 million, more than the record US\$900,000 prize pool for the game's world championship in 2023.

NiP Flash chief executive Mark

Chew, who is hoping the team reach the quarter-finals, said securing World Cup qualification was one of their key objectives when they assembled this side.

They earned their ticket as champions of the recent Mobile Legends: Bang Bang Professional League Singapore (MPL SG) season, which they won at a canter after bolstering their squad with two signings - Filipino Jankurt "KurtTzy" Matira, who joined from Philippine team Echo, and Singaporean Yeo, who was prized from rivals RSG Singapore.

NiP Flash, known as Team Flash before partnering Swedish e-sports organisation Ninjas in Pyjamas, retained the MPL SG title on June 16 by beating RSG 4-0, improving on their 4-3 win over the same side when they won the title for the first time eight months earlier.

Chong said they are looking forward to testing themselves against the region's best.

The 24-year-old said: "I think

this time around the MPL felt very unsatisfying, because it felt like it was too easy. We came into this season knowing that the trophy was kind of ours already but we still went through it with proper respect to each and every team."

He knows what it takes to achieve a top-four target as his Evos SG team finished fourth at the 2021 world championship, the highest placing for a Singapore e-sports team in MLBB at an international competition.

Yeo, who wants to prove that Singapore also has quality e-sports teams, also hopes that a good showing will attract investors.

"Previously you have Evos SG and RSG (representing Singapore), hopefully we can replicate the same results or do even better, but it takes time," he said. "If you do well, sponsors will come looking, and they always look at results. I want Singapore to be a prominent region, that's how we get more people to invest in e-sports. We will need to do well to get investors to come in."

This season, the team earned \$36,200 for winning MPL SG and US\$56,000 for reaching the Esports World Cup group stage.

But making it out of the group will not be an easy task. They will need to finish in the top two of Group A, which also contains Turkish champions Fire Flux, MPL Indonesia runners-up Evos Glory and MPL Latin America's Season 1 winners RRQ Akira.

Other contenders include Philippines-based Falcons AP.Bren, who beat Team Flash 2-0 en route to winning the 2023 world championship, MPL Philippines winners Liquid Echo and MPL Indonesia champions Fnatic Onic.

NiP Flash will not be the only Singapore representatives at the Esports World Cup. Bleed Esports will also be taking part in Overwatch, a first-person shooter video game, with Singaporean Manfred "Lumi" Sit competing alongside four Thai teammates.

The full-time national serviceman said: "Definitely it feels good to be able to participate at such a big event with such high stakes. But for my title, it's more of a casual game, so I hope more local talent will participate (in future)."

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Earps' exit adds to woes for United women

MANCHESTER - Manchester United goalkeeper Mary Earps appeared to fire a parting shot at the direction of the club under minority owner Jim Ratcliffe, as pressure builds over the club's handling of the women's team.

On June 29, she became the latest high-profile player to leave the Women's Super League (WSL) side, with the coveted England international saying she could not achieve her career ambitions at a club undergoing "transition".

The 31-year-old is reportedly close to signing with Paris Saint-Germain after rejecting a new deal. Since his takeover of football operations at Old Trafford, billionaire

businessman Ratcliffe has made it clear that the focus has been on the men's team. In May, he skipped the team's Women's FA Cup final win over Tottenham Hotspur - their first major honour - to catch the men's side play Arsenal.

Asked by Bloomberg about the plans for the women's team, he said earlier in June: "We haven't gone into that level of detail with the women's football team yet. We've been pretty much focused on how do we resolve the first-team issues."

This is despite him writing, in response to questions about his ambitions for the women's side, in February that "if it's a team wear-

ing a Manchester United badge on the shirt, then it's Manchester United and they need to be focused on winning and being successful."

However, Earps, in a farewell post on Instagram, wrote: "The club is about to undergo a period of transition, and unfortunately I don't feel it aligns with the timing of where I'm at in my career, therefore I think now is the right time to make a change and embark on a new challenge."

During the 2022-23 WSL season, Euro 2022 winner Earps kept 14 clean sheets to set a new league record, and a few months later finished fifth in the voting for the Ballon d'Or Feminin - the highest



Goalkeeper Mary Earps says Manchester United are undergoing a period of transition.

placing achieved by a goalkeeper.

Her exit comes just two days after that of United club captain Katie Zelem, with the Old Trafford hierarchy having previously announced the departure of striker Lucia Garcia. Nikita Parris looks set to follow suit.

After a 2022-23 season which saw the club reach their first major

cup final and record its best WSL finish of runners-up, they lost star players Alessia Russo and Ona Batlle. They fell off the pace in 2023-24, finishing fifth in the 12-team competition.

The Athletic reported that the Red Devils had agreed a deal for star striker Russo, but then reneged on several conditions, causing it to collapse.

It added that "poor communication from those in charge regarding budget and strategy for contract renewals, signings and transfer fees are said to have delayed negotiations and led to United missing out on players".

The women's team moved into a

new £10 million (S\$17.2 million) training facility in 2023.

Last week, it emerged that the men's side are set to use that venue while their own Carrington training base is undergoing renovation, leaving the women's team to relocate to portable cabins.

Former England Under-21 and Manchester City defender Nedum Onuoha told the Off The Ball show: "If they are buying into Manchester United, then you'd think they'd be involved in every aspect of that but from when this separation is here and it seems so clear, those who have an interest in the women's team, they've got every right to be frustrated."

The Athletic has since reported that the Professional Footballers' Association is now seeking talks with United "after being made aware of growing discontent regarding the club's management of their women's team". AFP, REUTERS

| FOUR-DIGIT DRAW | | |
|-----------------|--------|------|
| Jun 30 2024 | | |
| FIRST | ◆ 7878 | |
| SECOND | ◆ 6202 | |
| THIRD | ◆ 8016 | |
| STARTERS | | |
| 2261 | 2721 | 2967 |
| 2980 | 3657 | 4232 |
| 5475 | 6984 | 7094 |
| | 9633 | |
| CONSOLATIONS | | |
| 0682 | 1534 | 2765 |
| 2953 | 5324 | 5445 |
| 9255 | 9311 | 9376 |
| | 9736 | |

Euro 2024 • Dull French need some Griezmann sparkle | B12



SPL • Stags right on Sailors' tails but Cheetahs stay bottom | B13



Olympics • Paris' grand sights to welcome fans and athletes | B9

Formula One • Russell handed Austria win after rivals tangle | B10



STARSTRUCK IN SINGAPORE

Actor Kamal Haasan hypes fans up for Indian 2 | C3

NEW TRAILS

Poet-photographer Marc Nair's farewell show | C3

Life



NCT DREAMBOATS

K-pop boy band get sexy for concert at Singapore Indoor Stadium | C4

Fresh, unfiltered, precious: Baby's first 48 hours

Known as Fresh 48, these photo shoots that take place in hospitals are gaining popularity



Nishalini Saralatan

Scaly skin – check. Pointy head – check. Scrawny limbs – check.

These are the least glamorous and less-than-perfect scenes that come with the arrival of a new baby. But a growing number of parents are asking and paying for such shots.

There is even a term for it – Fresh 48.

This new trend emerging in the realm of newborn photography focuses on capturing a newborn's life within the first 48 hours of birth. In a world filled with polished images, these raw snapshots capture the intimate moments and emotions that unfold in those early hours.

Unlike lifestyle photography, which is about taking artistic pictures of people in everyday situations, special moments or important events, Fresh 48 photography focuses on capturing the unique setting of a hospital environment.

Photographers zoom in on details such as hospital blankets, ward features, identification tags, plastic bassinets, special birthmarks, forceps marks on a child's skull and more that are part of the newborn's first hours.

Mr Meerav Vijay Chandra and his wife, Madam Yuka Takahashi, both 42, decided to engage a professional to capture the birth of their twin daughters in July 2023. The couple are Singapore permanent residents and work in sales and marketing.

"We had no expectations. We were very excited. The experience was surreal, mostly because the session was unscripted and unposed," he says.

"The twins were fresh from the oven and were adorable when placed side by side in one bassinet. My wife was a little tired post-delivery. Regardless, you can't reverse time and go back to those moments once you've been discharged. They're not glamorous, but they're incredibly meaningful."

You can't reverse time and go back to those moments once you've been discharged. They're not glamorous, but they're incredibly meaningful.

MR MEERAV VIJAY CHANDRA, on why he and his wife engaged a professional photographer to capture the moments in the first 48 hours of his twin daughters' birth

In recent years, especially after the Covid-19 pandemic, photographers have been asked to document moments that parents are likely to forget, including times when they felt vulnerable and emotional.



First-time parents Meerav Vijay Chandra and Yuka Takahashi hired Fion Boon Photography to capture the first 48 hours of their twin girls, Khyrraa (left) and Khayurie (right). PHOTO: COURTESY OF MEERAV VIJAY CHANDRA

Over the past six years, the number of clients requesting Fresh 48 photography has surged, according to local photography companies which provide the service. Four companies The Straits Times interviewed say the average has risen from about four requests a year to about two a month.

Madam Yuyeth Fernandez, 41, co-owner of Bows and Ribbons Photography, highlights how Covid-19 restrictions led to a heightened desire to "capture more of life's fleeting moments", adding more significance to Fresh 48 photos.

During that time, due to visitor restrictions, many husbands were unable to be at the deliveries of their children. Couples who wanted to remember their long or challenging journeys towards parenthood were disappointed that they could not have maternity

photo shoots or such lifestyle newborn sessions, she says.

Madam Ang Bee Ting, 34, owner of Hatchday Photography, says: "Fresh 48 sessions allow me to document the raw, unfiltered moments that often get overlooked in traditional newborn shoots. The look of a baby can change very fast – sometimes from day to day. Parents appreciate the honesty and sacredness of specific moments that these Fresh 48 photos bring."

Mr Ryan Goh, 40, owner of Orange Studios, initially did not realise that professional photos could be taken in the hospital ward post-birth. He later discovered the Fresh 48 trend, which has been around in Western countries such as the United States and Australia for years.

In Singapore, Fresh 48 shoots typically start after the child is born and the mother is back in the ward. These shoots, which span at least 45 minutes, take place with nurses, lactation consultants, paediatricians and occasional visitors in the background.

Parents should inform the ward about the scheduled shoots to ensure they do not interfere with medical procedures or care routines. The photographer should also follow hospital guidelines and health and safety protocols to

ensure a safe and respectful environment.

Ms Fion Boon, 44, who owns Fion Boon Photography, says: "I do pre-session consultations for my photo shoots so that clients are aware about what to prepare and expect, and understand how each session will unfold on the actual day. During the photo shoot, I interact with customers to make them feel at ease with me."

Fresh 48 sessions in Singapore cost from about \$450 to \$700, depending on the duration and type of package, among other things.

In some instances like an unforeseen death or if the baby is admitted to intensive care, sessions are either cancelled with a full refund or rescheduled to another date with a different photography package.

The trend has gained traction on social media platforms like Instagram, where parents proudly share these candid snapshots of their newborns, using hashtags such as #fresh48.

"These photos capture the realness of those first hours – the joy, the exhaustion, the tiny details that fade so quickly," says Ms Sheena Quek, 36, a new mother who recently had such a shoot. She is married to software engineer Daniel Chua, also 36.

Ms Quek, who works in the banking industry, wanted "more raw and natural photos" and "didn't want to obsess over trying to capture the perfect shots ourselves".

"With a photographer, the burden is lifted off our shoulders and both of us could be in the pictures together with our newborn. I used the pictures to announce my son's arrival and on the one-month party invites as well."

Madam Lilin Lee, 34, sought a unique experience when her third child was born at the end of 2022 and says the Fresh 48 shoot was worth the investment.

The trading support manager, who is married to accounts manager Goh Bang Hao, 34, adds: "When we were younger, we didn't consider spending much on photography. Now, as a sentimental person influenced by my father's love for capturing memories, I see the value in preserving and reminiscing about such moments, especially with family. Money cannot buy such moments."

To some parents such as Madam Arathi Manamohan, the importance of capturing these moments outweighs the cost. She knows the images will be of better quality with a professional camera.

The 35-year-old mother of a one-year-old boy says: "I chose Fresh 48 to include my husband and my father, who is one of my son's caregivers, and to commemorate that moment as our family. My mother passed away when I was nine and I wish my parents had taken more pictures."

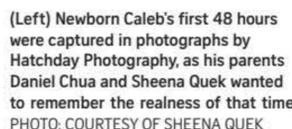
The housewife, who is married to maintenance executive Vinodan, 35, notes a shift in parental mindset over time. She says: "In the past, parents in the West often captured such moments, even in home videos. However, for Asians, it wasn't common. Parents didn't typically document these moments."



(Right) First-time parents Arathi Manamohan and her husband Mr Vinodan with their newborn baby Kieran during a shoot by Hatchday Photography. PHOTO: COURTESY OF ARATHI MANAMOHAN



(Above) Baby girl Juleia, the third child of Madam Lilin Lee and her husband Goh Bang Hao, on the second day of the birth seen in this shot by Fion Boon Photography. PHOTO: COURTESY OF LILIN LEE



(Left) Newborn Caleb's first 48 hours were captured in photographs by Hatchday Photography, as his parents Daniel Chua and Sheena Quek wanted to remember the realness of that time. PHOTO: COURTESY OF SHEENA QUEK

Minor Issues

Why it is good to let your child take up a 'useless' activity

Even if it does not seem to add to their academic achievements, interest and exposure are usually good enough reasons



Jane Ng
Correspondent

When my 18-year-old son wanted to work as a waiter during the holidays two years ago, a fellow parent asked what were the benefits he could gain from it.

It would do nothing for his resume and he may not learn any relevant skills. Why not spend the time doing an internship in an industry he is keen on instead, he suggested.

He could do that, but I felt that being exposed to a wide range of work and activities would also be beneficial for a teenager.

My son started doing part-time work when he was 15, working at his primary school bookshop where he picked up precious life lessons.

After that experience, he heard from his friends that being a waiter at banquets paid more and was keen to try it out.

I was all for him gaining the experience, never mind that the skills may not be immediately relevant.

Likewise, when my 15-year-old daughter wanted to learn knitting over the recent June holidays, I found her a class.

A friend asked me curiously why she was learning to knit, and how useful it would be to her future.

When I encourage my kids to take up activities or a part-time job, interest and exposure are usually good enough reasons. I do not always think in terms of the tangible benefits they could reap.

Over the years, I have been asked by parents if the activities I sign my children up for are useful for things like direct school admissions (DSA), where children can use an area of talent or skill to apply to a secondary school of their choice.

Parents tell me they start planning from the time the children are in pre-school.

I've met children who learn a sport or attend lessons only with

the aim of using it to apply for DSA. Down the line, they are activities to pad up their resume or to land a scholarship.

All is good until they realise they do not like the activity as much as they had thought or they fail to get into the school of their choice after having put in years of hard work.

I've also encountered parents who do not let their children take up or try out an activity if they see no "use" for it.

I'm always caught off guard when that happens, especially when parents say that an activity would not be useful for their child's future.

To be sure, there is nothing wrong with working towards these goals, but doing activities with a solely utilitarian aim and avoiding all others seems rather limiting.

While a part-time job or leisure activity may not contribute directly to a child's future, there could be transferable skills that may come in handy in the future.

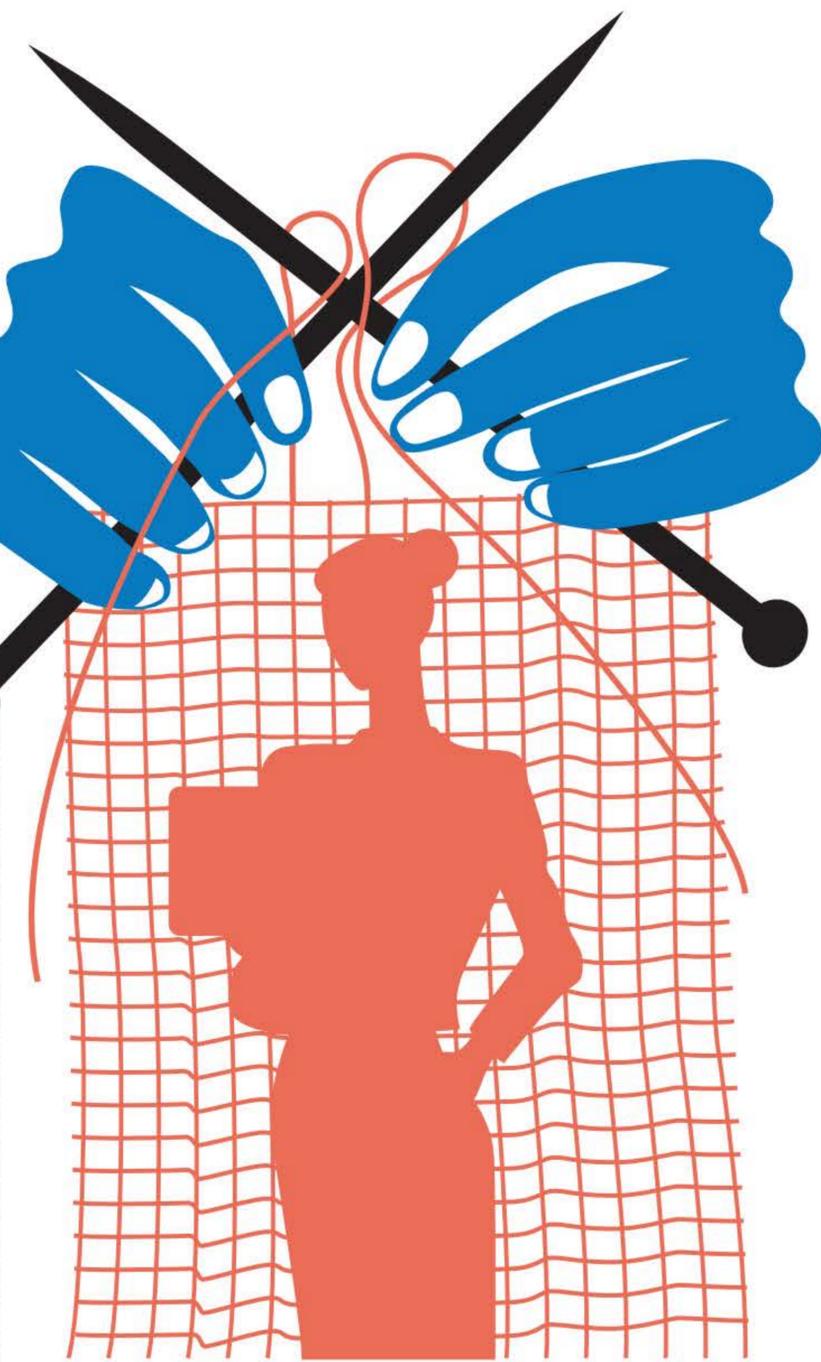
To dismiss something just because there are no immediate benefits would be a pity.

By that yardstick, my kids have been involved in many "useless" activities over the years, from primary school co-curricular activities that could not be used to apply for DSA, to holiday pursuits they were interested in.

And yet, they have gained so much from these activities.

After only four knitting lessons, my daughter has picked up a new skill. She has developed confidence, knowing that she has managed to learn something she thought looked intriguing, but complicated.

She attends lessons with three middle-aged women and chats easily with them. Knitting in between completing her holiday homework in June was a way for



ST ILLUSTRATION: CEL GULAPA

her to de-stress and hone her creativity.

One time, she had to unpick days of hard work when she realised she made a mistake and had to redo her project. Still, she persisted and is hopefully on her way to making a pouch and a beanie.

She may not make knitting her career, but to me, there is always something that can be learnt from every experience and every person she meets.

Children may not always see the learning moments, so when we chat about their new hobby or a part-time job, I try to help them make sense of the experience.

By encouraging children to pursue their interests, parents are

While a part-time job or leisure activity may not contribute directly to a child's future, there could be transferable skills that may come in handy in the future.

also shaping their children's values and perspectives.

When I asked my son what he learnt from being a banquet waiter, he replied that the dishes were very heavy. Also, waiters have to be alert to the needs of diners and be able to step in for one another when needed. The job also involves long hours of standing.

He concluded that it is very hard work.

A short stint as a banquet waiter may not count for much in his resume. But if he has learnt empathy and better appreciates people in the service industry, then I think the experience has more than served its purpose.

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Fun With Kids

Make family time all the more special with these ideas and activities



CHARLIE THE SWEEPER PICTURE BOOK

Charlie, a sand bubbler crab, is in awe of other creatures' talents. He is "just a sweeper", as he tells a sea krait and a hawksbill turtle.

But, thanks to a tern, Charlie discovers that he is also an artist who makes beautiful patterns on the beach.

With her second picture book *Charlie The Sweeper*, Singapore author and illustrator Sarah Ang wants readers to know that everyone, including themselves, has unique traits.

She had come across "artworks" by sand bubbler crabs at a beach. "Then, I asked myself: 'But do they know that they are amazing?'" says the 43-year-old.

The story is dear to her heart as

she feels a kinship with Charlie, thinking that others are more remarkable.

"Once, at a gathering, I introduced myself as 'just a homemaker'," she recalls. "The person I spoke to responded: 'You are not just a homemaker.' That struck me and stuck with me till today."

Ang was a scientist before she became a freelance illustrator and stay-at-home mum to three girls aged 12, nine and seven.

Her first children's book *The River That Brings Us Life*, about the clean-up of the Singapore River, was published in 2022.

In *Charlie The Sweeper*, she includes a glossary about the creatures featured in it.

Buy a copy at \$14.90 on publisher Epigram Books' website at str.sg/nhXT



Charlie The Sweeper author and illustrator Sarah Ang wants readers to know that everyone has unique traits. PHOTO: EPIGRAM BOOKS

Elisa Chia Correspondent

READ FOR BOOKS DONATION DRIVE

Encourage your kids to keep reading, as their hobby could help children from less privileged households.

From July 1 to 31, the National Library Board's donation drive Read For Books will give a book to beneficiaries for every 10 people who read for at least 15 minutes.

The charity effort has been

held annually since 2016 as part of the National Reading Movement.

For 2024, the beneficiaries are children from the WondeRead and kidsRead initiatives and social service agency MindSG, which cares for persons with intellectual disabilities and their families.

Low-income families with babies and toddlers will be given starter kits under the Ready to Read @ NLB initiative.

Anyone can take part in the book donation drive by registering as an individual, school or organisation. Read at any venue and submit photos of the activity. Find out more or sign up at str.sg/urlT

Read and help the donation drive Read For Books, which will give a book to beneficiaries for every 10 people who read for at least 15 minutes. PHOTO: ST FILE



DISNEY JUNIOR'S ARIEL

Mermaid princess Ariel is inviting pre-schoolers to go under the sea with her in a new animated series on Disney+.

Disney Junior's Ariel is inspired by the well-loved 1989 animated film *The Little Mermaid* and its 2023 live-action update.

It follows eight-year-old Ariel's

Animated series Disney Junior's Ariel (left) is inspired by the story of *The Little Mermaid* (1989 and 2023). PHOTO: DISNEY+

adventures in the underwater kingdom of Atlantica.

She is joined by familiar sidekicks, Sebastian the hermit crab and Flounder the fish, who look the same as from the movie 35 years ago.

But there are surprises elsewhere. For example, fan-favourite villain Ursula the sea witch is now Ariel's loving aunt. Look out for new characters too, such as Ariel's best friends, mer-children Lucia and Fernie.

Four half-hour episodes, each comprising two stories, are now available on the streaming platform.

Indian star Kamal Haasan thrills at fan meet

The veteran actor was in town to promote *Indian 2*, the follow-up to his 1996 blockbuster

Varun Karthik

Facilities engineer Elango Subburaj, a big fan of Indian actor Kamal Haasan, remembers watching the veteran screen icon's 1996 blockbuster film *Indian* the first day it was released in India.

Twenty-eight years later, on the evening of June 29, the 54-year-old Singaporean was at the Sands Expo & Convention Centre at Marina Bay Sands (MBS), waiting to lay eyes on Haasan, who was in town to promote *Indian 2*, the long-awaited sequel that opens in Singapore cinemas on July 12.

Mr Subburaj was among 1,200 people who showed up at a packed, boisterous MBS ballroom for a fan meet, hoping to catch a glimpse of the 69-year-old, widely considered to be one of the greatest actors in India and a massive star in the Tamil-language film industry.

While awaiting the arrival of Haasan and his *Indian 2* co-stars Siddharth and S.J. Suryah, the event's emcees worked the room, interacting with eager audience members.

When Singaporean actress-host Udaya Soundari asked a female fan what she thought the storyline of *Indian 2* was going to be, the latter told the room that the only thing that mattered to her was Haasan's presence in the film.

When Soundari asked another fan what he would say to Haasan in person, he said he would likely be too starstruck for words and would just fall at him in the hopes of making any fleeting contact.

When Haasan finally made his big arrival to much cheering, fans were on their feet – some on their toes – craning their necks to get a peek of the man of the moment amid a sea of smartphones.

Indian is a vigilante action film about retired freedom fighter Senapathy (Haasan), who rebels against corruption in India. It was the most expensive Indian film made at the time, costing an estimated 150 million Indian rupees. It went on to become the highest-grossing Tamil film then, collecting more than 500 million Indian rupees globally.

Indian 2, which will see Haasan reprise the iconic role of Senapathy, was first announced in 2017 and will finally see the light of day after facing significant delays.

At a press conference held at The Ritz-Carlton, Millenia Singapore before the fan meet, he said that while they were eager to make the sequel, it took time to find the right backer for it, which eventually materialised with Indian entertain-



Actor Kamal Haasan (in white cap) taking a group photo with performers and fans during a fan meet event for the upcoming movie *Indian 2*. ST PHOTOS: LIM YAOHUI

ment company Lyca Productions.

But will *Indian 2* still be fresh for moviegoers given the long wait? "Certain fruits of our labour are not perishable. Certain ideas are not perishable. It continues growing fresher," Haasan noted.

Responding to another question in Tamil and referring to himself, he said: "Do not expect the actor from Part 1 to appear in Part 2. They are different actors. If that did not happen, I have failed my duty."

"In the past 28 years, make-up, cinematography and even the technique of the actors I share a screen with have improved," he said, adding that the industry should be shut down if there was no improvement over decades.

"No one can step their feet into the same river. The very minute after you step foot in a river, it becomes a different river."

Much is riding on *Indian 2*, as its

production occurred concurrently with *Indian 3*, which is expected to be released in early 2025.

Haasan – who made a foray into Tamil Nadu electoral politics by launching his own political party in February 2018 and unsuccessfully contesting in state polls in 2021 – said: "Pressure is always there, whether there is a first part or not, (to make) a film successful".

Perhaps he need not worry, as fans in Singapore seem eager to catch the upcoming film in theatres, with Mr Subburaj declaring that for "people who were born in the 1970s, he is our generation's star".

Haasan first graced the big screen when he was just six, and has since starred in over 200 films, picking up a string of awards along the way.

He also produces, directs and sings in many of his movies, which often tackle social issues affecting Tamil society. He is also not shy

about posting his views on his X account, where he has eight million followers.

Ms Subha Chandrasekaran, 44, learnt of the fan meet only on the day itself through social media and was too late to secure free tickets. But the freelance graphic designer made a trip to MBS anyway and said she intended to wander outside the ballroom for a glimpse of Haasan.

There were younger faces in the crowd too.

IT engineer Harish Kumar, 26, has watched all of Haasan's recent works and is a big fan of *Indian*, despite it being released before he was born. He is looking forward to *Indian 2*, particularly the action scenes that its trailer promises, adding: "Pre-orders for the tickets have not opened yet – I would have already bought them if they were."

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Indian 2 opens in Singapore cinemas on July 12.

Haasan (above) at a press conference before the fan meet on June 29.

Poet-photographer Marc Nair says goodbye to Singapore with a show

Clement Yong
Correspondent

Poet and photographer Marc Nair has no qualms describing himself as the trailing spouse.

Trails, after all, is what the 42-year-old Singaporean is most comfortable dwelling in. His poetry has tended to wander off the beaten track of the city, taking in crushed snails, dead cats and the spectre of old railway trains.

For a photography project in 2020, he combed the streets of Bras Basah for scenes of "offence": how the private pushes its way into public space – a man napping on the ground near Raffles Hotel or funeral wreaths in a communal lift landing.

On July 10, he will follow his wife Carolyn Oei to Toronto, Canada, where she is earning her doctorate in adult education and community development. He is marking this departure with a collaborative performance with 18 artists, titled *Weave: A Multidisciplinary Playground* – a milieu from which Nair's practice grew – including Jennifer Anne Champion, Joshua Ip and ArunDitha.

Nair is hoping his beloved collaborators will surprise the audience as much as himself. "It's a black box so it's a space to show off what they are best at," Nair says.

"I told them they did not have to involve me. Even though I'm curating the show, I don't know what some people are doing. I want



teasing wearable tech that triggers effects and sounds.

"Neo-shamanic tribal funk sonic sorcerers" Mantravine will play a full set, alongside a strong showing from a crew of spoken word poets – a milieu from which Nair's practice grew – including Jennifer Anne Champion, Joshua Ip and ArunDitha.

Nair is hoping his beloved collaborators will surprise the audience as much as himself.

"It's a black box so it's a space to show off what they are best at," Nair says.

people to come and discover new answers."

The 2016 Young Artist Award recipient has become a recognised brand in the Singapore literary arts scene in the last two decades, publishing 12 collections of poetry and also taking the unusual step of launching full spoken word albums on major streaming platforms.

Before he became a regular at poetry slams in his 20s, he wrote "practical" poetry that could fit into the margins of his physics textbook, drawn to the medium's "brevity and composition".

But the discovery of the "larger form" of spoken word, its narrative arc and performative elements got him hooked.

In 2012, he co-founded spoken word troupe Party Action People. Art photography then inculcated in him an instinct to view poems as "a kind of textual photograph" and a willingness to work outside artistic silos.

Critic Chloe Lim, in an introduction to Nair, places this shift in his practice around his 2014 collection *Animal City*, which was accompanied by illustrations by Vanessa Chan and music by Neon & Wonder.

A later collection, *Spomenik* (2016), is his first to put his poems in conversation with photographs, which in this instance were shot while he was on a trip through the Balkans.

Nair says of his artistic evolution:

Weave: A Multidisciplinary Playground – poet and photographer Marc Nair's show of spoken word, music, dance and art exhibition – will be held at Aliwal Arts Centre.
ST PHOTO: NG SOR LUAN

"I've learnt to see that it's about listening as much as it is about speaking, not just to the people but also to the land."

He adds: "Poetry, in particular, allows for a softer point of intersecting because of the malleability of the writing form. You recognise your limitations. I can't dance or draw, so let me find someone who can. It comes from a very natural place of wanting to expand the final outcome of expression."

The most well-known name in the programme is no doubt local blogger Lee Kin Mun, also known as *mrbrown*, with whom Nair has worked on the *mrbrown* show for the past 15 years.

Known for its irreverent take on local issues, the popular podcast was an avenue for Nair to learn humour.

Asked if he is a naturally funny man, Nair demurs. "I know people who are a lot funnier than I am, but I do say some silly things and apparently I can tell jokes well."

He says with some pride that the song *Mosquito*, sung to the tune of home-grown singer Kit Chan's 1998 National Day Parade anthem *Home* and which he co-wrote in 2009, is still appreciated by kids in schools today.

The uniquely Singaporean cheek of the *mrbrown* show has not been replicated. "It was very important social commentary on moments in the country's history, some of which were mundane, some of which were enduring."

"At that time, because it was a podcast, the listener is also imagined. It provides that latitude to

play around with voices."

Up till 2024, Nair's practice has continued to take on many new forms.

In January, he wrote and directed his first fully interactive show, called *Thank You For Holding*, a speculative simulation of connecting to a phone operator at a call centre at The Arts House, which he cites as one of his fondest memories of his work in Singapore.

Asked for his wish for Singapore literature, he reels off a list: freedom of speech, more opportunities for mid-career writers, an undergraduate creative writing degree – "NUS, I'm looking at you" – a dedicated press for poetry and a public willing to buy books.

Despite these oft-referenced shortcomings, he calls on artists not to lose heart: "Change isn't always visible, but it is there."

He signs off with a promise: "I am looking forward to finding a new community of artists to work with, but won't cut off the ones here. I'm definitely still in touch and still thinking about projects, just at a distance for now."

WEAVE: A MULTIDISCIPLINARY PLAYGROUND

WHERE Aliwal Arts Centre, 28 Aliwal Street

WHEN July 6, 7 to 11pm

ADMISSION \$29, \$39 (including one drink)
INFO www.marcnair.com



NCT Dream and their backup dancers put on an energetic show in Singapore. PHOTO: LIVE NATION SINGAPORE

NCT Dream play up their sexy and cute sides

Despite being one man down again, the K-pop boy band still put on an energetic show at the Singapore Indoor Stadium on the first of two sold-out gigs

Elisa Chia
Correspondent

CONCERT
2024 NCT DREAM WORLD TOUR – THE DREAM SHOW 3: DREAM()SCAPE
Singapore Indoor Stadium
June 29

K-pop boy band NCT Dream returned to the Singapore Indoor Stadium, but without one member once more.

The septet – a sub-unit of NCT that were formed in 2016 – com-

prise Mark, Renjun, Jeno, Haechan, Jaemin, Chenle and Jisung, aged 22 to 24.

In May 2023, China-born Chenle missed out on the NCT Dream Tour The Dream Show 2: In A Dream In Singapore – also at the same venue – due to unspecified health issues, and was adamant to make up for his absence.

On the first of two sold-out shows in Singapore on June 29, he told the 9,200-strong audience in Korean through an interpreter: “Sadly, I couldn’t make it last year. Tonight, I’m going to do everything I couldn’t do last time.”

And referring to his new icy blue hair colour, the 22-year-old said to cheers: “This is for you, Singapore.”

However, Renjun – who is also from China – has been sitting out NCT Dream’s concert tour The Dream Show 3: Dream()Scape, which kick-started in Seoul in May. Prior to the Singapore leg, it took them to Japanese cities, Jakarta, Hong Kong and Bangkok.

The group’s agency SM Entertainment had earlier announced that the 24-year-old is on hiatus due to his “poor physical condition and anxiety symptoms”.

It is unknown if Renjun will

rejoin his bandmates, as the tour resumes in August and heads to countries including Brazil, the United States and Netherlands.

Nonetheless, the remaining six members and their crew of eight backup dancers still put on an energetic 2½-hour show. Here are three highlights.

1. RAMPING UP THE SEX FACTOR

The sextet oozed masculine charm as they took the stage in figure-hugging black outfits with silver studs for their opening track Box.

Released in March, the heart-thumping number is from their fifth mini album Dream()Scape that includes the sexy song Smoothie.

“Do you like NCT Dream when we are at our cutest?” Canada-born leader Mark, 24, asked their fans – or NCTizens as the group affectionately call them – in English.

“What about when we’re at our sexiest? Or when we’re at our most youthful?”

His questions sent fans into a screaming frenzy, and into an overdrive at the mention of “sexiest”.

To which a bemused Mark responded: “Whenever we ask these questions, we either get cute or sexy. But nowadays, I think we get a lot of sexy. I don’t know why.”

The fans were rewarded with what they liked most, as the concert videography team zoomed in on the heart-throbs’ bulging biceps whenever they removed their jackets.

2. THE BOYS STILL LOVE TO BE CUTE

Besides their powerful dance moves and commanding stage presence, NCT Dream also want to present their youthful and adorable sides.

The second half of the gig saw them in colourful casual wear as they performed catchy tracks such as Candy (2022), Dream Run (2020) and Fireflies (2020).

In yet another outfit change, Haechan, 24, and Jisung, 22, appeared in blue sleeping robes adorned with cartoon characters, while Jaemin, 23, wore a headband with two pink ribbons.

They also showcased their camaraderie, often teasing and hugging one another.

During a group photo shoot with their fans on stage, Mark told his fellow members, “Everybody do cute”, after which they struck their most adorable poses on cue.

3. SMOOTH TALKERS

Many of the group members have glib tongues too.

“I really like the chilli crab here in Singapore. But it cannot be my favourite part of Singapore because of you guys,” Mark said as the show came to an end.

Jisung agreed, adding: “I like Singapore NCTizens more than chilli crab.”

As with every show on the concert tour, the guys requested their fans to do a stadium wave.

As NCT Dream basked in the sight, Mark gushed: “Singapore has the most beautiful wave out of this tour.” He followed up in Singlish: “Swee lah.”

And when the camera crew captured a number of fan signs that read “We miss you, Renjun”, Jaemin assured in charming fashion: “We will come back to Singapore as soon as we can with Renjun, okay? Till then, please wait for us. Don’t skip (your) meals.”

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cont.act Contemporary Dance Festival

Well-crafted works show off dancers’ skills

Melissa Quek

DANCE
ELUSIVE – A DOUBLE BILL
T.H.E Dance Company
DBS Foundation Outdoor Theatre
at Esplanade
June 28

Elusive – a double bill by T.H.E Dance Company – capitalised on the format to satisfy audiences with contrasting but well-crafted premieres that exhibited the dancers’ precision and versatile expressivity.

Part of the cont.act Contemporary Dance Festival, it opened with Chorales by T.H.E’s South Korean resident choreographer Kim Jae-duk, his first work for the company since the Covid-19 pandemic.

It closed with Malebranche – Harleking Multitude by Geneva Panzetti in her first collaboration with T.H.E, drawing on Germany and Italy-based performance duo Panzetti/Ticconi’s previous work Harleking.

The performers in Chorales were abstract energy, the image of



Chorales by T.H.E Dance Company’s resident choreographer Kim Jae-duk was his first work for the company since the Covid-19 pandemic. PHOTOS: BERNIE NG

nature, moving with fluid and wave-like grace.

Then in Malebranche – Harleking Multitude, they were grotesque characters, angular and sculptural, the essence of the stylised archetype Arlecchino (Harlequin) of the Commedia dell’arte, an Italian theatrical form from the 1500s.

Chorales began with a lone dancer, Haruka Leilani Chan, the flowing but structured blue layers she wore reflecting the deep purple of the bay. Moving like the waves rippling behind her, she slowly retreated towards a mottled backdrop, undulating with a deceptive calm that hid an internal drive hinted at by the deep rumbling of the music.

As more dancers joined her, the noisy murmur of the crowd in

Esplanade’s Courtyard underscored the weighty undercurrent on the sparse stage.

The music, composed by Kim, was now a vessel that held the movements, unlike his previous approach that perfectly matched the two. Kim focused on the temporality of the body, using the image of a deep sea and what was beneath as a metaphor – making Chorales different from his previous works with T.H.E.

However, the clear and focused articulation of the body was characteristic of their collaborations.

The gurgling sound of objects sinking into water increased and the dancers personified particles floating in water. Soon, the watery aesthetic combined with the



In Malebranche – Harleking Multitude, the dancers were grotesque characters, who made disquieting transformations from comedic to ravenous to violent.

rhythmic footwork associated with Kim’s style.

The strong cast of dancers moved as one entity – a testament to the success of artistic director Kuik Swee Boon’s philosophy of HollowBody as a training methodology. Laotian-Australian rehearsal master and dance artist Billy Keohavong blended in with a company mostly unfamiliar to him after almost five years away. This demonstrated how HollowBody unified the dancers in performance.

The dancers picked up speed, extending their spines and throwing their arms, like jets of water from the fountains at Marina Bay Sands. They gradually settled, like sediment at the bottom of the sea, their shadows on the wall behind

them as faint music from the water show at the integrated resort filtered towards the immersed audience at Esplanade’s DBS Foundation Outdoor Theatre.

Marina Bay was an apt frame for this dance and after 15 years of cont.act, T.H.E has become adept at adapting its works for this outdoor space. There was a backdrop to limit distractions and highlight the dancing bodies, distilled lighting by designer Adrian Tan to focus the audience and thoughtful costumes by Loo An Ni to tie the production together.

After the intermission was Malebranche – Harleking Multitude. Five dancers had their backs turned to the audience, with trembling and shaking accompanied by sounds of

choking and croaking. Or was it laughter? The ambiguity was unsettling.

They were in black, with yellow diamonds lined like racing stripes, a nod to the diamond pattern on the costume of their namesake. As they revealed their faces, it became clear that they were laughing.

The dancers were amusing and grotesque figures who made disquieting transformations from comedic to ravenous to violent. Singaporean Chang En shone in this work with an expressive face, poised carriage and expansive gestures – she was the embodiment of Harlequin.

In a moment of slapstick humour, a dancer tripped and they mocked him, convulsing with laughter. The dark side of the harlequin emerged with serpentine movements, shaping diamonds with legs, arms and hands. The smiles seemed sinister now. Evocative images continually emerged.

Mouths rounded in facial expressions reminiscent of Edvard Munch’s The Scream (1893). Legs marching in line and arms raised in a disguised hailing of a Fuhrer. Hands scooped air into the open mouths of insatiable dancers. A friendly tableau became a murder scene as a comforting arm slid into a choke hold and bodies went limp.

The tragedy was shaken off with vibrating laughter. This was the ugly side of humanity hidden beneath an insincere facade and laughing aplomb. The joyless laughter was a challenge not to take things at face value.

Glastonbury music festival

Seventeen make history as first K-pop act to appear



K-pop band Seventeen performing at the Pyramid stage on the third day of the Glastonbury Festival on June 28. PHOTO: AFP

GLASTONBURY, England – South Korean boy band Seventeen skipped, twisted and gyrated in a high-energy performance on Glastonbury's main Pyramid Stage on June 28, making history as the first K-pop group to appear at the iconic music festival in southern England.

The 13-member group, dressed in shades of black, performed highly synchronised dance sequences alongside peppy hits such as Hot (2022), Rock With You (2021) and Very Nice (2016), thrilling thousands of music fans in one of Glastonbury's most atypical sets.

In Britain and at Glastonbury – which sells out before its line-up is announced – Seventeen may be relatively unknown, but the group had the biggest-selling album globally in 2023.

"Even though the language,

country and culture are all different, we can still connect as one through music," singer Joshua Hong told the crowd after performing SOS (2023).

Seventeen drew a smaller crowd than preceding acts on the stage, but many of those who came to check them out sang, waved and danced along even without knowing any of the songs.

Loyal Seventeen fans, who are called "carats", lined the front row.

"It was so much fun," said Ms Kiera Finn, 26, from Liverpool in northern England, who had never heard Seventeen before. "The crowd was so good. It was kind of, like, this is what Glastonbury's all about, and everyone was just having fun."

The K-pop industry, which involves rigorous training in dance, singing and language skills, has



produced bands like BTS and Blackpink, who are increasingly appearing at Western festivals, having won international fan followings.

English-Albanian singer Dua Lipa headlining the Pyramid stage on the third day of the Glastonbury Festival on June 28. PHOTO: EPA-EFE

Meanwhile, pop star Dua Lipa transformed the Pyramid stage on June 28 into an open-air nightclub where thousands grooved to hits such as Levitating (2020) and Houdini (2023).

Headlining the music festival for the first time, Lipa delivered a glittery, energetic performance featuring firework displays, five outfits and an ensemble of break dancers and musicians.

The 28-year-old English-Albanian singer told the crowd how it had been a dream for her to sing on the Pyramid stage, where artists such as English singer-songwriters Paul McCartney and David Bowie and American star Beyonce have performed over the festival's more than 50-year history.

"Little me would just be so beside herself right now," she said.

"Honestly, I couldn't believe it. I feel so grateful."

Born in London to Kosovo Albanian parents, Lipa began covering songs by pop artistes as a teenager and uploading them to YouTube, which led to a record deal in 2014 when she was 18. In 2019, she won two Grammy Awards, including for Best New Artist.

Lipa also brought Australian act Tame Impala's Kevin Parker – a collaborator on her latest album – on stage and the duo performed The Less I Know The Better (2015) together.

She joined British rock band Coldplay, American R&B singer SZA and Canadian country music singer Shania Twain as headliners – a grouping with much more female talent after criticism over the male-dominated line-up in 2023. REUTERS

Michael Jackson died with \$680 million in debt

NEW YORK – Michael Jackson's debts and creditors' claims at the time of his death in 2009 totalled more than US\$500 million (\$680 million), according to a court filing by the American pop superstar's estate that provides details of his financial woes towards the end of his life.

Jackson owed about US\$40 million to tour promoter AEG, according to the filing, which was made in Los Angeles County Superior Court in June and earlier reported by People magazine.

The filing said that 65 creditors made claims against the singer after his death, some of which resulted in lawsuits, and that some of his debt had been "accruing interest at extremely high interest rates".

A representative for the estate, which is executed by Mr John Branca and Mr John McClain, did not immediately respond to a request for comment. The estate filed the court papers as a request to authorise the payment of about US\$3.5 million to several legal firms for their work in the second half of 2018.

In the court filing, the executors say they have eliminated the estate's debt and that almost all of the creditors' claims and litigation have been resolved.

Jackson earned hundreds of millions of dollars throughout the 1980s and 1990s as the creator of some of the best-selling albums of all time, along with dazzling concert tours that filled stadiums around the world.

But when he died at the age of 50, shortly before he was supposed to embark on a tour called This Is It, he left behind a tangled web of assets and liabilities.

He was famous for his lavish lifestyle. He incurred millions of dollars in debt from his Neverland Ranch estate in Southern California and had a penchant for expensive art, jewellery and private jets. He was paying more than US\$30 million annually on interest payments, a forensic accountant testified during a 2013 wrongful death trial in which AEG prevailed.

The Jackson estate is currently in a dispute with the Internal Revenue Service after a tax audit. In a separate court filing in 2024, the estate said that the federal agency accused it of undervaluing its assets and said it owed "an additional US\$700 million in taxes and penalties". NYTIMES

Singer Joanna Dong goes for minor surgery after breast cancer scare

Lim Ruey Yan

Home-grown singer Joanna Dong suffered a health scare recently and is recovering after a minor operation.

The 42-year-old wrote in a long post on social media on June 29 that she noticed bloody discharge from her right breast, so when she went for her regular breast check-up, her specialist recommended some tests and scans.

Dong said the MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) results were "pretty concerning" and revealed a sizeable area of blood pooling in the ducts on both breasts. As it looked like it might be DCIS (stage zero breast cancer), a biopsy was ordered.

The jazz performer, who found mainstream fame after placing third in Chinese reality TV singing competition Sing! China in 2017, said she and her doctor were greatly relieved to find no cancer, but there were some atypical cells in her right breast.

"Just had minor surgery yesterday to have a relatively small segment excised and my ducts removed – I am home and doing great and should make a full recovery really soon," she wrote.

Dong said she is sharing her experience as she believes talking about breast conditions should be destigmatised by now.

"I went through a whole gamut of emotions when my doctor told me in the worst-case scenario it might have been a double lumpectomy or even mastectomy and breast re-



Joanna Dong said she is doing great and should make a full recovery soon. PHOTO: J.O.A.N.N.A.D.O.N.G./INSTAGRAM

construction," she wrote.

"My heart goes out to anyone who has had to endure that – besides the obvious physical trauma, the psychological relationship that we have with gendered body beauty standards is complex."

Dong remembered to thank her doctor and nurses for the care they have shown her.

"I am also thankful to my younger self for getting a solid insurance policy, so that I can have the best treatment possible when I need it without worrying too much about finances," Dong wrote. "Everyone, especially freelancers in the arts – please, get on top of this if you haven't."

The singer, who is slated to perform in one of the segments of the upcoming National Day Parade (NDP), also thanked the 2024 NDP

team for making arrangements at short notice, so that she can focus on recovery and return for the final rehearsals and NDP show on Aug 9.

"In the meantime, the awesome Tay Kexin will be performing in my place for the next three Saturdays of NDP rehearsals/shows," Dong wrote, referring to the local singer who is also a member of Singapore vocal group MICappella. "Please look out for her and the delightfully fun segment we are involved in."

More than 20 of Dong's celebrity pals posted words of encouragement and wished her a speedy recovery.

"I'm in awe of your professionalism and attitude right up to before your surgery," Tay wrote. "Please rest well and I look forward to seeing you on the big screen on Aug 9."

Golden Melody Awards Taiwanese rapper MC HotDog beats JJ Lin

MC HotDog beat fellow nominees such as Singapore star JJ Lin to the Best Male Singer (Mandarin) prize at the Golden Melody Awards held at the Taipei Arena on June 29.

The Taiwanese rapper, who was also nominated for Best Male Singer (Mandarin) in 2023, won for the album Disgusted Artist at what is touted to be the Grammys of the Mandopop world.

The 46-year-old, whose real name is Yao Chung-jen, beat Lin, Taiwanese singer Marz23 as well as Chinese singers Xu Jun and Jude Chiu to the title.

Lin, 43, was nominated in this category for his album Happily, Painfully After, as well as for Best Composer for the song Dust And Ashes.

The composing award eventually went to Xu, 35, for Moments and he also nabbed Best Arranger for Open It.

Lin's last wins at the Golden Melody Awards were in 2016, when he won Best Male Singer (Mandarin) for the album From M.E. To Myself and Best Composer for the song Twilight.

MC HotDog also won Best Lyricist for the song The Landlord Upstairs from Disgusted Artist.

Meanwhile, Taiwanese-Korean singer Shi Shi won her first Best Female Singer (Mandarin) award for the album Boomerang after being in the industry for 10 years.

The 33-year-old, whose full name is Sun Sheng Xi, pipped Taiwanese singers Yang Nai-wen and 9m88 as



(From left) MC HotDog and Shi Shi with their trophies at the Golden Melody Awards in Taipei on June 29. PHOTO: EPA-EFE

well as Chinese singers Su Yunying and Tia Ray.

Shi Shi was previously nominated in this category in 2019 and 2021.

She shot to fame after coming in sixth in the second season of Taiwanese reality singing competition Chinese Million Star from 2012 to 2013. She released her debut album Girls in 2014, for which she was nominated for Best New Artist.

Album of the Year went to Taiwanese rock band No Party For Cao Dong's The Clod, which also won Best Mandarin Album. The four-member indie group also won the Best Band prize.

Song of the Year was awarded to Taiwanese rock trio Accusefive's We Will Be Fine, while Best New Artist went to Taiwanese indigenous singer Makav, 21.

Lim Ruey Yan

On social media

THAI FILM BRINGS ON TEARS FOR ACTRESS SONIA SUI: Taiwanese actress Sonia Sui did not have enough time to wipe away her tears after watching the hit Thai film, How To Make Millions Before Grandma Dies, with her businessman-husband Tony Hsieh in Taiwan.

"It was funny and touching," the 43-year-old star wrote in Chinese on Facebook on June 27. "The only thing I could find fault with was the cinema ruthlessly switching on the lights (after the movie ended), at the moment when the dam broke."

Sui first posted a photo of her and Mr Hsieh before their movie date, and a second image of them teary-eyed in the cinema.

The mother of three children aged



Actress Sonia Sui and her husband Tony Hsieh (both left) were moved by How To Make Millions Before Grandma Dies (above, starring Usha Seamkhum and "Billkin" Putthipong Assaratanakul). PHOTOS: SONIA SUI/FACEBOOK, GOLDEN VILLAGE

five, seven and eight wrote that her husband turned to her with puffy eyes and said: "The speed at which they turned on the lights could be said to be rude, right?"

She also used hashtags such as #Lovelt and #RememberToBring FacialTissues.

How To Make Millions Before Grandma Dies has also moved enough moviegoers in Singapore, as it is now the country's biggest film for the first half of 2024.

Written and directed by Thai film-maker Pat Boonitipat, the tearjerker stars actress Usha Seamkhum, 78, as the titular cancer-stricken grandmother Amah and pop idol "Billkin" Putthipong Assaratanakul, 24, as her grandson M.

Pat and Usha were in Singapore for a fan meet on June 24.

According to a press release from local cinema chain Golden Village, the film has earned \$5.01 million at the local box office within just one month of its

release here on May 30.

It has overtaken Singapore director Jack Neo's comedy Money No Enough 3 and Hollywood animated film Kung Fu Panda 4, which are in second and third place respectively.

How To Make Millions Before Grandma Dies has also cracked the list of Singapore's top 10 highest-grossing Asian films of all time, in ninth position. It is led by Neo's military-themed Ah Boys To Men II (2013), with box-office takings of \$7.9 million.

In the press statement, Pat said: "I am deeply thankful to the people of Singapore for their warm reception during my recent visit with Amah. It is a great honour to see the film resonating with audiences across generations in Singapore."

FREE TO AIR

CHANNEL 5

AM
 6.00 Kung Fu Panda: Legends Of Awesomeness (PG) (C)
 6.30 Johnny Test (C)
 7.00 Robocar Poli (P)
 7.30 Tayo The Little Bus (P)
 8.00 Bugsville (P)
 8.30 Pinkfong Songs & Stories (P)
 9.00 Sesame Street (P)
 9.30 Blippi (P)
 10.00 Ollie And Friends (C)
 10.30 Super Wings: World Guardians (C)
 11.00 Robocar Poli (P)
 11.30 Go Go Dino (C)
PM
 12.00 Kung Fu Panda: Legends Of Awesomeness (PG) (C)
 12.30 The Adventures Of Peanut And Pig (PG) (M)
 2.00 Denver The Last Dinosaur (C)
 2.30 Mount Emily: Guardians Of The Crystal (C)/3.00 On The Red Dot - Family Mysteries (CA)
 3.30 Talking Point (CA)
 4.00 Tanglin (PG) (CC) (D)
 4.30 Bake Off: The Professionals (PG) (IE)
 5.30 Asia Unplated With Diana Chan 2 (Cul)
 6.00 America's Got Talent 17 (PG) (V)
 7.00 Wheel Of Fortune 40 (V)
 7.30 Lingo USA (PG) (V)
 8.30 Sunny Side Up (PG) (CC) (D)
 9.00 News Tonight (News)
 9.30 Future Proof (PG) (D)
 10.00 The Last Bout (PG13) (CC) (D)
 11.00 The Fear Index (PG13) (CC) (D)
AM
 12.00 Sunny Side Up (PG) (CC) (D)
 12.30 FBI 4 (PG13) (CC) (D)
 1.30 America's Got Talent 17 (PG) (V)
 2.30 Lingo USA (PG) (V)
 3.30 Euromaxx (PG) (Cul)
 4.00 Wheel Of Fortune 40 (V)
 4.30 Asia Unplated With Diana Chan 2 (Cul)
 5.00 Bake Off: The Professionals (PG) (IE)

CHANNEL 8

AM
 6.00 Special Delivery (CC) (IE)
 6.30 Frontline (CA)
 7.00 News Tonight (News)
 7.30 Hello Singapore Highlights (CA)
 8.00 The Queen Of News (PG) (CC) (D)
 9.00 Morning Express (News)
 9.30 A Perfect Man (PG) (CC) (D)
 10.00 Focus (CA)
 10.30 Taste Of Life (PG) (D)
PM
 12.30 The Wonder Shop (Infomercial)
 1.00 News 8 At One (News)
 1.30 Come Home Love: Lo And Behold (PG) (D)
 3.00 The Wonder Shop (Infomercial)
 3.30 Lost Track Of Time (PG) (D)
 4.30 The Way To Happiness (PG) (D)
 5.30 Recipe Of Life (PG) (CC) (D)
 6.30 Hello Singapore (CA)
 7.30 A Perfect Man (PG) (CC) (D)
 8.00 Dishing With Chris Lee 2 (CC) (V)
 9.00 The Queen Of News (PG) (CC) (D)
 10.00 News Tonight (News)
 10.30 Detective L (PG13) (CC) (D)
 11.00 Mysterious Lotus Casebook (PG13) (D)
AM
 12.00 Luoyang (PG) (D)
 1.00 Super Taste 48 Hours Burning Desire - Japan (PG) (IE)
 2.00 Holland V (PG) (D)
 4.00 The Way To Happiness (PG) (D)
 5.00 The Scarlet Kid (PG) (D)

CHANNEL U

PM
 3.00 Fixer 3 (PG) (IE)
 4.00 RenovAID 8 (CC) (IE)
 4.30 You Deserve A Break 2 (CC) (IE)
 5.00 Never Twice (PG) (CC) (D)
 6.00 The Two Fates (PG) (CC) (D)
 7.00 Miss Monte Cristo (PG) (CC) (D)
 9.00 Stylish Man - The Chef 3 (PG) (V)
 10.00 Queen Of Masks (PG13) (CC) (D)
 11.00 News Tonight (News)
 11.30 Stylish Man - The Chef 3 (PG) (V) (IE)

AM
 12.30 Miss Monte Cristo (PG) (CC) (D)
 2.30 Close

CNA

AM
 6.00 Singapore Tonight
 6.30 Money Mind
 7.00 Asia First
 10.00 Shermin's March
 11.00 Asia Now
PM
 1.00 Shermin's March
 2.00 Asia Now
 4.00 Dead Alone In Singapore
 5.02 Insight
 6.00 East Asia Tonight
 7.00 Money Mind
 7.30 On The Red Dot
 8.00 Asia Tonight
 9.00 Riot Island
 10.00 Singapore Tonight
 11.00 Shermin's March
AM
 12.03 East Asia Tonight
 1.00 Power To The People
 2.00 Singapore Tonight
 3.00 Insight
 4.00 Asia Tonight
 5.00 Riot Island

VASANTHAM

AM
 9.00 Mitcham Meethi Puthusu (CC) (IE)
 9.30 Siri Siri Siri (PG) (CC) (V)
 10.00 Indian Beat 15 (CC) (IE)
 10.30 Siri Siri Siri (PG) (CC) (V)
 11.00 Anjaraipetti 9 (CC) (IE)
PM
 12.00 Thayin Madiyil (PG) (M)
 3.00 Kathaippoma (CC) (V)
 4.00 Vaa Magale Vaa (PG) (M)
 7.00 Samaippoma (CC) (IE)
 8.00 Ming Lee C/O Manickam (CC) (C)
 8.30 Tamil Seithi (News)
 9.00 Veerasingam (PG) (CC) (D)
 9.30 Ungalukku Theriyumma (CC) (IE)

10.00 Mei (PG) (CC) (D)
10.30 Vanjam (PG) (CC) (D)
11.00 Ungalukkaga Paadalgal (V)
11.30 Tamil Seithi (News)

SURIA

AM
 9.00 Kelab JM.J (CC) (C)
 9.30 Ini Baru Rare (PG) (CC) (IE)
 10.00 Rahsia Sepi Di Hati (PG) (D)
 11.00 Jangan Menangis Cinta (PG) (CC) (D)
PM
 12.00 Selamanya Suri Cinta (PG) (CC) (D)
 1.00 Seribu Nina (PG) (CC) (D)
 2.00 Aku Titipkan Cinta (PG) (CC) (D)
 3.00 Kasi Setel Itu Lirik (PG) (CC) (V)
 4.00 Jangan Menangis Cinta (PG) (CC) (D)
 5.00 She Was Pretty (PG) (CC) (D)
 6.00 Kelab JM.J (CC) (C)
 6.30 E.A.T (CC) (IE)
 7.00 Akira Khan (PG) (CC) (D)
 8.00 Berita (News)
 8.30 Manja 9 (IE)
 9.30 Bukan Syurga Pilihan (PG) (CC) (D)
 10.30 Andai Itu Takdirnya (PG) (CC) (D)
 11.30 Berita (News)
AM
 12.00 Close

C: Children; CA: Current Affairs; CC: Closed Captions; Cul: Culture; D: Drama; IE: Info-Ed; M: Movies; P: Pre-school; PG: Parental Guidance; R: Repeat; S: Schoolkids; SC: Sitcom; V: Variety
 Telecast details from Mediacorp, StarHub and Singtel TV. For pay TV updates, go to www.starhub.com/tv or www.singtel.com.sg. For streaming updates, go to fixpatrol.com/top10/netflix/singapore or www.viu.com/ott/sg.

RADIO

KISS92

AM
 6.00 The BIG Show With Glenn, Angel And The Flying Dutchman
 10.00 Kiss Cafe With Charmaine Phua
PM
 1.00 Eavesdropping With Daphne Khoo
 4.00 On Your Way With Joshua Simon
 8.00 The Owls With Juliana Yeow

ONE FM 91.3

AM
 6.00 The Brightside With Carol, Lavinia & Shehzad
 10.00 The Music Mansion With Shan Wee
PM
 1.00 The Sweet Escape With Carrie Chong
 4.00 The ONE Way Home With Tim Oh
 8.00 Nights With Simon Lim

MONEY FM 89.3

AM
 6.00 Breakfast With Ryan Huang, Emaad Akhtar & Audrey Siek
 9.00 Your Money With Michelle Martin
PM
 12.00 On The Show With Jill Lim
 1.00 The Afternoon Update With Lynlee Foo
 4.00 The Evening Runway With Hongbin Jeong, Roshan Gidwani & Chua Tian Tian

UFM100.3

AM
 6.00 Zao Ban GaoGao With Limei, Weilong & Chengyao
 10.00 Lively Life With Kemin
PM
 1.00 Tea With Yuling
 4.00 La La La 4-8 With Wenhong & Andrew
 8.00 Singing With The Stars With Xinying

96.3 HAO FM

AM
 6.00 Morning Drive Time With Jingyun, Deming And Jieqi
 10.00 Lunch Break With Anna
PM
 1.00 Best Of 80s And 90s
 4.00 Evening Drive Time With Liyi And Guoxian
 8.00 Night Time With 963



Sunny Side Up, starring (from far left) Chen Xiuhuan and Estovan Reizo Cheah, is showing on Channel 5. PHOTO: MEDIACORP

CABLE TV

STARHUB TV HUB E CITY (CHANNEL 825)

AM
 6.00 My Bargain Queen
 7.00 Perfect Match 10
 8.30 The Way To Happiness
 9.30 Storm City
 11.30 James' Going Places 7
PM
 12.30 Forensic Heroes 4
 1.30 Perfect Match 10
 3.00 Flowers Bloom In Spring
 5.00 Forensic Heroes 4
 6.00 The Way To Happiness
 7.00 Hot Door Night 26
 8.00 Divas Hit The Road - Good Friends
 10.00 Hello My Love
 11.00 Hot Door Night 26

BBC EARTH (CHANNEL 407)

AM
 6.00 Food Factory 4
 6.30 Whale With Steve Backshall
 7.25 The Secret Genius Of Modern Life 2
 8.20 Food Factory
 9.15 Mammals
 10.10 Whale With Steve Backshall
 11.05 Expedition With Steve Backshall 2
PM
 12.05 Great Asian Railway Journeys
 1.10 Food Factory
 2.05 Mammals
 3.05 Whale With Steve Backshall
 4.05 Food Factory
 5.05 Expedition With Steve Backshall 2
 6.05 Mammals
 7.00 Food Factory 2
 8.00 Blue Planet 2
 9.00 Griff's Canadian Adventure
 9.55 World's Most Dangerous Roads 4
 10.45 Extreme Fishing With Robson Green 3
 11.35 Blue Planet 2

BBC LIFESTYLE (CHANNEL 432)

AM
 6.00 Grand Designs: House Of The Year 7
 6.55 The Great Cookbook Challenge With Jamie Oliver
 7.50 Rick Stein's Cornwall 3
 8.20 Donal's Asian Baking Adventure
 8.45 The Great Home Transformation
 9.35 Extraordinary Places To Eat 2
 10.35 Grand Designs: House Of The Year 7
 11.30 The Great Cookbook Challenge With Jamie Oliver
PM
 12.25 The Great Home Transformation
 1.20 Grand Designs: House Of The Year 7
 2.15 Extraordinary Places To Eat 2
 3.15 The Great Cookbook Challenge With Jamie Oliver
 4.10 The Great Home Transformation
 5.05 Extraordinary Places To Eat 2
 6.05 Grand Designs: House Of The Year 7
 7.00 Nigella's Cook, Eat, Repeat
 7.30 Rachel Khoo's Chocolat
 8.20 Amazing Hotels: Life Beyond The Lobby 4
 9.20 Your Home, Made Perfect 4
 10.20 Gordon Ramsay's Future Food Stars
 11.20 Rachel Khoo's Chocolat

HUB SPORTS 1 (CHANNEL 201)

AM
 6.00 Golf: Legends Tour 2024
 Highlights: Barbados Legends Hosted By Ian Woosnam/7.00 Other Sports: UCI Cycling 2024: Tour De La Provence
 7.50 Football: Conmebol Copa America 2024: Jamaica Vs Venezuela
 10.00 Magazine Show: Track & Field Weekly 2024
 10.30 Golf: The Golf Fix 2024
 11.00 Golf: LPGA Tour 2024: Dow Championship Round 4
PM
 2.00 Golf: DP World Tour 2024: Italian Open Presented By Regione Emilia-Romagna Day 4
 6.30 Magazine Show: Track & Field Weekly 2024/7.00 Golf: Golf Central 2024
 8.00 Golf: LPGA Tour 2024: Dow Championship Round 4
 11.00 Golf: Golf Central 2024
AM
 12.00 Tennis: Hologic WTA Tour 2024: Internazionali BNL D'Italia (1000) Quarter-finals 1/1.30 Tennis: Hologic WTA Tour 2024: Internazionali BNL D'Italia (1000) Quarter-finals 2
 3.00 Golf: NCAA Golf National Championships 2024: NCAA Men's Golf Championships - Individual National Championship

SINGTEL TV CARTOON NETWORK (HD) (CHANNEL 226)

AM
 6.00 Grizzly And The Lemmings
 7.00 Boy Girl Dog Cat Mouse Cheese
 7.35 The Amazing World Of Gumball
 8.00 Mechamoto
 8.25 Mini Beat Power Rockers
 9.00 Teen Titans Go!
 9.35 Looney Tunes Cartoons
 10.00 Mr Bean: The Animated Series
 10.30 We Bare Bears
 11.00 Craig Of The Creek
 11.35 Unikitty
PM
 12.00 Mechamoto
 12.30 Clarence
 1.00 Teen Titans Go!
 1.35 Lamput
 2.00 Mr Bean: The Animated Series
 2.30 Lamput
 3.00 Grizzly And The Lemmings: World Tour
 4.00 Looney Tunes Cartoons
 4.30 Lamput
 5.00 Teen Titans Go!
 5.35 We Bare Bears
 6.00 Craig Of The Creek
 6.35 Unikitty
 7.00 Mechamoto
 7.30 Clarence
 8.00 Teen Titans Go!
 8.35 Mr Bean: The Animated Series
 9.00 Lego Dreamzzz
 9.25 Chowder
 10.00 Steven Universe
 11.00 Regular Show

AXN (HD) (CHANNEL 304)

AM
 6.00 CSI: Vegas 2
 6.45 Blue Bloods 14
 7.30 The Rookie: Feds
 8.20 CSI: Miami 9
 9.10 S.W.A.T.
 10.00 Blue Bloods 14
 10.50 The Blacklist 10
 11.45 The Rookie: Feds
PM
 12.40 S.W.A.T.
 1.30 CSI: Miami 9
 2.25 The Blacklist 10
 3.20 The Rookie: Feds
 4.15 Blue Bloods 14
 5.10 S.W.A.T.
 6.05 NCIS: Los Angeles 14
 7.00 CSI: Vegas 2
 7.55 The Blacklist 10
 8.50 The Rookie: Feds
 9.45 FBI: Most Wanted 5
 10.40 White House Down

E-LE (HD) (CHANNEL 501)

AM
 6.00 Turn On The Right Way Of Life
 7.00 Burning Flames
 8.00 Enemies From The Past
 9.30 Come Home Love: Lo And Behold
 10.00 Turn On The Right Way Of Life
 11.00 A Dream Of Splendor
PM
 12.00 The Treasured Voice 5
 2.00 Street Dance Of China 5
 4.00 The Secret House
 5.30 Burning Flames
 6.30 Come Home Love: Lo And Behold
 7.00 A Dream Of Splendor
 8.00 Burning Flames
 8.50 The Secret House
 10.10 Love Me, Love My Voice
 11.00 Three-Body

STREAMING

NETFLIX

- TOP 10 MOVIES**
 1. Trigger Warning
 2. Money No Enough 3
 3. Madame Web
 4. Maharaj
 5. Kiss The Girls
 6. Rush Hour 3
 7. Monster-in-Law
 8. Power Rangers
 9. Outbreak
 10. Minions: The Rise Of Gru
- TOP 10 TV SHOWS**
 1. Miss Night And Day
 2. Demon Slayer: Kimetsu No Yaiba
 3. The Secret Of Us
 4. Hierarchy
 5. Bridgerton
 6. The Victims' Game
 7. Kaiju No. 8
 8. America's Sweethearts: Dallas Cowboys Cheerleaders
 9. Mystery Investigators
 10. Worst Roommate Ever

VIU

1. The Tale Of Rose
 2. Lovely Runner
 3. High School Return Of A Gangster
 4. The Legend Of Heroes - Hot Blooded 5. Joy Of Life 2
 6. The Midnight Romance In Hagwon
 7. Missing Crown Prince
 8. Suji & Uri
 9. Beauty And Mr Romantic
 10. Dreaming Of A Freaking Fairy Tale

COMICS

BABY BLUES



GARFIELD



ST Classifieds

BUY IT.
SELL IT. FIND IT.
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6289-9988
www.sphclass.com.sg

Antiques/Collectibles 52

CALL: 97381868! WANTED: Gold & Silver Coins/ Old Notes/ Porcelain/ Furniture

Club Memberships 66

TEE-UP 9 7 6 0 5 0 8 0 FION teeup@singnet.com.sg SICC 328k TMCC 210k Laguna 160k Sentosa 490k Seletar 68k OCC / Warren 22k Keppel 11k Changi 9.5k One 15/Tower/SGCC / British 11k SRC/SSC 12k Polo/ Pines/ Dutch 6k Cricket 22.5k American 160k CSC/RSYC 8k R.Marina / Palm Resort 3k

SINGOLF.COM TEL:97377650 SICC \$345K, TMCC \$220K, - SENTOSA \$500K, LAGUNA - \$145K, SELETAR, WARREN, TMCC CORPORATE \$230K

ACTIVE GOLF 96369950 SICC \$330K TMCC \$215K Sentosa \$500k Laguna \$150k Seletar \$69k OCC, Warren Keppel SRC American

Electrical 96

POWER FAILURE FREE Check! Repair Install / Water Heater All Electric work Lic: 8/14528 LED Light & Fan. 6483 7845

QUALIFIED ELECT Contractor Experienced Licenced Electrician 96391853 (7/081426)

Interior Design/Renovation 108

TILING WALL/FLOOR PLASTER pipe,wire,painting,toilet bowl +basin \$188 90613466 zhong

Home Furnishings/Fittings 114

LUCKY ALUMINIUM WORKS Factory price window & grille \$180 TL DR 90698871 Henry

AUTO GATE/ AWNING/ Railing HDB Gate/ Aluminium Work/ Toilet Door. 94593613 Tan

Pest Control 116

SYSTEM PEST CONTROL Est 1985 ISO 9001/ 14001/ 45001 Cert Termite| Cockroach| Ant Rodent| Bedbug| Mosquito Tel: 6748 8966 / 9670 1366

Plumbing 118

CHOKAGE/ LEAKAGE/ INSTALL / Repair & All Plumbing Svcs Rubbish Chute. (ws15092011) Good\$ MeiLing St 6479-7507

Items Wanted 168

\$ ANTIQUE ROSEWOOD, Blackwood furn, hifi speaker, repair, disposal. Jason 90016482

Business Accounting/Secretarial Services 203

ACCOUNTING, REGD. ADDRESS answering fax, telex, tax & secretarial svcs. 65355300

Packing/Storage/Delivery/Removal 239

\$30 UP. BOX Lorry. Hse/ Office/ piano/ disposal service, Cheap storage & free boxes 65678426 huphing.com.sg

Honda For Sale 316

REPOSSESSED 07/2020 SMU569L HONDA SHUTTLE 1.5G CVT Call 64663808

Toyota For Sale 344

REPOSSESSED 06/2016 SLD7011J TOYOTA SIENNA 1.5G Highest Call 64663808

Vehicles For Hire 361

LIAN AIK: TWIN cabin/ pick-ups/ vans/ 10-15ft open/ box/ canopy. Long/ Short term. 363 Joo Chiat Rd. 63458080

DIESEL 10/14FT LORRY / Van for rent. Daily / monthly rate. Reasonable price 96235020

Vehicles Wanted 363

WANTED! ALL MODELS Private and commercial vehicles. High price! Immediate cash. Call 97279905/ 97266789

Car Financing/Insurance 377

TAI THONG LEE Offers Low Interest : In hse car loan, bank loan, Insurance, re-financing, COE loan, etc. Call: 67416868

100% LOAN FOR COE. Special rate: in house / direct bank. One stop service! 97272658 / 64695691 Thiam Heng

Scrap Vehicles 381

HIGHEST CASH OFFER for all scrap/ export/ used & commercial vehicle. 9661 8888

Lorries For Sale 387

NEAR 08 MITSUBISHI. FB70 High Canopy, new paint. Good condition COE 10/27. In-house finance. Low down-payment. Call now 81833939

7/2014 NISSAN CABSTAR New paint / 5 years COE. Good condition, trade in available. Call now 96849282

Vans For Sale 391

REPOSSESSED GBB8523X, 06/2010 Toyota Hiace. Manual. Highest offer secure. Expiry date 5/7/2024. Please Call Jo 6933 9411

2019 FIAT FLORINO Cargo Agent maintenance. Good condition. In-house Finance. One stop service. For viewing, Call now! 98558158

D10 BUKIT TIMAH/ HOLLAND RD/ TANGLIN HOUSES FOR SALE 403



HOLLAND PARK 21800 sqft. Beautiful rectangular land for rebuild. Charming house, easy access. Only \$2200psf yet neg 94567348 Newsman

D11 NEWTON/ NOVENA HOUSES FOR SALE 404



OPEN HOUSE BY Appointment Brand new 12 Chee Hoon Ave 15499/ 26000sf. Best layout, 12 carpark, huge gdn. 600m to Botanic Garden 93839025

D28 SELETAR HOUSES FOR SALE 410



BRAND NEW BUNGLW. Fully fitted. 6+ family+ ktv. Lift. Pool. 4352/9590sf.Last unit! Owner 98635635/97272996 www.wahkhaw.com.sg

D10 BUKIT TIMAH/ HOLLAND RD/ TANGLIN PTE APTS FOR SALE 414

BELOW BANK VALUE! Cheap! 2BR Open House weekend. Freehold. 12units. River Valley MRT! 94554663 Mr Goh

(NORTH/ NORTH-EAST) PTE RMS FOR RENT 509

ENSUITE RM NEAR Hougang MRT, can cook, PUB, Wifi, SCV, \$1.4K. Owner 81823333

FACTORY/ INDUSTRIAL SPACE FOR SALE 532

SENOKO FOOD FTY Coldrooms Land- 32k / GFA 48k sf. Bal 27yrs. 83382283/ 85221428

OFFICE SPACE FOR RENT 534

WINSLAND HOUSE

- 1,300 to 9,500 sq ft
- Somerset MRT Station
- Bare / Fitted Office
- Ample Parking
- Proximity To Amenities

6736 2622

OFFICE SPACE FOR SALE 535

FREEHOLD STRATA OFFICE. Full Floor avail 753-9375 sf/ Fully tenanted/ Bendeemer MRT. C&W 9855 2502

SHOP SPACE FOR RENT 537

LIFT LOBBY SHOP 200sf. Near MRT. Crowded, aircon, grd flr Owner 98635635/97272996 www.wahkhaw.com.sg

SHOP SPACE FOR SALE 538



RARE! FH GRANDVIEW Suites @ Geylang. 8 units w tenancy Facing Main Rd 8805sf \$26M 8112 9347 Huttons Auction

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Engineers 709

IT CO NEEDS Service Engineer 5 Days, 1.30pm to 6pm. With IT Skills. \$1,350. 6339 0866

Sales 730

HAIR PRODUCTS CO. Experience Outdoor Sales, own vehicle an advantage, Basic + Comm + Benefits. 62807828

Call Centres/ Telemarketing 734

TELE EXEC/ MARKETERS. All are welcome. Singaporean only. Attractive pay + Incentives. Call Nicholas 91558832

Food Stalls 743

KOPI KIOSK SEEKS Experience Crew. Mon-Fri. Team Player S'porean only. Tel: 97601328

Administrative/ Clerical 748

ACCOUNTS CLERK @UBI Techpark / 5 days work LCCI Cert, experience in autocount Call : 67490128

Accounting/ Bookkeeping 749

EXPERIENCED BOOK-KEEPING ACCOUNTS Asst. Work place@ Boon Lay Way(near Clementi Ave. 6). Pls send resume to: annietoh@hansa.com.sg

MAID AGENCY NEEDS Account / Admin / Customer Service/ Trainer, able to start immed pls call 9627 1191 (03C4432)

NEED ACCOUNT / Admin, able to start immed, please call 9627 1191 (03C4432)

Technical 754

URGENT HIRING FOR Pest Control Technician with experience and with Driving License. Contact: 8366 2058

General Production/ Operators 758

1. Production Workers
2. QC
Singaporeans are welcome
Interested, please call **6261 1010** or walk-in **37 Quality Rd, S'pore 618808** (Boon Lay Interchange, take bus 246 Allight at the 4th bus stop)

JURONG OPERATOR 7.30AM-4.48pm \$100. Forklift 8-5:30 pm \$90. Amk 8-6pm \$80, 11-7am \$80. Call : 90091844

NEAR JOO KOON MRT. Scope Checker. 8.30-5.30pm \$90. 5-day. 62416466 / 93852919

AMK MALE/ FEMALE Operator 1st \$70 , 2nd \$75 , 3rd \$80 , 6 days. 62416466 / 93852919

CHAI CHEE CHECKER 8-5pm \$70. 5.5 days. Lots of OT. Jumpsuit. Sitting job. 62416466

Warehousing/ Inventory/ Logistics 763

PENJURU AND WOODLANDS Store / Forklift Driver 8am-5.30pm. 5-day. 90076336

Security 766

SECURITY OFFICERS NEEDED at Pasir Ris, Loyang, Eunos, Macpherson. Call 68444746

10AM-7PM: MUSEUM@ Raffles Pl/ City Hall. 8am-8pm: Keppel Rd/ Tg Pagar. 96573246

Security 766

URGENT HIRING FULL TIME
SO Pay up to **\$3,000!*** (Day&Night)
SSO Pay up to **\$3,230!*** (Day&Night)

Benefits:
• Joining Bonus up to \$888
• Union Membership
• Medical Reimbursement
• Performance Incentive
• Birthday Token

1 Free notification HCTA or RTT Trained
1 Limited Slots Only!

Welcome Singaporean only
Whatsapp @ 8488 3186

Walk in Interview at our office: (Mon-Fri 9AM-5PM) exclude PH Avoid Lunch time (12nn-1pm)
20 Sin Ming Lane #07-52/53 Midview City S(573968) **Terms & conditions applies!

Security 766

IMMEDIATE VACANCIES SECURITY OFFICER
♦ Somerset ♦ Tanah Merah ♦ Novena ♦ Havelock Rd ♦ Simei ♦ Potong Pasir
*** \$2700-\$3260 ***
Daily cash can be arranged
Call 91894197
☎ 96803477 / 67343179

Security 766

1-SSO: DAY SHIFT 1-man show: Queenstown Area. SO: Day/ Night: Bedok & S'goon North Area. Call Roy 9060 2992. Walk in #05-38 Sultan Plaza

DAY/ NIGHT SO. Gross \$2750. Office at Tg Pagar & Hotel at Somerset. Call 81016955

DAY SO. GROSS up to \$2900+ 8am-8pm. Mall at Novena. Polo Tee. Call 97626955

Cleaners 769

@ Changi Cargo
Supervisor
6 days, 7am - 4pm, up to \$2500
Indoor Cleaner
5.5 days, 8am - 5pm, up to \$1750

@ Buona Vista
Office Cleaner
5 days, 7am - 4.30pm, up to \$1750
☎ 93682828 / 97881162 (No agent call)

Cleaners 769

URGENTLY NEEDED! CLEANERS
Salary up to **\$2,500**
Sisters' Islands Marine Park, 6 days
Call **9066 0899**

SUPERVISOR, CLEANER & FLOATER (basic + incentive)
Indoor/Outdoor Cleaning Crew
- Attractive Remuneration Package
- Attractive Bonus
- Projects located in the North/ East areas

ST Ang Mo Kio
24 Ang Mo Kio St 65 (Bus 70, 86, 163, 854)
1) Canteen Cleaner
2) General Cleaner
3) Office Cleaner
☎ 9694 8728 / 8235 8896

Mount Vernon Park (Gurkha Camp)
1) Station Supervisor
2) Station Cleaner
Able to wait for 1 week clearance before start work
Location: Opp Maris Stella High Sch. Bus no: 100, 135, 155, 28, 93 & 158.
MRT: Bartley (Orange line)
5.5 days, 7am-4pm
☎ 9138 7789 / 8611 4800

KLA @ Ang Mo Kio Ind Park 2 & Serangoon North Ave 4
1) General Cleaner (5.5 days, 7am-4pm)
2) Cleanroom Cleaner (5.5 days, 7am-4pm)
☎ 9138 6605 / 9138 7789

Chinese Development Assistance Council (CDAC) @ 65 Tanjong Katong Road
1) Station Cleaner 7am-4pm (5 days)
☎ 9724 3800 / 8611 4800

WAREHOUSE INDOOR CLEANER 5-days, Mon-Fri, 7am-4pm, at Pioneer/Tuas Crescent. Attractive salary. Can start immed. Call: 90842455

\$1.9K CONDO CLEANER Yishun BT Timah, Thomson, Punggol, Somerset, Bendemeer, Pasir Ris, Henderson. 96187353 / 96441614

CONDO CLEANER at Holland Hill & Keppel Bay. 6 days, Singaporean. Call 92333353 / 86545886

GENERAL CLEANER AT Lor Chuan MRT Stn Exit A, 2 min walk, 8am - 5pm. 6 days. Singaporean.call: 88228067

CONDO CLEANER at near Novena MRT, Jalan Pemimpin and Holland Hill. 6 days. Singaporean. call: 84981285

OUTDOOR & TOILET CLEANER - Condo @ Orchard, S'porean, able to work Sun & PH. Up to \$2k Good benefits 62352984

OFFICE OR COMPOUND Cleaners needed at Pasir Panjang, 7am-4pm. Call 9863-7812

Supreme Court/ School Cleaners. For S'porean. Area: Supreme Ct / Island wide. High Pay/ Annual Bonus/ New Join Incentive/ Medical Benefit. Pls Call: 81393925/ 97909777

CONDO CLEANER DHOBY Ghaut, River Valley, Sengkang, Paya Ubi (URGENT) & Beach Road. 6 days \$1.75K - \$2.4k. Singaporean. Pls call: 93892189 / 90821014

HOTEL CLEANERS NEAR MRT @Orchard Areas 3pm-11pm/ 11pm-7am/7am-3pm/8am-4pm @Queen Street 7am-3pm @Marina Square 11pm-7am @Pasir Panjang, Block Cleaner. 5.5 days week Call: 67490128

RESTROOM CLEANER \$2.1K 8am-6pm @ Telok Blangah area. S'poreans. 83806733

LOOKING FOR CONDO Indoor Cleaner near YCK & AMK. 5 day wk. S'porean. 98581475

CLEANER REQUIRED @ Bukit Batok Cres. 8am-5pm. 5.5 days work. Pls Call: 97516771

DISHWASHER REQUIRED @ One North 7.30am to 4.30pm 5days work. Call: 90613780

HIGH PAY CONDO Cleaner @ Hougang. 6 Days, 9am-6pm Pls Call : 86278266

OFFICE CLEANER \$2.1K 7am-4pm @Benoi area. 5.5 days S'poreans. Immed. 81896955

Cleaners 769

CONDO CLEANER NEAR Simei MRT & Dairy Farm Road (Hillview MRT) \$1.75K, 6day Singaporean. call: 84042853

CONDO @ WEST area Block Cleaner \$1750/Carpark \$1.9K /Compound \$2060 8am-5pm 6days. 98241220/ 88636866

\$1750 + BONUS. Full time Condo Block Cleaners needed at Redhill area. Please call 88564283 / 88170676

\$1740-\$2300 JALAN BESAR. Pioneer, Woodlands, Jurong East, Yio Chu Kang, Potong Pasir. Call 96533707

CLEANER \$1.8K 8-5PM/\$1.4K 5-10pm +\$200 allowance. @Tegah Plantation Plaza. Call: 93392818 /90013630

CLEANER. PART/FULL-TIME, ATTRACTIVE Salary. Central Area. Call 8314 2303

DISHWASHER NEEDED @ Sengkang area. \$2600-\$2800. 88149179/89234902

CLEANERS/ FLOATERS REQ'D islandwide. S'porean only. Pls call: 9069 7926

CLEANER TO WORK in hospital environment, 5.5 days/week. Prefer experience. 90123027

FULL-TIME CLEANERS near Queenstown/Commonwealth MRT. Good salary 98320938

FULL-TIME CLEANERS NEAR Haw Par Villa / Kent Ridge MRT. Good salary. 9115-6837

FULL-TIME CLEANERS. NEAR Punggol MRT. 5 days. Good salary. Immed. Call 9115 6837

FULL-TIME/ PART-TIME CLEANER wanted. 5-day work week. Please call: 84681842

\$1750 + BONUS + Incentive 5-days Work @ Condo/ Office Building/ Offices. 9155 5344

5 DAYS OFFICE Cleaner needed @ Teban Garden. 7.30am-5pm, \$1570. Call: 68621353

URGENTLY NEEDED! CLEANERS
Salary up to **\$2,500**
Sisters' Islands Marine Park, 6 days
Call **9066 0899**

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Sisters' Islands Marine Park, 6 days
Call **9066 0899**

Cleaners 769

Asst Area Manager
Salary range \$2800 to \$3000
6 days work
Cleaning industry experience
Hands on and use machine
class 3 driving license
Singaporeans Call 69581599

FULL TIME CLEANERS required by established cleaning co Attractive Salary & Good Benefits. Pls call the numbers for project areas: 1) Tanjung Rhu/ Kallang - call 9339 1313. 2) Pasir Ris - call 9160 2598. 3) Bt Timah/ Other Areas - call 9117 5660 / 9818 8466 / 9756 2417. 4) Operations Executive required - please call 8102 7411 / 9117 5660

HOTEL CLEANERS NEAR MRT @Orchard Areas 3pm-11pm/ 11pm-7am/7am-3pm/8am-4pm @Queen Street 7am-3pm @Marina Square 11pm-7am @Pasir Panjang, Block Cleaner. 5.5 days week Call: 67490128

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OFFICE CLEANER \$2.1K 7am-4pm @Benoi area. 5.5 days S'poreans. Immed. 81896955

TAMAN JURONG NEEDS Compound Cleaner, 7am-3pm, 5 days. 94893584 / 84119600

Despatch/ Delivery 772

DELIVERY DRIVER CUM Packer required at Jurong East. Please call: 9750 2462

Drivers/ Chauffeurs 775

PERSONAL DRIVER 5.5 Days Have own transport. East area. S'porean. 63488488

Other Positions 789

FRUITS/ PASTRY PACKERS @ Changi, w/Hygiene cert. Daily \$70-\$95, pay wkly.88522951

CLEANERS URGENTLY NEEDED Please contact Joy at 91183884 for interview

GARDENER, FILL TIME, \$2000. Condo, Near Stevens MRT, James 91150126

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Sisters' Islands Marine Park, 6 days
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Call **9066 0899**

NOTICES

Tel 6289-8822 | Email notices@sph.com.sg | www.sphclass.com.sg



Company Registration No. 202120748H

TENDER NOTICE

SPH Media Limited (SPH) invites online video platform service providers to participate in a pre-qualification tender for the supply of video platform services, including services to manage video assets, scheduling, and streaming of videos on websites as well as in mobile applications (the "Project"). The tenderer is required to provide a robust and future-proof solution and shall be responsible for the success of the implementation.

Key Requirements of the Video Platform

1. Compliance with industry standards, with reliable adaptive video streaming via CDN
2. Provide API integration capabilities
3. Provide SDK integration for native mobile apps
4. Provide video analytics



SINGAPORE AIRLINES LIMITED
(Incorporated in the Republic of Singapore)
Company Registration No. 197200078R

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the Fifty-Second Annual General Meeting of Singapore Airlines Limited (the "Company") will be held at Marina Bay Sands Expo and Convention Centre, Level 4, Roselle and Smpor Ballrooms, 10 Bayfront Avenue, Singapore 018956 on Monday, 29 July 2024 at 10.00 a.m. to transact the following business:

Ordinary Business

- To receive and adopt the Directors' Statement and Audited Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2024 and the Auditors' Report thereon.
- To declare a final dividend of 38 cents per ordinary share for the year ended 31 March 2024.
- To re-elect the following Directors who are retiring by rotation in accordance with Article 91 of the Company's Constitution and who, being eligible, offer themselves for re-election:
 - Mr Gautam Banerjee
 - Mr Simon Cheong Sae Peng
 - Ms Goh Swee Chen
 - Ms Jeanette Wong Kai Yuan
- To approve Directors' emoluments of up to S\$2,600,000 for the financial year ending 31 March 2025 (FY2024/25; up to S\$2,600,000).
- To re-appoint KPMG LLP as Auditors of the Company and to authorise the Directors to fix their remuneration.

Special Business

To consider and if thought fit, to pass, with or without modifications, the following resolutions which will be proposed as Ordinary Resolutions:

- That pursuant to Section 161 of the Companies Act 1967, authority be and is hereby given to the Directors of the Company (the "Directors") to:

- Issue shares of the Company ("shares") whether by way of rights, bonus or otherwise; and/or
- make or grant offers, agreements or options (collectively, "Instruments") that might or require shares to be issued, including but not limited to the creation and issue of (as well as adjustments to) warrants, debentures or other instruments convertible into shares,

at any time and upon such terms and conditions and for such purposes and to such persons as the Directors may in their absolute discretion deem fit; and

- (notwithstanding the authority conferred by this Resolution may have ceased to be in force) Issue shares in pursuance of any Instrument made or granted by the Directors while this Resolution was in force,

provided that:

- the aggregate number of shares to be issued pursuant to this Resolution (including shares to be issued in pursuance of Instruments made or granted pursuant to this Resolution) does not exceed 50% of the total number of Issued shares (excluding treasury shares and subsidiary holdings) (as calculated in accordance with sub-paragraph (2) below), of which the aggregate number of shares to be issued other than on a *pro rata* basis to shareholders of the Company (including shares to be issued in pursuance of Instruments made or granted pursuant to this Resolution) does not exceed 5% of the total number of Issued shares (excluding treasury shares and subsidiary holdings) (as calculated in accordance with sub-paragraph (2) below);
- (subject to such manner of calculation as may be prescribed by the Singapore Exchange Securities Trading Limited (the "SGX-ST")) for the purpose of determining the aggregate number of shares that may be issued under sub-paragraph (1) above, the percentage of Issued shares shall be based on the total number of Issued shares (excluding treasury shares and subsidiary holdings) at the time this Resolution is passed, after adjusting for:

- new shares arising from the conversion or exercise of any convertible securities or share options or vesting of share awards which were issued and are outstanding or subsisting at the time this Resolution is passed; and
- any subsequent bonus issue or consolidation or subdivision of shares,

and, in sub-paragraph (1) above and this sub-paragraph (2), "subsidiary holdings" has the meaning given to it in the Listing Manual of the SGX-ST;

- In exercising the authority conferred by this Resolution, the Company shall comply with the provisions of the Listing Manual of the SGX-ST for the time being in force (unless such compliance has been waived by the SGX-ST) and the Constitution for the time being of the Company; and
- (unless revoked or varied by the Company in general meeting) the authority conferred by this Resolution shall continue in force until the conclusion of the next Annual General Meeting of the Company or the date by which the next Annual General Meeting of the Company is required by law to be held, whichever is the earlier.

7. That:

- approval be and is hereby given, for the purposes of Chapter 9 of the Listing Manual ("Chapter 9") of the Singapore Exchange Securities Trading Limited for the Company, its subsidiaries and associated companies that are "entities at risk" (as that term is used in Chapter 9), or any of them, to enter into any of the transactions falling within the types of interested person transactions described in the Appendix to the Letter to Shareholders dated 1 July 2024 (the "Letter") with any party who is of the class of interested persons described in the Appendix to the Letter, provided that such transactions are made on normal commercial terms and in accordance with the review procedures for such interested person transactions;
- the approval given in paragraph (a) above (the "IPT Mandate") shall, unless revoked or varied by the Company in general meeting, continue in force until the conclusion of the next Annual General Meeting of the Company; and
- the Directors of the Company and/or any of them be and are hereby authorised to complete and do all such acts and things (including executing all such documents as may be required) as they and/or he may consider expedient or necessary or in the interests of the Company to give effect to the IPT Mandate and/or this Resolution.

8. That:

- for the purposes of Sections 76C and 76E of the Companies Act 1967 (the "Companies Act"), the exercise by the Directors of the Company (the "Directors") of all the powers of the Company to purchase or otherwise acquire Issued ordinary shares of the Company ("Shares") not exceeding in aggregate the Maximum Limit (as hereafter defined), at such price or prices as may be determined by the Directors from time to time up to the Maximum Price (as hereafter defined), whether by way of:

- market purchase(s) on the Singapore Exchange Securities Trading Limited (the "SGX-ST"); and/or
- off-market purchase(s) (if effected otherwise than on the SGX-ST) in accordance with any equal access scheme(s) as may be determined or formulated by the Directors as they consider fit, which scheme(s) shall satisfy all the conditions prescribed by the Companies Act,

and otherwise in accordance with all other laws and regulations and rules of the SGX-ST as may for the time being be applicable, be and is hereby authorised and approved generally and unconditionally (the "Share Buy Back Mandate");

- unless varied or revoked by the Company in general meeting, the authority conferred on the Directors pursuant to the Share Buy Back Mandate may be exercised by the Directors at any time and from time to time during the period commencing from the date of the passing of this Resolution and expiring on the earliest of:

- the date on which the next Annual General Meeting of the Company is held;
- the date by which the next Annual General Meeting of the Company is required by law to be held; and
- the date on which purchases and acquisitions of Shares pursuant to the Share Buy Back Mandate are carried out to the full extent mandated;

(c) in this Resolution:

"Average Closing Price" means the average of the last dealt prices of a Share for the five consecutive trading days on which the Shares are transacted on the SGX-ST immediately preceding the date of the market purchase by the Company or, as the case may be, the date of the making of the offer pursuant to the off-market purchase, and deemed to be adjusted in accordance with the listing rules of the SGX-ST for any corporate action which occurs during the relevant five-day period and the date of the market purchase by the Company or, as the case may be, the date of the making of the offer pursuant to the off-market purchase; "date of the making of the offer" means the date on which the Company announces its intention to make an offer for the purchase or acquisition of Shares from holders of Shares, stating therein the purchase price (which shall not be more than the Maximum Price calculated on the basis set out herein) for each Share and the relevant terms of the equal access scheme for effecting the off-market purchase;

"Maximum Limit" means that number of issued Shares representing 5% of the total number of issued Shares as at the date of the passing of this Resolution (excluding treasury shares and subsidiary holdings (as defined in the Listing Manual of the SGX-ST)); and

"Maximum Price" in relation to a Share to be purchased or acquired, means the purchase price (excluding brokerage, commission, applicable goods and services tax and other related expenses) which shall not exceed, whether pursuant to a market purchase or an off-market purchase, 105% of the Average Closing Price of the Shares; and

- the Directors and/or any of them be and are hereby authorised to complete and do all such acts and things (including executing all such documents as may be required) as they and/or he may consider expedient or necessary or in the interests of the Company to give effect to the transactions contemplated and/or authorised by this Resolution.

9. That pursuant to Section 161 of the Companies Act 1967 (the "Companies Act"), the Directors of the Company be and are hereby authorised (in compliance with and subject always to the provisions of Article 10 of the Constitution of the Company (the "Constitution")) to:

- allot and issue, from time to time and at any time, such number of ASA Shares (as defined in Article 10 of the Constitution) at an issue price of S\$0.50 for each ASA Share or in the event of a liquidation of the Company, the higher of S\$0.50 or the liquidation value of an ASA Share as certified by the liquidator appointed in relation to the liquidation of the Company for each ASA Share, partly paid at the price of S\$0.01, to the Minister for Finance (the "Minister"), and on such terms and subject to such conditions, as the Directors of the Company may in their absolute discretion deem fit;

- make dividend payments out of the Company's distributable profits to the Minister as the holder of the ASA Shares in accordance with the provisions of the Companies Act and the Constitution;

- enter into an agreement with the Minister, on behalf of the Company, pursuant to which the Minister will undertake, for a period of 5 years from 29 July 2024, to subscribe for any ASA Shares as and when requested to do so by the Company; and

- complete and do all such acts and things (including executing all such documents as may be required) as they may consider expedient or necessary or in the interests of the Company to give effect to the transactions contemplated and/or authorised by this Resolution.

10. That:

- the SIA Performance Share Plan 2014 and the SIA Restricted Share Plan 2014 (together, the "Existing Share Plans") be and are hereby terminated, provided that such termination shall be without prejudice to the rights of holders of awards outstanding under the Existing Share Plans as at the date of such termination;

- a new performance share plan to be known as the "SIA Performance Share Plan 2024" (the "SIA PSP 2024"), the rules of which, for the purpose of identification, have been subscribed to by the Chairman of the Meeting, under which awards ("PSP Awards") of fully paid-up ordinary shares, their equivalent cash value or combinations thereof will be granted, free of payment, to selected employees (including executive directors) of the Company and/or its subsidiaries, details of which are set out in the Letter to Shareholders dated 1 July 2024, be and is hereby approved;

- the Directors of the Company be and are hereby authorised:

- to establish and administer the SIA PSP 2024; and
- to modify and/or alter the SIA PSP 2024 at any time and from time to time, provided that such modification and/or alteration is effected in accordance with the provisions of the SIA PSP 2024, and to do all such acts and to enter into all such transactions and arrangements as may be necessary or expedient in order to give full effect to the SIA PSP 2024; and

- the Directors of the Company be and are hereby authorised to grant PSP Awards in accordance with the provisions of the SIA PSP 2024 and to allot and issue from time to time such number of fully paid-up ordinary shares as may be required to be delivered pursuant to the vesting of PSP Awards under the SIA PSP 2024, provided that:

- the aggregate number of (1) new ordinary shares allotted and issued and/or to be allotted and issued, (2) existing ordinary shares (including shares held in treasury) delivered and/or to be delivered, and (3) ordinary shares released and/or to be released in the form of cash in lieu of ordinary shares, pursuant to the SIA PSP 2024 and the SIA RSP 2024 (as defined in Resolution 11 below), shall not exceed 5% of the total number of Issued ordinary shares (excluding treasury shares and subsidiary holdings) from time to time;

- the aggregate number of ordinary shares under PSP Awards and RSP Awards (as defined in Resolution 11 below) to be granted pursuant to the SIA PSP 2024 and the SIA RSP 2024 respectively during the period (the "Relevant Year") commencing from this Annual General Meeting and ending on the date of the next Annual General Meeting of the Company or the date by which the next Annual General Meeting of the Company is required by law to be held, whichever is the earlier, shall not exceed 0.5% of the total number of Issued ordinary shares (excluding treasury shares and subsidiary holdings) from time to time (the "Yearly Limit"); and

- if the Yearly Limit is not fully utilised during the Relevant Year, any unutilised portion of the Yearly Limit may be used for the grant of PSP Awards and RSP Awards in subsequent years, for the duration of the SIA PSP 2024 and the SIA RSP 2024 respectively,

and in this Resolution, "subsidiary holdings" has the meaning given to it in the Listing Manual of the Singapore Exchange Securities Trading Limited.

11. That:

- a new restricted share plan to be known as the "SIA Restricted Share Plan 2024" (the "SIA RSP 2024"), the rules of which, for the purpose of identification, have been subscribed to by the Chairman of the Meeting, under which awards ("RSP Awards") of fully paid-up ordinary shares, their equivalent cash value or combinations thereof will be granted, free of payment, to selected employees (including executive directors) of the Company and/or its subsidiaries and non-executive directors of the Company, details of which are set out in the Letter to Shareholders dated 1 July 2024, be and is hereby approved;

- the Directors of the Company be and are hereby authorised:

- to establish and administer the SIA RSP 2024; and
- to modify and/or alter the SIA RSP 2024 at any time and from time to time, provided that such modification and/or alteration is effected in accordance with the provisions of the SIA RSP 2024, and to do all such acts and to enter into all such transactions and arrangements as may be necessary or expedient in order to give full effect to the SIA RSP 2024; and

- the Directors of the Company be and are hereby authorised to grant RSP Awards in accordance with the provisions of the SIA RSP 2024 and to allot and issue from time to time such number of fully paid-up ordinary shares as may be required to be delivered pursuant to the vesting of RSP Awards under the SIA RSP 2024, provided that:

- the aggregate number of (1) new ordinary shares allotted and issued and/or to be allotted and issued, (2) existing ordinary shares (including shares held in treasury) delivered and/or to be delivered, and (3) ordinary shares released and/or to be released in the form of cash in lieu of ordinary shares, pursuant to the SIA RSP 2024 and the SIA PSP 2024 (as defined in Resolution 10 above), shall not exceed 5% of the total number of issued ordinary shares (excluding treasury shares and subsidiary holdings) from time to time;

- the aggregate number of ordinary shares under PSP Awards (as defined in Resolution 10 above) and RSP Awards to be granted pursuant to the SIA PSP 2024 and the SIA RSP 2024 respectively during the Relevant Year (as defined in Resolution 10 above) shall not exceed the Yearly Limit (as defined in Resolution 10 above); and

- If the Yearly Limit is not fully utilised during the Relevant Year, any unutilised portion of the Yearly Limit may be used for the grant of PSP Awards and RSP Awards in subsequent years, for the duration of the SIA PSP 2024 and the SIA RSP 2024 respectively,

and in this Resolution, "subsidiary holdings" has the meaning given to it in the Listing Manual of the Singapore Exchange Securities Trading Limited.

Notice of Record Date and Payment Date

Notice is hereby given that, subject to the approval of shareholders to the final dividend being obtained at the Fifty-Second Annual General Meeting to be held on 29 July 2024, the Transfer Books and the Register of Members of the Company will be closed on 5 August 2024 for the preparation of dividend warrants.

Duly completed and stamped transfers (together with all relevant documents of or evidencing title) received by the Share Registrar, Boardroom Corporate & Advisory Services Pte. Ltd., 1 Harbourfront Avenue, #14-07 Keppel Bay Tower, Singapore 098632 up to 5.00 p.m. on 2 August 2024 will be registered to determine shareholders' entitlements to the final dividend. Subject as aforesaid, shareholders whose Securities Accounts with The Central Depository (Pte) Limited are credited with ordinary shares of the Company as at 5.00 p.m. on 2 August 2024 will be entitled to the final dividend.

The final dividend, if so approved by shareholders, will be paid on 21 August 2024.

By Order of the Board

Brenton Wu
Company Secretary
1 July 2024
Singapore

Explanatory notes

- In relation to Ordinary Resolution Nos. 3(a), 3(b), 3(c) and 3(d), Mr Gautam Banerjee will, upon re-election, continue to serve as a member of the Board Executive Committee and the Board Audit Committee, Mr Simon Cheong Sae Peng will, upon re-election, continue to serve as Chairman of the Customer Experience, Technology and Sustainability Committee and a member of the Board Compensation and Industrial Relations Committee, Ms Goh Swee Chen will, upon re-election, continue to serve as a member of the Board Audit Committee, the Board Nominating Committee and the Customer Experience, Technology and Sustainability Committee, Ms Jeanette Wong Kai Yuan will, upon re-election, continue to serve as a member of the Board Audit Committee and the Board Compensation and Industrial Relations Committee, Mr Cheong, Ms Goh and Ms Wong are considered Independent Directors, Mr Banerjee is considered a non-Independent Director. Please refer to the section on Additional Information on Directors Seeking Re-election in the Annual Report FY2023/24 for information relating to each of these Directors, as set out in Appendix 7.4.1 of the Listing Manual of the Singapore Exchange Securities Trading Limited (the "SGX-ST").

- Ordinary Resolution No. 4, if passed, will facilitate the payment of up to S\$2,600,000 as Directors' fees during the financial year in which the fees are incurred, that is, during the financial year ending 31 March 2025 ("FY2024/25") (up to S\$2,600,000 for the previous financial year). The amount of Directors' fees is computed based on the fee structure for non-executive Directors for FY2024/25 and takes into account, among others, the anticipated number of Board and Board Committee meetings for FY2024/25, assuming full attendance in person by all of the non-executive Directors. The amount also caters for any additional unscheduled Board or Board Committee meetings and/or the formation of additional Board Committees. The amount also includes transport and travel benefits to be provided to the non-executive Directors. In the event that the amount proposed is insufficient, approval will be sought at the next Annual General Meeting in year 2025 ("2025 AGM") before payments are made to Directors for the shortfall. Mr Goh Choon Phong, being the Chief Executive Officer, does not receive any Director's fees.

The current intention is that the Directors' fees for non-executive Directors for FY2024/25 will comprise a cash component and a share component, with approximately 30% being paid out in the form of awards under the SIA Restricted Share Plan 2024 proposed to be adopted pursuant to Resolution 11. Any such award would typically consist of the grant of fully paid shares outright with no performance or vesting conditions attached, but with a selling moratorium of one year. Non-executive Directors would eventually be required to hold shares (including shares obtained by other means) worth a minimum of the annual basic retainer fees (currently S\$90,000) as the shares paid out to them as part of their remuneration in lieu of cash accumulate over time.

The cash component of the Directors' fees for FY2024/25 is intended to be paid quarterly in arrears. The share component of the Directors' fees for FY2024/25 is intended to be paid after the 2025 AGM has been held. The actual number of shares to be awarded to each non-executive Director holding office at the time of the payment is intended to be determined by reference to the volume weighted average price of a share on the SGX-ST over the 10 trading days from (and including) the day on which the shares are first quoted ex-dividend after the 2025 AGM (or, if no final dividend is proposed at the 2025 AGM, or the resolution to approve any such final dividend is not approved at the 2025 AGM, over the 10 trading days immediately following the date of the 2025 AGM). The number of shares to be awarded will be rounded down to the nearest hundred and any residual balance will be settled in cash. A non-executive Director who steps down before the payment of the share component will receive all of his Directors' fees for FY2024/25 (calculated on a pro-rata basis, where applicable) in cash.

- Ordinary Resolution No. 6, if passed, will empower the Directors to issue shares, make or grant Instruments convertible into shares and to issue shares pursuant to such Instruments. The number of shares which the Directors may issue under this Ordinary Resolution will not exceed 50% of the total number of Issued shares (excluding treasury shares and subsidiary holdings), with a sub-limit of 5% for issues other than on a *pro rata* basis. The 5% sub-limit for non-*pro rata* issues is lower than the 20% sub-limit allowed under the Listing Manual of the SGX-ST. For the purpose of determining the aggregate number of shares which may be issued, the percentage of Issued shares shall be based on the total number of Issued shares (excluding treasury shares and subsidiary holdings) at the time this Ordinary Resolution is passed, after adjusting for (a) new shares arising from the conversion or exercise of any convertible Instruments or share options or vesting of share awards which were issued and are outstanding at the time this Ordinary Resolution is passed; and (b) any subsequent bonus issue or consolidation or subdivision of shares. For the avoidance of doubt, shareholders' approval will be required for any consolidation or subdivision of shares. As at 5 June 2024, the Company had 4,236,000 treasury shares and no subsidiary holdings.

- Ordinary Resolution No. 7, if passed, will renew the mandate to allow the Company, its subsidiaries and associated companies that are entities at risk (as that term is used in Chapter 9 of the Listing Manual of the SGX-ST) or any of them, to enter into certain restricted person transactions with certain classes of interested persons as described in the Appendix to the Letter to Shareholders dated 1 July 2024 (the "Letter"). The authority will, unless revoked or varied by the Company in general meeting, continue in force until the conclusion of the next Annual General Meeting of the Company. Please refer to the Letter for more details.

- Ordinary Resolution No. 8, if passed, will renew the mandate to allow the Company to purchase or otherwise acquire its issued ordinary shares, on the terms and subject to the conditions set out in the Resolution.

The Company may use internal or external sources of funds to finance the purchase or acquisition of its ordinary shares. The amount of financing required for the Company to purchase or acquire its ordinary shares, and the impact on the Company's financial position, cannot be ascertained as at the date of this Notice as these will depend on the number of ordinary shares purchased or acquired, the price at which such ordinary shares were purchased or acquired and whether the ordinary shares purchased or acquired are held in treasury or cancelled.

The financial effects of the purchase or acquisition of such ordinary shares by the Company pursuant to the proposed Share Buy Back Mandate on the audited financial statements of the Company and the Company and its subsidiaries for the financial year ended 31 March 2024, based on certain assumptions, are set out in paragraph 3.7 of the Letter.

Please refer to the Letter for more details.

- Ordinary Resolution No. 9, if passed, will empower the Directors to allot and issue ASA Shares (as defined in Article 10 of the Constitution of the Company) to the Minister for Finance from time to time and at any time, so as to preserve the rights and privileges granted to the Company by the air services agreements entered into between the Government of Singapore and the governments of other countries for regulating the conduct of air services between Singapore and the respective countries. The terms of the ASA Shares are set out in the Letter. Please refer to the Letter for more details.

- Ordinary Resolution Nos. 10 and 11 are to adopt the new SIA Performance Share Plan 2024 (the "SIA PSP 2024") and the new SIA Restricted Share Plan 2024 (the "SIA RSP 2024").

The SIA PSP 2024 and the SIA RSP 2024 are intended to replace the SIA Performance Share Plan 2014 and the SIA Restricted Share Plan 2014 respectively, both of which are due to expire on 29 July 2024. Summaries of the principal rules of, and other information relating to, the SIA PSP 2024 and the SIA RSP 2024 are set out in the Letter. Please refer to the Letter for more details.

If passed, Ordinary Resolution Nos. 10 and 11 will also empower the Directors to grant awards, and allot and issue ordinary shares of the Company, pursuant to the SIA PSP 2024 and the SIA RSP 2024. The total number of ordinary shares which may be delivered pursuant to awards granted under the SIA PSP 2024 and the SIA RSP 2024 (whether in the form of ordinary shares or in the form of cash in lieu of ordinary shares) shall not exceed 5% of the total number of Issued ordinary shares (excluding treasury shares and subsidiary holdings) from time to time. In addition, Ordinary Resolution Nos. 10 and 11 will also provide that the total number of ordinary shares under awards to be granted pursuant to the SIA PSP 2024 and the SIA RSP 2024 from this Annual General Meeting to the next Annual General Meeting (the "Relevant Year") shall not exceed 0.5% of the total number of issued ordinary shares (excluding treasury shares and subsidiary holdings) from time to time (the "Yearly Limit"), provided that if the Yearly Limit is not fully utilised during the Relevant Year, any unutilised portion of the Yearly Limit may be used by the Directors to make grants of awards under the SIA PSP 2024 and the SIA RSP 2024 in subsequent years, for the duration of the SIA PSP 2024 and the SIA RSP 2024 respectively.

Notes:

Format of Meeting

- The Annual General Meeting will be held, in a wholly physical format, at Marina Bay Sands Expo and Convention Centre, Level 4, Roselle and Smpor Ballrooms, 10 Bayfront Avenue, Singapore 018956 on Monday, 29 July 2024 at 10.00 a.m. Shareholders, including CPF and SRS investors, and (where applicable) duly appointed proxies and representatives will be able to ask questions and vote at the Annual General Meeting by attending the Annual General Meeting in person. There will be no option for shareholders to participate virtually. Printed copies of this Notice and the accompanying proxy form will be sent by post to members. These documents will also be published on the Company's website at the URL <https://www.singaporeair.com/shareholder> and the SGX website at the URL <https://www.sgx.com/securities/company-announcements>.

Appointment of Proxy(ies)

- A member who is not a relevant intermediary is entitled to appoint not more than two proxies to attend, speak and vote at the Annual General Meeting. Where such member's instrument appointing a proxy(ies) appoints more than one proxy, the proportion of the shareholding concerned to be represented by each proxy shall be specified in the instrument.
- A member who is a relevant intermediary is entitled to appoint more than two proxies to attend, speak and vote at the Annual General Meeting, but each proxy must be appointed to exercise the rights attached to a different share or shares held by such member. Where such member's instrument appointing a proxy(ies) appoints more than two proxies, the number and class of shares in relation to which each proxy has been appointed shall be specified in the instrument.

"Relevant intermediary" has the meaning ascribed to it in Section 181 of the Companies Act 1967.

A member who wishes to appoint a proxy(ies) must complete the instrument appointing a proxy(ies), before submitting it in the manner set out below.

- A proxy need not be a member of the Company. A member may choose to appoint the Chairman of the Meeting as his/her/its proxy.

The instrument appointing a proxy(ies) must be submitted to the Company in the following manner:

- if submitted personally or by post, be lodged with the Company's Share Registrar, Boardroom Corporate & Advisory Services Pte. Ltd., at 1 Harbourfront Avenue, #14-07 Keppel Bay Tower, Singapore 098632; or

- if submitted electronically, be submitted via email to the Company's Share Registrar, Boardroom Corporate & Advisory Services Pte. Ltd., at srs.proxy@boardroomlimited.com,

and in each case, must be lodged or received (as the case may be) not less than 72 hours before the time appointed for holding the Annual General Meeting.

CPF and SRS investors:

- may vote at the Annual General Meeting if they are appointed as proxies by their respective CPF Agent Banks or SRS Operators, and should contact their respective CPF Agent Banks or SRS Operators if they have any queries regarding their appointment as proxies; or
- may appoint the Chairman of the Meeting as proxy to vote on their behalf at the Annual General Meeting, in which case they should approach their respective CPF Agent Banks or SRS Operators to submit their votes by 5.00 p.m. on 17 July 2024.

Submission of Questions

- Shareholders, including CPF and SRS investors, may submit substantial and relevant questions related to the resolutions to be tabled for approval at the Annual General Meeting in advance of the Annual General Meeting:

- by post to the Company's Share Registrar, Boardroom Corporate & Advisory Services Pte. Ltd., at 1 Harbourfront Avenue, #14-07 Keppel Bay Tower, Singapore 098632; or

- via email to the Company's Share Registrar, Boardroom Corporate & Advisory Services Pte. Ltd., at srs.proxy@boardroomlimited.com.

When submitting questions by post or via email, shareholders should also provide the following details: (i) the shareholder's full name; (ii) the shareholder's email address; and (iii) the manner in which the shareholder holds shares in the Company (e.g., via CDP, CPF/SRS and/or physical scrip), for verification purposes.

All questions submitted in advance must be received by 5.00 p.m. on 17 July 2024.

- The Company will address all substantial and relevant questions received from shareholders by the 17 July 2024 deadline by publishing its responses to such questions on its corporate website at the URL <https://www.singaporeair.com/shareholder> and the SGX website at the URL <https://www.sgx.com/securities/company-announcements> at least 48 hours prior to the closing date and time for the lodgement/receipt of instruments appointing a proxy(ies). The Company will respond to questions or follow-up questions submitted after the 17 July 2024 deadline either within a reasonable timeframe before the Annual General Meeting, or at the Annual General Meeting itself. Where substantially similar questions are received, the Company will consolidate such questions and consequently not all questions may be individually addressed.

- Shareholders, including CPF and SRS investors, and (where applicable) duly appointed proxies and representatives can also ask the Chairman of the Meeting substantial and relevant questions related to the resolutions to be tabled for approval at the Annual General Meeting, at the Annual General Meeting itself.

Access to Documents

- The Annual Report FY2023/24 and the Letter to Shareholders dated 1 July 2024 (in relation to the proposed renewal of the mandate for interested person transactions, the proposed renewal of the share buy back mandate, the proposed renewal of the authorisation to issue redeemable cumulative preference shares of the Company pursuant to Article 10 of the Constitution of the Company and the proposed adoption of the SIA Performance Share Plan 2024 and the SIA Restricted Share Plan 2024) are available for inspection at the registered office of the Company at Airline House, 25 Airline Road, Singapore 819829 during normal business hours from the date of this Notice up to the date of the Annual General Meeting, and have also been published and may be accessed at the Company's website at the URL <https://www.singaporeair.com/shareholder> as follows:

- the Annual Report FY2023/24 may be accessed by clicking on the hyperlink for "Annual Report FY2023/24" under "Annual General Meeting (29 July 2024)"; and

- the Letter to Shareholders dated 1 July 2024 may be accessed by clicking on the hyperlink for "Letter to Shareholders" under "Annual General Meeting (29 July 2024)".

The above documents may also be accessed at the SGX website at the URL

life HOBBY HORSING GETS LEG UP



A buzz of excitement crackled through the hushed arena as the riders gripped the reins of their stuffed steeds.

Immaculately coiffed equestrians leapt athletically over fences just like in horse jumping, going as fast as they could against the clock straddling their stick steeds.

Things were more stately in the dressage, with riders trotting their stick horses with intricately decorated stuffed heads before the discerning eyes of the judges.

Welcome to the strangely exacting world of hobby horing, the Finnish sport guaranteed to put a smile on your face.

First invented in Finland more than a decade ago, hobby horing has taken off at a gallop across the globe. Some 260 riders from 22 countries – mostly women and girls aged between 10 and 20 – turned up to compete at the 11th annual Finnish championship held in the town of Seinajoki in June.

But despite its vast international reach, from the Arctic to Argentina, hobby horing is a sport that dares not speak its name. It is not officially recognised as a proper sport in its birthplace, even though it is enjoying soaring popularity.

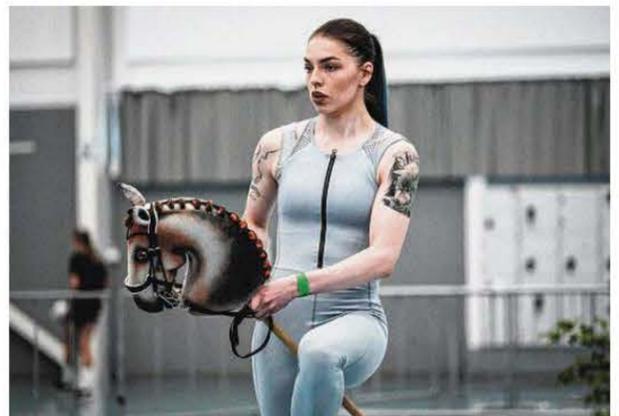
"We have faced so much bullying and judgment," said participant Nara Arlin, 24. "We know what everyone in hobby horing has been through... I think that is the main thing that pulls us together."

Beyond the whimsy, great strength and skill are required to jump the obstacles while holding the hobby horse, with some fences as high as 110cm.

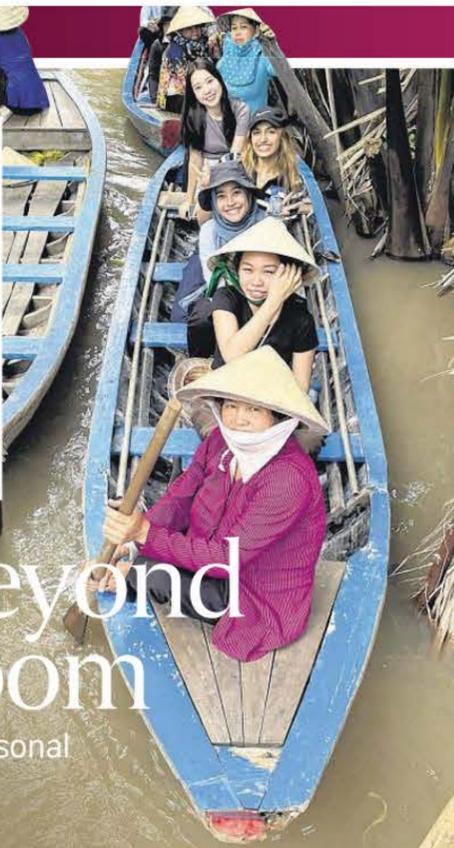
"If you jump over obstacles, your hip mobility has to be absolutely insane," said Ms Julia Mikkonen, 20, chair of the Finnish hobby horse association.

Competitors also went to great lengths with their "horses" – which were exhibited and judged – modelling and sewing the heads and adorning them with decorations.

Ms Mikkonen, who estimated that there are about 10,000 hobby horing enthusiasts globally, said the 2024 championship was the biggest so far. She added: "Of course, we are all dreaming of having a world championship one day." TEXT AND PHOTOS: AFP

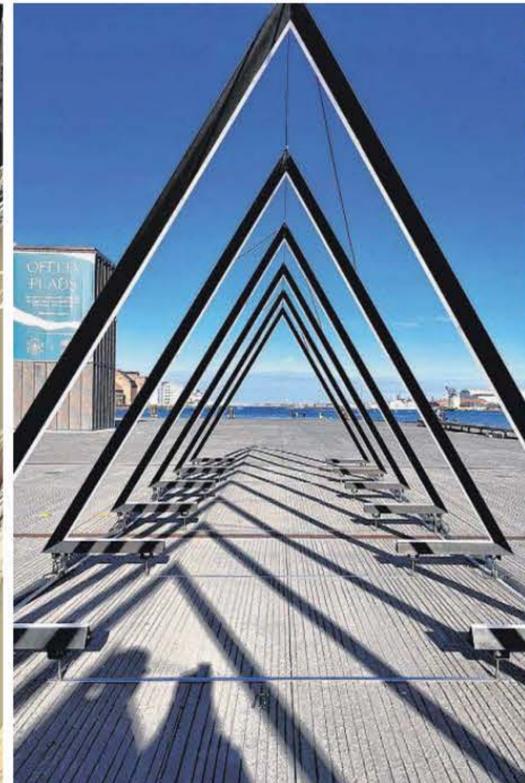


In Life tomorrow



Education beyond the classroom

Overseas school trips bring personal growth, teach life skills



COPENHAGEN'S BEST LANDMARKS
Where to go in the Unesco World Capital of Architecture

