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# THE STRAITS TIMES

## Kranji racecourse hosts final Singapore Derby



The final Singapore Derby was won on July 21 by Lim's Saltoro with jockey Marc Lerner aboard (far right). Around 5,800 fans turned up at the Singapore Turf Club in Kranji to watch one of the oldest and most prestigious feature races here. Open to four-year-old horses, the Singapore Group 1 race held over 1,800m featured \$400,000 in prize money. The inaugural Singapore Derby, held in 1880 at the Farrer Park racecourse, offered prize money amounting to \$150. The Kranji facility will close by March 2027, with the final race meeting scheduled to take place on Oct 5, 2024. ST PHOTO: ARIFFIN JAMAR **SEE RACING • B8**

## Setting safeguards for tech outages starts in peacetime: Josephine Teo

**Govt regularly stress-tests its systems; firms urged to update business continuity plans**

**Gabrielle Andres**  
Correspondent

Preparations for crises like the recent global tech outage often start in peacetime, when things are going reasonably well, said Minister for Digital Development and Information Josephine Teo.

At such times, safeguards are put in place to prevent incidents from occurring, and plans are drawn up to respond when "things go very wrong", she wrote in a Facebook post on July 21.

"It is precisely when things are going reasonably well that we must take action to fortify our defences," Mrs Teo said, adding that the Government regularly stress-tests its systems through tabletop exercises.

The July 19 tech outage was related to a software update by cybersecurity firm CrowdStrike. It affected nearly 8.5 million Microsoft devices, or less than 1 per cent of all Windows machines, according to a Microsoft blog post on July 20.

Companies worldwide, including airlines, banks and media outlets, reported disruptions to their services and operations. In Singapore, services at Changi Airport and Singapore Post were among those affected.

Government services in the Republic, as well as local banks, telcos and hospitals, were not affected by the outage, said the Ministry of Digital Development and Information on July 19.

Mrs Teo wrote in her post that IT systems in Singapore organisations affected by the outage are "almost fully recovered".

"Yet the incident has left many of us feeling vulnerable and questioning our heavy reliance on technology for everyday activities," she noted. "We should be concerned. The real question is what we can do about these concerns."

Mrs Teo said fortifying Singapore's defences starts with robust testing and putting in place safeguards to prevent such incidents from occurring.

"Testing and red-teaming must be prioritised and conducted across multiple levels so that appropriate safeguards can be put in place," she said.

Red-teaming typically refers to a process where a system undergoes

a series of rigorous tests to find gaps in safety.

"It also involves planning for suitable responses when things go very wrong, such as putting in place business continuity plans (BCPs), which many organisations have."

Such plans should be updated and practised regularly, with stress tests carried out through tabletop exercises.

Singapore takes tabletop exercises seriously, Mrs Teo added.

She cited Exercise Cyber Star, a cyber-security exercise to prepare for attacks targeting key infrastructure that keeps the nation ticking, which was last conducted by the Cyber Security Agency of Singapore in September 2023.

The exercise involved 11 critical information infrastructure sectors, including public and private organisations from banking and finance, as well as the Government.

In addition, agencies in charge of various sectors run their own tabletop exercises to focus on their respective domains, she said.

The whole government also conducts yearly exercises, with nearly 100 agencies having exercised their crisis management responses as a team in the past three years.

"These exercises are helpful in refining our emergency responses, thus building confidence in our people, processes and technology," Mrs Teo said.

She added that the Government ensures that its technology is "up to date and resilient against outages" during each exercise.

"We practise our incident responses and BCPs, so that we know what to do and who to contact during crises," she said. "Our people demonstrate their dedication and hone their knowledge and capabilities to respond under stress."

However, she pointed out that the existence of BCPs and tabletop exercises "will not eradicate crises". "In fact, they exist precisely because we know that outages will happen. It is not a matter of if, but when," she said.

"Hence, we need to do as much as we can even before incidents happen so that we can recover and prevail over the disruptions."

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**SEE FORUM • B5**

## Japanese, Chinese gardens to reopen in September with new features

**Wong Pei Ting**  
Correspondent

The Japanese and Chinese gardens, which have been closed for redevelopment since May 2019, will reopen in September as part of Jurong Lake Gardens' next phase of opening.

Visitors can expect to be greeted with expanses of water dotted with shades of yellow, blue, white, pink and purple – part of what will be Singapore's largest water lily collection – when they cross the Japanese Garden Bridge, a 15-minute walk from Jurong East MRT station.

The aquatic garden will feature more than 150 day- and night-blooming water lily varieties sourced from the United States, Britain, France and Thailand, said the National Parks Board (NParks) on July 21.

Those who venture farther will come across a gorge-like landscape called the Sunken Garden, where walled paths lined up to 3.5m high on both sides with more than 200 types of epiphytes – plants that grow on other plants or structures – attempt to create a microclimate of high humidity and low temperatures.

Its centrepiece takes inspiration from a cenote – a deep natural well or sinkhole formed by the collapse of surface limestone that exposes groundwater underneath – featuring an air well that allows natural light into the otherwise shaded garden, and a still pool to harvest and recycle rainwater.

Visitors emerging from the Sunken Garden will enter the Floral Garden, which was partly designed and conceptualised by students and other members of the community.

Giving a preview of these features at the 13ha Japanese Garden on July 21, NParks said the design concept was built on more than 14,000 suggestions gathered through roving exhibitions, town-hall sessions and online surveys held between November 2016 and April 2017.

The feedback showed people liked "water-sensitive" designs, which integrate water cycle management in their approach, and garden features related to water – both of which are being realised in

the Water Lily Garden and Sunken Garden, NParks said.

Meanwhile, the Floral Garden serves as a showcase for community stewardship of Singapore's green spaces, a key thrust of the country's "City in Nature" vision, it pointed out.

National Development Minister Desmond Lee, who spoke at the sidelines of a tree-planting event held alongside the preview, noted that the new features are an extension of the idea of Jurong Lake Gardens as a "people's garden".

It is the first of Singapore's three national gardens to be situated in the heartland. The other two national gardens are the Singapore Botanic Gardens and Gardens by the Bay.

This was why MPs from Jurong GRC, West Coast GRC and the single seat ward of Yuhua were present at the planting event, which drew about 150 participants, including volunteers, residents and students, Mr Lee told the media.

"Being the very first (gardens) in the heartland, we made significant effort to reach out to local communities, roping in our grassroots advisers to help raise awareness, drum up interest, and help marshal communities together to give their views and feedback," said Mr Lee, who is an MP for West Coast GRC.

Also at the event were West Coast GRC MPs Foo Mee Har, Ang Wei Neng and Rachel Ong; Jurong GRC MPs Shawn Huang and Ra-

hayu Mahzam; and Yuhua MP Grace Fu, who is the Minister for Sustainability and the Environment. Dr Hamid Razak, a surgeon who has been active in Jurong GRC and is tipped to run as a People's Action Party candidate there in the next general election, was also present.

While it has been a decade since the authorities started reimagining the possibility of Jurong Lake Gardens becoming Singapore's third national garden, Mr Lee said plenty of opportunities remain for the community to volunteer and pass on feedback.

"The park is a living space. Even as the plants continue to grow and evolve, we want to continue to get residents' feedback on how they find the park, and the kind of issues they encounter when it comes to the park," he said.

It is not just "big-level ideas" that are being sought, but issues on the ground too, he added.

This is so that feedback can be used to keep improving the spaces, such as allowing the use of some communal spaces for community events, Mr Lee said.

NParks' Friends of Jurong Lake Gardens, which gathers people who care about the gardens and long to use them for a variety of activities, is one channel where people can get engaged and contribute, he noted.

Therapeutic horticulturist Fion Tham, 50, who volunteers with this group, said her participation

has prompted her to think harder about how she can apply her knowledge to improve seniors' enjoyment of the gardens.

One of her suggestions being incorporated is the planting of the musical note plant at the Floral Garden's Invigoration Garden, one of five community plots there, she noted. She hopes the plant's unusually shaped flowers will attract parkgoers.

The tree-planting event was supported by a \$21,000 donation from Mr Han Jok Kwang, 70, a business development adviser at Schneider Electric, under the Garden City Fund, NParks' registered charity.

Under the fund, with every \$300 donation, organisations and individuals can plant a tree in one of the NParks-managed green spaces. Mr Han is a member of the fund's management committee.

Given that the gardens will be set against the backdrop of the future Jurong Lake District, which is planned as Singapore's second Central Business District, Mr Han believes the collective effort will go towards making the area a more attractive place to live, work and invest in.

Micron Technology also donated \$1 million to the Garden City Fund to support a smart water management system that helps clean and restore water at the Water Lily Garden.

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The Japanese Garden will feature a gorge-like landscape called the Sunken Garden, where walled paths lead parkgoers to a centrepiece (left) that takes inspiration from a collapsed limestone cave formation. ST PHOTO: WONG PEI TING

## US • Biden faces tough choice

Mr Joe Biden faces a difficult choice over his presidential bid: Hang on or cement his legacy as the man who stopped Donald Trump twice. Once by fighting him. And again by stepping away.

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## News analysis

# Biden's quest to be consequential could mean stepping away

Exit chorus grows louder even as he says he is the one who can beat Trump



**Bhagyashree Garekar**

US Bureau Chief

WASHINGTON – During a life filled with more than his fair share of personal tragedy, trauma and crisis, Mr Joe Biden has fought almost impossible odds to become US president.

So much so that in 51 years of public life, he has come to be associated with grief and grit.

But now, at 81 and on the eve of his last political battle, is it time for him to let go, to give up the fight and to go gently into the night?

So far, he has been unyielding in his resolve to fight.

In an interview a day after his disastrous performance in a presidential debate with Republican rival Donald Trump, Mr Biden tried to tamp down calls for him to exit the 2024 presidential race.

"If the Lord Almighty came down and said, 'Joe, get out of the race', I'd get out," he told ABC News anchor George Stephanopoulos on June 28.

Even after a bout of Covid-19 – his third – laid him low, Mr Biden gave no indication that he had changed his mind.

"I look forward to getting back on the campaign trail next week," he said on July 20, even as opinion polls show him trailing Trump. He is expected to return to the capital in the coming week, after convalescing for five days in his Delaware home, while a rising chorus of Democrats asks him to pass the torch.

If he accedes to the wishes of his party men, he will become a one-term president, alongside Mr George H.W. Bush (1989 to 1993)



US President Joe Biden, seen here at a convention in Las Vegas on July 16, is set to return to the campaign trail this week after a bout of Covid-19. PHOTO: NYTIMES

and Mr Jimmy Carter (1977 to 1981). Americans regard two-term presidents as more consequential.

Mr Biden has tried all his life to be consequential. The road to the White House for the boy who grew up poor and was bullied for his stutter has been long.

His political career began at 29, in a Delaware hospital ward where his two sons were fighting for their lives after a car crash that killed their mother and 13-month-old sister. He took the oath as a senator by their bedside in 1973.

His first presidential foray in 1987 ended badly – he had to stand down after being accused of plagiarising British Labour leader Neil Kinnock's speech.

The second attempt in 2007 too ended in failure. He lost the party nomination to Mr Barack Obama,

then a young first-time senator who excited the nation with his powerful oratory and history-making potential to become the first black president of America.

In 2016, after Mr Biden had served two terms as Mr Obama's vice-president, it would have been logical to assume that he would have been the Democratic Party's next nominee. But personal tragedy tracked him again when his 46-year-old son Beau died of brain cancer.

Then, Mr Obama bypassed him to virtually hand the nomination to Mrs Hillary Clinton, who went on to lose to Trump.

Mr Biden finally clinched the nomination in the 2020 election cycle, 32 years after he had made his first attempt at a presidential run.

His performance in the early primary contests was far from encouraging – he came in fourth in Iowa and fifth in New Hampshire. But he persevered with a big win in South Carolina and ultimately prevailed.

And this is a point he makes frequently: That he is the best man to defeat Trump.

As Washington's political establishment and its mostly liberal media keep up a loud countdown to his exit, Mr Biden's judgment is about to be tested again.

The New York Times reported that he sees former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi as the "main instigator" of the call to replace him, and Mr Obama as the "puppet master behind the scenes".

Relations between Mr Obama

and Mr Biden are often the subject of intense and sometimes speculative reporting in the American press. Reportedly, Mr Biden has nursed a grudge ever since Mr Obama picked Mrs Clinton over him as the Democratic candidate in the 2016 election.

The Washington Post, quoting anonymous sources, said Mr Biden's anger is driven in part by a conviction that he could have moved past the debate debacle if so many Democrats had not piled on him.

"The tone some in the party are taking in their effort to push him out has only stiffened Biden's resolve to stay in," the Post quoted people close to him as saying in a July 20 report.

He has often spoken of his Irish Catholic upbringing and the

family values that taught him to get back up whenever he has been kicked down. But this time, his tenacity has few admirers.

"As someone nearly his age, I find it easy to empathise with his refusal to come to terms with his situation," Dr Charles Morrison, a former congressional staff member, told The Straits Times, noting the incumbent President's tendency to boast of his past achievements and to express frustration with ageism.

But the writing is on the wall, said Dr Morrison, who served as a congressional aide to two US senators, including one from Mr Biden's home state of Delaware.

The question is if it is a graceful exit or one where party delegates end up voting him out.

"He has put this off and resisted so long, it is hard to do (that) in some way, respectfully," Dr Morrison said.

"But it probably doesn't matter to anyone but him. For almost everyone else, we'll respect him more for not running than otherwise. And even for him, he should be mighty relieved and find that he can bask in the praise – and relief – of the party," he added.

As a young senator, Mr Biden had himself applauded the legendary Montana Senator Mike Mansfield, who after serving a record-setting 16 years as majority leader and helping the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, decided not to run again at 72, said Dr Morrison.

Mr Biden, then in his 30s, was quoted in The New York Times as praising Mr Mansfield's "integrity".

In another illustrative case, Mr Biden in 2000 discouraged Republican Senator William V. Roth, who had served for 28 years, from running for re-election at 78. Mr Roth, famous for his work on the Roth IRA account, a popular tax-sheltered retirement account, did not heed the advice and lost the race badly.

Now it's Mr Biden's turn.

He has made tough calls before. As he took the oath of office in 1973 while tending to his children in hospital, he spoke from his heart, saying: "If there is a conflict between my being a good father and a good senator, I will contact the governor and tell him that we can always get another senator. But my boys can't get another father."

As cries for him to renounce his candidacy among Democratic circles reach a fever pitch, Mr Biden faces another difficult choice: Hang on or cement his legacy as the man who stopped Trump twice.

Once by fighting him. And another time by stepping away.

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## Trump campaign prepares attack plan against Harris in case Biden withdraws

GRAND RAPIDS, Michigan – Donald Trump's campaign is preparing a major effort to attack Vice-President Kamala Harris if US President Joe Biden steps aside as the Democratic Party's nominee, including a wave of advertisements focusing on her record in her current office and in California, according to two people briefed on the matter.

The Trump team has prepared opposition research books on Ms Harris, 59, and has similar dossiers on other Democrats who could become the nominee if Mr Biden drops out of the presidential race.

But the bulk of the preparations so far has been focused on Ms Harris, including a recently concluded poll testing her vulnerabilities in a general election contest, according to the two people.

The Trump team's attention on Ms Harris is based on its assumption that if Democrats were to bypass the first black woman to serve as US vice-president, it would drive even deeper divisions in the party and risk alienating their base of black voters.

Trump allies have also begun examining the records of Democratic governors who are considered potential running mates for Ms Harris.

Advisers to the former US president are paying especially close attention to Pennsylvania Governor Josh Shapiro – the state the Trump campaign is most focused on winning to block the Democrats' path to the White House.

A Trump campaign spokesperson did not respond to an e-mail seeking comment.

Since Mr Biden's disastrous debate performance on June 27, Trump and his political operation have softened their criticism of the President, hoping he stays politically viable until the party formally nominates him and it is too late to replace him without major legal hurdles.

Trump's senior team preferred that Mr Biden, 81, remained in the race, believing his low approval numbers, and voters' widespread doubts about his age and cognitive fitness represent the former president's best chance at reclaiming the White House.

After the debate, the Trump team decided to hold back advertising that could further damage Mr Biden, according to one person briefed on the Trump campaign's internal discussions who was not authorised to speak publicly.

A change at the top of the ticket could throw a remarkably stable race into chaos – particularly if Ms Harris, who could be the first black woman elected US president, becomes the nominee.

Some Trump aides say privately that Ms Harris might be better at delivering certain messages than Mr Biden has been, particularly on abortion rights, an issue that galvanised Democrats in the 2022 midterm elections.

And as a former prosecutor, she may be positioned to make a sharp



Vice-President Kamala Harris arriving aboard Air Force Two in Buzzards Bay, Massachusetts, en route to a campaign fund-raiser on July 20. The bulk of the opposition research by Donald Trump's campaign team has focused on Ms Harris, who could become the Democratic Party's nominee if President Joe Biden drops out of the presidential race. PHOTO: NYTIMES

argument about Trump's criminal indictments, including his conviction in New York City on charges that he falsified business records to conceal a hush-money payment to

a porn actress in 2016.

But they also believe Ms Harris will have to own every unpopular Biden-era policy, which will cancel out the gains she might make. In

particular, the Trump team plans to attack her over the border crisis, one that the US President tasked her with finding the "root causes" of.

Aides to Ms Harris have said that Trump has distorted her role, and have noted that regardless, border crossings have fallen since a Biden administration curtailing of asylum.

They are also looking to define her based on her tenure as a senator in California and, before that, her time as the state's attorney-general and as the district attorney of San Francisco, where her record during her 2020 presidential campaign was criticised alternately as too conservative or too lenient towards first-time drug offenders.

Republicans have long criticised Ms Harris. She has been on the receiving end of similar Republican attacks, particularly about the border and Mr Biden's acuity, for years.

And despite not rolling out videos or signs, several Republicans made her part of their focus during their convention this past week, mentioning her both in conjunction with Mr Biden and also on her own.

A recent New York Times/Siena College poll found Ms Harris in a slightly stronger position against Trump than the President. The poll, however, was completed before the assassination attempt on Trump.

Still, Mr Jim Hobart, a pollster whose firm, Public Opinion Strategies, is helping to conduct NBC's bipartisan poll, said Ms Harris is starting from a fairly defined place nationally.

He said that in the most recent survey, "50 per cent of voters already have a negative opinion of Harris – just 32 per cent have a positive opinion".

He added: "Could those positive numbers improve if she is the nominee? Sure. But remember, she has never shown herself to be a particularly skilled candidate."

He pointed to her narrow win in the 2010 attorney-general's race, and the bust that was her presidential campaign in 2020. NYTIMES



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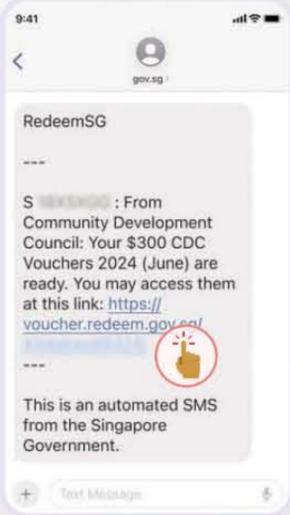


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## News analysis

# Systemic issues affecting S'pore's recycling rate

Lack of domestic facilities, rather than poor recycling habits, poses bigger challenge



Ariel Yu

Recyclables "spoil" with food or liquid waste may be a common and regrettable sight at many recycling bins around Singapore, but poor recycling habits are not likely to be the main driver behind Singapore's falling recycling rates, said an expert.

Instead, systemic issues – such as Singapore's lack of domestic recycling facilities – pose larger obstacles in the country's quest to recycle more.

In June, the National Environment Agency (NEA) released Singapore's waste statistics for 2023, which showed that the overall recycling rate here had declined over the past decade, from 62 per cent in 2013 to 52 per cent in 2023.

This falls short of the 70 per cent goal set out in the 2030 Zero Waste Masterplan.

Ms Robin Rheume, a long-time zero-waste advocate, said: "The low and dropping recycling rates are not primarily due to a lack of education and poor practices by consumers."

She added: "While it is absolutely true that many consumers are putting the wrong things into the blue bins, it's impossible to say that this is the primary issue or that this behaviour is getting worse."

Ms Rheume is the founder of Recyclopeda.sg, a volunteer-run website about recycling.

The NEA attributed the decline in overall recycling rate to structural factors, such as freight costs and commodity prices.

When freight rates are high, recyclers are less incentivised to collect recyclables, since exporting them overseas would entail higher shipment costs and

narrow profit margins.

And when prices for recyclables are low, recyclers may choose to accumulate the materials until prices increase, if space permits.

Two-thirds of the waste Singapore generates come from the industrial sector, such as construction sites and factories.

Recyclable waste from this sector is usually cleaner and tends to be segregated, compared with the commingled recycling bins in housing estates, said Ms Tan Huileng, executive director of Zero Waste SG, a not-for-profit non-governmental organisation.

This means that the issue of contamination is not so prevalent in the industrial sector, and points to the fact that other factors could belie the lower recycling rate.

## LIMITED DOMESTIC RECYCLING CAPABILITIES

Singapore exports a portion of its recyclables to countries like Malaysia and Indonesia to be made into new products, such as benches or clothes, to be sold to consumers.

This subjects the business of recycling to international market forces.

In 2019, Minister for Sustainability and the Environment Grace Fu said in a written response to a parliamentary question that Singapore exported about 34 per cent of its recyclable waste that year. There is no publicly available data for subsequent years.

Building recycling facilities requires land, which is a precious commodity in Singapore.

Mr Cheang Kok Chung, executive director of the Singapore Environment Council, said: "Given the size of Singapore's domestic market, there may not be sufficient recyclable feedstock to support large recycling facilities that are able to reap economies of scale. "Furthermore, some recycling

processes can be resource-intensive, in terms of land, water or energy."

Recycling facilities, some featuring innovative technologies, have been under development for several years.

In 2023, Abraclean, the first recycling plant in Singapore that can repurpose glass waste into an abrasive that removes unwanted coatings such as rust and paint from metal surfaces in industrial applications, was officially opened.

Abraclean chairman Gurmit Singh said the company has already met the target of recycling 3,500 tonnes of glass waste in May, and that it is in talks to upscale its capabilities to recycle up to 35,000 tonnes of glass waste by processing construction and vehicle glass each year.

Recycling start-up Magorium was founded in 2019 to turn plastic waste into road construction material.

In February 2023, the Land Transport Authority said that it was in discussions with Magorium to trial its bitumen-like product, NewBitumen, on public roads.

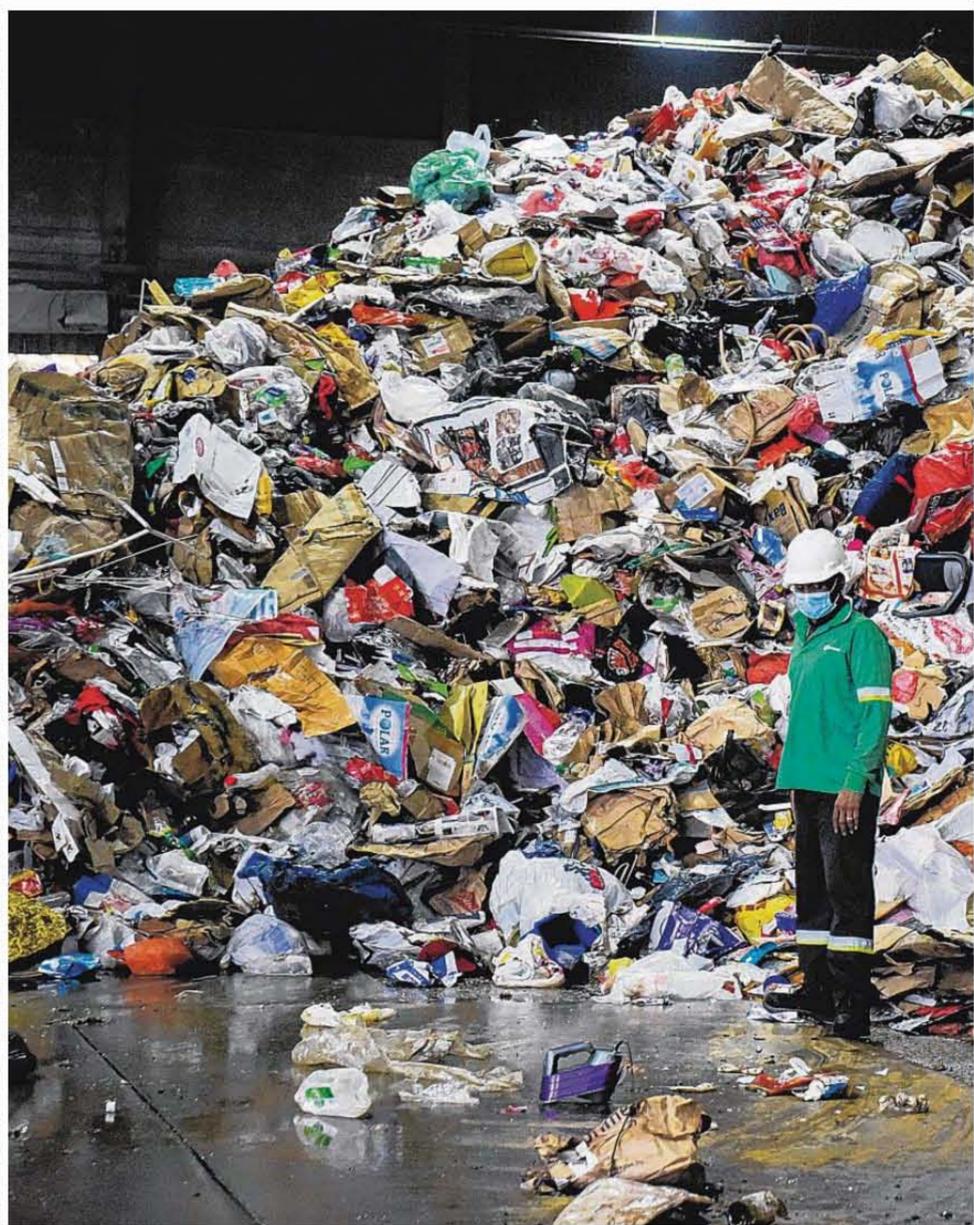
Magorium founder Oh Shu Xian said that the company has paved nine roads – including driveways at the DBS Newton Green building, a condominium in Marymount, and a road near the Sentosa Sensoryscape attraction – and converted close to 100 tonnes of plastic waste into NewBitumen.

## INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

Since the bulk of Singapore's recyclables have to be exported, the local recycling business is also subject to regulations that govern the transboundary movement of waste.

The Basel Convention, enacted in 1998, controls the international movement of hazardous and certain categories of non-hazardous waste such as household waste or residue from the incineration of household waste.

The convention was expanded to include contaminated, mixed



The overall recycling rate in Singapore has declined over the past decade, from 62 per cent in 2013 to 52 per cent in 2023. This falls short of the 70 per cent goal set out in the 2030 Zero Waste Masterplan. ST FILE PHOTO

or non-recyclable plastics in 2021.

Prior to the amendments, exporters were able to ship contaminated mixed and non-recyclable plastics across Singapore's borders without obtaining consent from the countries receiving them.

In 2018, China banned the import of most plastics and other materials.

The country had previously processed nearly half of the world's recyclables for more than two decades.

Prior to the changes, Singapore exported a substantial portion of its recyclables to China for processing. The ban's restrictions made exporting much more difficult, especially for lower-quality or contaminated materials.

More recently, global shipping has been thrown into disarray as

NOT AN EDUCATION ISSUE

**The low and dropping recycling rates are not primarily due to a lack of education and poor practices by consumers... While it is absolutely true that many consumers are putting the wrong things into the blue bins, it's impossible to say that this is the primary issue or that this behaviour is getting worse.**



MS ROBIN RHEUME, a long-time zero-waste advocate.

ships take longer routes to bypass dangerous attacks in the Red Sea.

Rerouting of shipping routes has led to increased operational costs, such as rises in fuel consumption.

Ms Jacqueline Lim, managing director of Tai Hing Group, a local paper recycling company, said current freight costs have increased about three to four times more than usual, which is worse than during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Ms Rheume said: "These developments mean that transport costs will get pushed up. This makes the cost of purchasing waste materials from Singapore even more expensive, reducing demand for our recyclables."

"So we can expect this will have a negative impact on recycling rates."

## What is recycling contamination, and what can we do about it?

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Efforts to recycle household waste in Singapore are hampered by a persistent issue: contamination.

When non-recyclables such as food and liquid waste are thrown into the blue commingled recycling bins for all paper, plastic, glass and metal recyclables, they contaminate actual recyclables, which must then be disposed of by incineration.

So, even though 72 per cent of households here recycled in 2023, the contamination rate of household recyclables in the blue bins has remained at around 40 per cent since 2017.

The Straits Times hears from environmental advocates about the contamination rate of domestic recycling in Singapore, and ways in which this can be reduced.

### WHAT IS CONSIDERED CONTAMINATION?

Contamination does not refer to just food and liquid waste coming into contact with recyclable items.

Other common contaminants in the blue bins include non-recyclable

things like styrofoam and furniture; rubbish like tissue paper; electronic waste that should go to only e-waste collection points; and items meant for reuse, such as clothing, toys and shoes.

The National Environment Agency (NEA) said the top contaminants in 2023 were small electronic appliances (41 per cent), old clothing (41 per cent) and light bulbs (31 per cent).

Contamination can also happen because of "wishcycling" – where items are put into the recycling bin in the hope that they are recyclable, without actually checking if they are.

### WHY IS THE CONTAMINATION RATE STILL AT 40 PER CENT?

Singapore's 40 per cent contamination rate is calculated by dividing the weight of items rejected by material recovery facilities by the weight of domestic recyclables collected.

One reason for this high contamination rate is that the ubiquitous blue bins are often located in open areas along roads or in Housing Board carparks, where people can blithely toss rubbish into them.

Ms Pamela Low, founder of Tingkats, a consultancy that partners businesses to take climate action, said the existing recycling infrastructure "attracts" contamination.

"There's nothing to prevent users from throwing rubbish into recycling bins. Hence, I would suggest making the barrier to recycling higher to filter out those who do

not recycle right, through the use of the tech-enabled material segregated bin," she said.

She added that a large cost attributed to the logistics and sorting of contamination is borne by taxpayers.

Ms Tan Huileng, executive director of the Zero Waste SG non-governmental organisation, said commingled deposits lessen the need for people to sort out their recyclables, which means they may be less mindful about keeping these items clean or cutting down on waste generation in the first place.

She said the issue of contamination is not as prevalent in the industrial sector, as recyclable waste is usually produced in cleaner and separate streams.

Another problem is that the blue bins are exposed to rain, so water can enter the opening and contaminate the recyclables, especially paper materials. NEA said commingled blue recycling bins in HDB estates are not placed at void decks for fire safety reasons.

### WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO REDUCE THE CONTAMINATION RATE OF RECYCLABLES?

"The contamination of recyclables undermines the success of the entire recycling system," said Mr Cheang Kok Chung, executive director of the Singapore Environment Council.

"Not only does it increase the processing costs, which include transporting, sorting, recycling



The contamination rate of household recyclables in blue recycling bins has been around 40 per cent since 2017. These bins are often located in open areas along roads or in HDB carparks, where people toss rubbish into them. ST PHOTO: LIM YAOHUI

and disposing, but it also reduces the quality of recyclables, affecting its market value."

At a materials recovery facility, sorters manually pick out recyclables with market value on conveyor belts from contaminated recyclables, items that are not recyclable, and hazardous waste such as broken glass, used masks and diapers.

Recyclable materials are then compressed into separate bales according to material type and sold to recyclers here or overseas. Everything else is sent for incineration just like regular waste.

This means contaminated recyclables ultimately end up in the Semakau Landfill after they are incinerated, taking up valuable space.

This landfill – built for \$646 million, including its second phase – is expected to be fully filled by 2035, 10 years ahead of its originally projected lifespan of 47 years.

Tingkats' Ms Low said: "Managing waste in a land-scarce country is a huge cost borne by taxpayers."

A low recovery rate at waste sorting facilities also has larger implications for the commercial viability of the recycling industry.

Contamination reduces the quality of recyclable commodities, in turn impacting the quality consistency and the supply to companies that reprocess the materials into usable feedstock for manufacturers to create new products.

Ms Tan of Zero Waste SG said recyclers determine whether the price the recycled materials fetch on the market is worth the cost of obtaining and processing the waste.

Reducing contamination was a key goal in NEA's Recycle Right campaign launched in 2019 to improve awareness on recycling.



#### GENERATING LESS WASTE

Singapore is moving to be more self-sufficient in processing its waste, which could subject recycling companies here to fewer fluctuations in global supply chains. This could, in turn, help lift recycling rates.

But Singapore's recycling infrastructure will take time to improve, given that the development of recycling capabilities and facilities is still in progress.

Tuas Nexus – an integrated waste and water treatment facility that can sort household recyclables and process food waste, on top of treating industrial used water for industrial use – is slated to be completed in phases from 2025 onwards.

Reducing waste should be prioritised instead of relying on recycling, Ms Rheume said.

Already, Singapore's one and only landfill in Semakau is expected to be fully filled by 2035, instead of 2045.

There are already encouraging signs.

NEA statistics showed that in 2023, each person generated 0.88kg of rubbish a day. This is less than the 0.9kg figure in 2022.

Under the Zero Waste Masterplan, Singapore aims to reduce the waste sent to the landfill each day by 30 per cent by 2030, so as to extend the landfill's lifespan beyond 2035.

Said Ms Rheume: "The bigger problem is consumption in the first place."

She added: "Keep finding ways to not use so much single-use material. Avoid single-use glass for sure. Avoid single-use plastic. Don't just substitute one single-use item for another."

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The initiative was part of Singapore's Zero Waste Masterplan launched the same year with the aim of reducing waste sent to the landfill.

#### HOW CAN WE DO OUR PART TO REDUCE CONTAMINATION?

Here are four ways to minimise contamination of recyclables.

##### 1. FOCUS ON RECYCLING A FEW TYPES OF WASTE FIRST

Familiarise yourself with local recycling guidelines, such as NEA's list of recyclable and non-recyclable items, to understand what can and cannot be recycled, said Ms Koh Wei Lin, Plastic Action lead at WWF-Singapore.

It may be daunting to remember an entire list of items. So start with a few recyclable items commonly used in your home, for example, shampoo bottles, tissue boxes and toilet paper rolls.

##### 2. CLEAN AND DRY RECYCLABLES BEFORE DEPOSITING THEM IN RECYCLING BINS

Placing recyclables with food or liquids can contaminate an entire blue recycling bin worth of recyclables.

"Singaporeans should give their recyclables a good rinse to remove any leftover residue and, ideally, leave them to dry," said Ms Cheryl Tan, capability development senior manager of Zero Waste SG.

##### 3. PRACTISE 'DEFENSIVE' RECYCLING

Maximise the chances of recyclables actually being recycled by minimising the risk of their contamination.

Tie up clean and dry recyclables in a plastic bag before depositing them into a recycling bin.

This helps "defend" the items until they reach a materials recovery facility, where the plastic bags are split before the items are sorted.

Ms Robin Rheume, a zero-waste advocate, said a plastic bag can protect clean paper products from contamination and rain.

Make use of unwanted plastic bags that are often thrown out, such as poly mailers your online purchases come in, or the plastic packaging of products like toilet paper rolls or electrical appliances.

##### 4. START A RECYCLING CORNER AT HOME

Set up a recycling corner in a convenient spot that everyone at home has access to.

This not only saves multiple trips to the recycling bin, but is also a visual cue to encourage recycling. You can use the free Bloobox NEA distributed or any large reusable container.

A pragmatic aspect of this is that your household members are – hopefully – less likely to toss food-contaminated items that risk attracting pests to your home, and any washed items have some time to dry there before you deposit them.

Ariel Yu

• For more information on how to recycle right, visit <https://www.cgs.gov.sg/recyclerright/how-to-recycle-right>

• Unsure if an item can be placed in the blue recycling bins? Do a quick search on Clean and Green Singapore's recycling search engine or Recyclopeda.sg

## President Tharman, PM Wong pay tribute to late Vietnamese leader Nguyen Phu Trong

Chin Hui Shan

Vietnamese leader Nguyen Phu Trong was devoted to improving the lives of the Vietnamese people, said President Tharman Shanmugaratnam as he paid tribute to Mr Trong, who died on July 19 at the age of 80.

Mr Trong was a former Vietnamese president, and was general secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam.

In a letter to Vietnam's President To Lam on July 20, Mr Tharman said: "Throughout his lifetime, General Secretary Trong devoted himself to the upliftment of the Vietnamese people. Their greatly improved livelihoods and the country's growing prosperity are testament to his work."

Mr Trong's dedication to stamping out corruption was also a defining element of his leadership, Mr Tharman said.

"He was a steadfast believer in Vietnam's potential, and worked tirelessly to ensure that the Communist Party of Vietnam and government would be in the best position to realise it," Mr Tharman

added.

"My heartfelt thoughts are with the people of Vietnam and General Secretary Trong's family during this difficult time."

Prime Minister Lawrence Wong, who penned a tribute to Mr Trong on Facebook on July 20, wrote to his counterpart, Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh, to express his condolences.

In his letter, he highlighted how Mr Trong's leadership had contributed significantly to Vietnam's rapid economic growth and improvements to the lives of the Vietnamese people.

PM Wong also said Mr Trong was a close friend of Singapore and that his visit to the Republic in September 2012 was a catalyst for Singapore and Vietnam to establish a strategic partnership in 2013.

"Under his steadfast leadership, bilateral relations continued to deepen and broaden, with both sides now working on upgrading our relations to a comprehensive strategic partnership in the near future," he said.

Foreign Minister Vivian Balakrishnan also paid tribute to Mr Trong's able leadership which saw



Vietnamese leader Nguyen Phu Trong died on July 19 at the age of 80. PHOTO: EPA-EFE

Vietnam grow from strength to strength and make remarkable socio-economic strides.

In his letter to chairman Le Hoai Trung of the Commission for External Relations of the Communist Party of Vietnam, Dr Balakrishnan said: "In the last decade, Vietnam has risen not only as an eco-

nomic power in the region, but also a deft diplomatic actor."

Dr Balakrishnan recalled meeting Mr Trong in August 2023 when then Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong visited Vietnam.

Dr Balakrishnan said Singapore's relationship with Vietnam flourished with Mr Trong at its helm, citing as examples both countries establishing a strategic partnership in 2013, celebrating 50 years of diplomatic relations in 2023 and discussing elevating their relations to a comprehensive strategic partnership.

"Singapore and Vietnam share a deep relationship grounded by mutual trust, which is in no small part due to the strong support of General Secretary Trong and the Vietnamese leadership," he added.

Mr Trong died after a 13-year reign as chief of the Vietnamese Communist Party. He had suffered from ill health, including a stroke in April 2019.

Vietnam will hold a two-day state funeral this week for Mr Trong, with two days of national mourning set for July 25 and 26.

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Along with the opening of Tengah's bus interchange on July 21, new bus service 871 was introduced, making travel more convenient for residents. The new bus interchange is managed by Tower Transit and currently has three bus services – 870, 871 and 992. ST PHOTO: NG SOR LUAN

## Tengah residents welcome new bus service and interchange

Samuel Devaraj

Mr Shahrul Khan, 25, was concerned about his commute to work at a vaccination centre in Kaki Bukit in the east from his new flat in Tengah in the west.

But his worries were eased with the introduction of bus service 871 on July 21. He is pleased that the bus will pass Beauty World MRT station – a convenient route for him to get to work when he and his fiancée move into their new home at the end of 2024.

The couple will be living at Parc Clover, situated opposite a new bus interchange that also opened on July 21 in Tengah Boulevard. They travelled to Tengah to check out the new interchange as well as the progress of their new flat.

Mr Khan, who lives in the east, said: "When there was talk that a bus interchange was going to be built here, we looked out for which buses were coming here and where they would stop."

"The fact that a bus is going to Beauty World station, which is on the Downtown Line, makes it quite efficient and easy for me to go to the east via Bugis station."

The new bus interchange in Tengah is managed by Tower Transit and currently has three bus services – 870, 871 and 992.

As part of the changes on July 21, the routes of the two existing buses will cover more ground. Service 992 will ply a longer route that includes Tengah Garden Walk, Ten-

gah Drive and Tengah Boulevard before ending at the interchange, while service 870 will take in Tengah Boulevard.

In October 2023, The Straits Times reported that Tengah residents had complained about the lack of public transport options in the area. The situation improved in January when new bus stops were introduced.

Tengah will have 30,000 Housing Board units when it is completed. As at June 13, 4,640 households – or 67.1 per cent of 6,911 booked units – have collected their keys across six completed precincts, an HDB spokesperson said. The precincts are Plantation Acres, Plantation Grange, Plantation Village, Plantation Grove, Garden Vines and Garden Vale.

The spokesperson added that before the opening of the new interchange, residents of Garden Vines and Garden Vale who started collecting their keys from the end of May were able to use a free temporary shuttle bus service to Bukit Batok Central, provided by HDB since May 27.

With the extension of service 992, this service will end on July 31.

On July 21, some current and future residents visited the new bus interchange to learn more about its facilities.

A 40-year-old man, who declined to be named, said he will be moving into his new flat at Parc Woods, next to the interchange, after the precinct is completed in 2025.

Describing the interchange as nice and clean, the man, who works in corporate communications at a non-profit organisation, said he went to Tengah to explore the transport options as he works in Ang Mo Kio, which is quite far away.

While new bus service 871 does provide connectivity for him to go to work, he said: "I'm keeping my fingers crossed that there will be more transport options in the future."

The new changes benefit not only Tengah residents, but also those living nearby.

A 64-year-old retiree, who wanted to be known only as Mr Toh, said he took the 871 service to the bus interchange from his home in Bukit Batok, where he

**As part of the changes on July 21, the routes of the two existing buses will cover more ground. Service 992 will ply a longer route that includes Tengah Garden Walk, Tengah Drive and Tengah Boulevard before ending at the interchange, while service 870 will take in Tengah Boulevard.**

has been living for over 30 years.

He is happy that he now has a direct route to the recently opened Plantation Plaza in Tengah, as he can shop for groceries at the supermarket there.

He added: "It is also good that the bus passes the wet market near Keming Primary School (in Bukit Batok). Previously, no buses went there."

A Tengah resident, who wanted to be known only as Mr Rama, 54, noted there was some confusion among residents taking service 992 to Bukit Batok interchange from a bus stop near his home.

They were unaware that they must now take the service from across the road due to changes in the route.

Mr Rama, a general manager at a manufacturing company who has been living in Plantation Grange since February, said some connectivity issues remain despite the new service and interchange.

He feels there is a need for a bus service that plies Jurong East as many children living in Tengah go to school there.

Mr Rama said his daughter, who is in Primary 6 at Jurong Primary School, has to take two buses to get home. This can take about 45 minutes despite the school being relatively near.

"It's okay for my daughter because she won't be in the school next year. But some of my neighbours have younger children studying there," he added.

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# WORLD

## China maps out 300 reform measures for next five years

Xi says aim is to raise innovation capacity for high-quality development

Joyce ZK Lim  
China Correspondent  
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Senior Correspondent

BEIJING/SINGAPORE – China has released a major political document outlining some 300 reform measures to be implemented over the next five years, as it transitions towards a more sustainable and innovation-driven growth model amid pressing economic and geopolitical headwinds.

The document, a result of the third plenary meeting of the Communist Party's central committee held from July 15 to 18, outlined economic, social and political reform measures in broad strokes – as is typical of such documents – with policies and implementation to be rolled out later.

A key focus of the swathe of reforms involved numerous measures to support a national drive for “new quality productive forces” – a buzzword coined by President Xi Jinping in 2023 that describes growth driven by industrial upgrading and science and technology innovation.

The over 22,000-word document, released on July 21, called for education system reforms to better nurture talent in strategic industries, improvements in the scheme to attract overseas talent, and a stronger nexus between universities and industries – which would help focus research efforts and commercialise such efforts more seamlessly.

It also outlined roles for both state-owned firms and companies in the private sector in the innovation drive.

State-owned enterprises would have “improved institutional arrangements” to promote original innovation, the document said, while “capable private enterprises” would be supported to take the lead in undertaking major national technological tasks and enjoy more access to national scientific research infrastructure.

In remarks explaining the reforms, Mr Xi said these are needed as China's innovation capacity falls short of that required for high-quality development.

“The industrial system, while large in size and extensive in scope, is not yet strong or sophisticated enough; the over-reliance on



The over 22,000-word document, released on July 21 after the Third Plenum, called for education system reforms to better nurture talent in strategic industries, improvements in the scheme to attract overseas talent, and a stronger nexus between universities and industries. PHOTO: AFP

key and core technologies controlled by others has not been fundamentally changed,” state news agency Xinhua quoted him as saying.

Technology innovation – particularly that which strengthens self-reliance in core technologies – is the key to Mr Xi's long-term vision, said Mr Qiu Mingda, a senior analyst for China and North-east Asia at Eurasia Group.

It serves not just as a sustainable economic growth driver in the long run, but also as an opportunity for China to assume global leadership in frontier technology. Better self-reliance in core technologies would also provide Beijing with a buffer against external competition or decoupling, he told The Straits Times.

The document also outlined more support for entrepreneurs and private businesses – whose confidence in recent years have dampened amid a spate of regulatory crackdowns.

There would be a better environ-

ment for entrepreneurship and improved access to credit for private firms, it said.

China would encourage financing means such as private equity and venture capital, make it more convenient for foreign investors to carry out such investments in the country, and develop “patient capital” – a term referring to investments with a longer horizon, which is typically government-led.

It would also promote foreign investments, including by protecting foreign businesses' rights and interests, and providing them with a level playing field in areas such as access, licences and government procurement.

Another key piece to the document was the deepening of fiscal and tax reforms.

This, in part, would help address financial difficulties faced by local governments, which are responsible for the bulk of public spending but have in recent years had their budgets squeezed by the twin

problems of runaway debt and decreased revenues from land sales.

The document outlined measures to expand localities' sources of tax revenues, including from consumption taxes, increase the proportion of central government spending, and establish a mechanism to monitor local debt.

Professor Bert Hofman from the National University of Singapore's East Asian Institute expects to see a package of detailed reforms in the fiscal system rolled out in the near future.

“The paragraph in the (document) on fiscal is quite long and detailed, and covers tax system, transfer system, and budget management. The basic fiscal system has not changed much since 1994, and it needs a major revamp to meet the goals of China's society today and in future,” said the former World Bank country director for China.

In addition, reforms to support social welfare, from improving social security for gig workers to pro-

moting employment support, were mentioned.

The document also pledged to improve the system of income distribution such that the lower-income group made more, the middle-income group grew, and “overly high incomes” were “reasonably regulated”.

Salaries of executives at state-owned firms would be “reasonably determined and strictly regulated”, it added.

The document called for a “two-way flow of urban and rural factors”, as well as “narrowing the gap” between urban and rural areas and “deepening reform of the land system”, phrasings that Nan yang Technological University economist Tan Kong Yam interpreted as a hint of reforms for the hukou or household registration system.

“This (would be a) major reform that could improve domestic demand and consumer spending to stimulate growth,” he said.

China would also provide more

public housing and allow local governments more autonomy to manage the property market, and “improve the property tax system”, the document said, without giving details.

Besides economic reforms, the document also elaborated on reforms to enhance national security and the military.

“National security is the important bedrock for stable and sustained Chinese-style modernisation,” documents from the Third Plenum reiterated.

Associate Professor Alfred Wu from the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy said: “Although the Chinese leadership said security is needed for economic development, what it is actually doing is to make economic development, specifically technology advancement, serve its security purposes.”

China aims to boost the technological capabilities of its national security sector with reforms to make cyber security more robust and to use artificial intelligence for security surveillance.

The country shall speed up its development of “strategic deterrence forces”, a term commonly used to describe nuclear weapons, and develop new fighting capabilities. It will also deepen reforms in its defence-industrial sector.

Prof Tan noted that amid rising concerns that security considerations have increasingly undermined economic development objectives, the Third Plenum crucially hinted that China's leaders want to strike a more nuanced balance between security and growth.

China must “achieve a healthy interaction between high-quality development and a high level of security,” the document said.

During the Third Plenum, Mr Xi explained that the economic plans are meant to buffer China against hostile foreign powers that are out to “suppress and contain” China.

“To win the strategic initiative in the increasingly fierce international competition, we need to deepen reforms comprehensively, to prevent and defuse the risks and effectively meet challenges with a perfect system and to cultivate new opportunities in the midst of crises,” he said.

The reform document was drafted by a team that Mr Xi led, with Politburo Standing Committee members Wang Huning, Cai Qi and Ding Xuexiang as his deputies.

Prof Hofman noted that curiously, Premier Li Qiang, who is responsible for the economy, was not named by Mr Xi as a member of the drafting team in his remarks.

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COMMENTARY  
The case for Princess Aiko

A woman on the throne would be a tremendous soft power tool at a time when Japan is planning a surge in hard power, writes Ravi Velloor.

str.sg/japan-princess

## Key takeaways from Third Plenum

Tan Dawn Wei  
China Bureau Chief

BEIJING - Beijing released a lengthy document outlining sweeping reforms from governance to the economy to social welfare on July 21, three days after a major meeting of its political elites concluded.

Policies will be rolled out successively in line with this five-year plan, but here are some reforms that President Xi Jinping and his team have promised to complete by 2029 when the People's Republic of China marks the 80th anniversary of its founding.

### STATE-OWNED ENTERPRISE REFORMS

Improve the management and supervision of state-owned enterprises, so that they focus on their core functions in being a pillar supporting the country's security, economy and public services.

### PROMOTE PRIVATE ECONOMY

Introduce legislation to boost the private economy, remove market access barriers and to allow private enterprises to participate in major national projects. Support companies that can take the lead in making technological breakthroughs.

### BOOST INNOVATION

Promote "revolutionary technological breakthroughs" through industrial transformation and policies to develop strategic industries such as artificial intelligence, aerospace, new energy, new materials, biomedicine and quantum technology. Encourage venture capital and private equity funds to these sectors.

### TALENT ATTRACTION

Implement more proactive and open talent-attraction policies while cultivating scientists, engineers and innovators with a focus on scientific research. Explore an immigration policy to draw tech talents.

### FOREIGN INVESTMENT

Protect the rights of foreign investors and expand the catalogue of industries accessible to foreign investment, such as telecommunications, education and healthcare. Lift restrictions on foreign investment access in the manufacturing sector.

### FISCAL AND TAX SYSTEM REFORM

Improve the budget system and the tax system, including expanding local tax sources and giving greater authority to local tax management.

### HOUSING

Speed up the establishment of a housing system that promotes both renting and purchasing, and boost the construction and supply of affordable housing. Empower city governments to regulate the property market and to formulate policies based on local conditions.

### INCOME DISTRIBUTION

Improve the income distribution system and wealth accumulation mechanism.

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## Manila says deal reached with Beijing on resupply missions to beached ship

MANILA - The Philippines and China have "reached an understanding on the provisional arrangement" for resupply missions to a beached naval ship in the South China Sea, Manila's Foreign Ministry said in a statement on July 21.

The ministry did not provide details on the arrangement for the Philippines' resupply missions to the Sierra Madre on the Second Thomas Shoal.

But it said this followed "frank and constructive discussions" between the two sides at the Bilateral Consultation Mechanism earlier in July.

"Both sides continue to recognise the need to de-escalate the situation in the South China Sea and manage differences through dialogue and consultation, and agree that the agreement will not prejudice each other's positions in the South China Sea," the ministry said.

The Chinese Embassy in Manila did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Manila deliberately beached the Philippine naval ship in 1999 to re-

inforce its claims over disputed waters around the shoal, and it has since maintained a small contingent of sailors there.

Philippine security officials also said on July 21 that it would carry out the resupply missions on its own despite an offer from the United States to help.

White House National Security

**Tensions in the disputed waterway have boiled over into violence in the past year, with a Filipino soldier losing a finger in June in a clash that Manila described as "intentional high-speed ramming" by the China Coast Guard.**

Adviser Jake Sullivan said on July 19 that the US "will do what is necessary" to ensure its treaty ally can resupply the Sierra Madre on the Second Thomas Shoal.

Mr Sullivan's Filipino counterpart Eduardo Ano said the resupply would remain "a pure Philippine operation".

"There is no need at this time for any direct involvement of US forces in (the resupply) mission," Mr Ano said in a statement.

Tensions in the disputed waterway have boiled over into violence in the past year, with a Filipino soldier losing a finger in June in a clash that Manila described as "intentional high-speed ramming" by the China Coast Guard.

The Philippine military's spokesperson said in a separate statement on July 21 that the country "will exhaust all means before seeking foreign intervention" in its resupply missions.

Manila and Washington are bound by the 1951 Mutual Defence Treaty, a pact that can be invoked in case of an armed attack against Philippine forces, public vessels or aircraft in the South China Sea.

US officials, including President Joe Biden, have affirmed its "iron-clad" commitment to aid the Philippines.

China claims nearly all of the South China Sea, despite overlapping maritime claims of the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia and Brunei. REUTERS

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## Bangladesh court pares back govt job quotas after clashes

DHAKA – Bangladesh's top court on July 21 pared back, but fell short of public demands to abolish, contentious civil service hiring rules that sparked nationwide clashes between the police and university students that have killed at least 151 people.

What began as a protest against politicised admission quotas for sought-after government jobs snowballed into some of the worst unrest of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's tenure.

Soldiers are patrolling cities across Bangladesh after riot police failed to restore order, while a nationwide internet blackout since July 18 has drastically restricted the flow of information to the outside world.

The Supreme Court was due to decide in August on the legality of the recently reintroduced scheme that reserves more than half of government jobs for select applicants, but brought forward its verdict as the civil strife intensified.

It decided that a lower bench's order in June to reintroduce the scheme was "illegal", Bangladeshi Attorney-General A.M. Amin Ud-din said.

Mr Shah Monjurul Hoque, a lawyer involved in the case, said the court also asked protesting students "to return to class" after issuing its verdict.

The ruling curtailed the number of reserved jobs, from 56 per cent of all positions to 7 per cent, but fell short of meeting protester demands.

It reserved 5 per cent of all government jobs for the children of "freedom fighters" from Bangladesh's 1971 liberation war against Pakistan, down from 30 per cent.

One per cent was reserved for tribal communities, and another 1 per cent for people with disabilities or who identify as a third gender under Bangladeshi law.

The remaining 93 per cent of positions would be decided on merit, the court ruled.

The "freedom fighter" category in particular is a point of resentment for young graduates, with critics saying it is used to stack public jobs with loyalists to Ms Hasina's ruling Awami League.

Students had called for the complete abolition of that category, along with other quotas for women and specific districts of the country.

"We welcome the Supreme Court verdict," a spokesman for Students Against Discrimination, the main group responsible for organising the protests, said, on condition of anonymity. "But we won't call off our protests until the government issues an order reflecting our demands." AFP

## SM Lee, Malaysian PM Anwar meet over lunch



Senior Minister Lee Hsien Loong and Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim, accompanied by their spouses, Mrs Lee and Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, met over lunch at the latter's official residence, the Seri Perdana in Putrajaya, on July 21. SM Lee was on the third day of his four-day visit to Malaysia to reciprocate Sultan Ibrahim Iskandar's invitation to attend his installation ceremony as the 17th King of Malaysia. Later in the evening, SM Lee delivered a speech on Singapore-Malaysia relations at the Kuala Lumpur Business Club. PHOTO: PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE

# Israel strikes vital port in Yemen after Houthis' drone attack on Tel Aviv

## Defence minister says it is also a warning to other Iran-backed armed groups

HODEIDA, Yemen – Israeli warplanes killed three people in the Houthi-controlled Yemeni port of Hodeida, the Iran-backed rebels said on July 21 after the group's deadly drone attack on Tel Aviv.

The strikes on the vital port, which triggered a raging fire and plumes of black smoke, are the first claimed by Israel in the Arabian peninsula's poorest country, about 2,000km away, analysts said.

"The blood of Israeli citizens has a price," Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant said, adding that more operations against the Houthis would follow "if they dare to attack us".

Mr Gallant said the Hodeida strikes were also a warning to other Iran-backed armed groups around the Middle East that have claimed attacks on Israel during the Gaza war.

"The fire that is currently burning in Hodeida is seen across the Middle East and the significance is clear," he said.

The Israeli strikes killed three people and wounded 87, the rebel-run Health Ministry said in a statement carried by Houthi media.

The ministry said earlier that most of the wounded had severe burns.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu warned that "anyone who harms us will pay a very heavy price", after the drone attack on Tel Aviv on July 19 killed an Israeli civilian.

But Houthi politburo member Mohammed al-Bukhaiti swiftly threatened to "meet escalation with escalation" in a social media post.

Israel's military said on July 21 that it intercepted a missile fired from Yemen, the latest in a series of Houthi weapons downed off the Red Sea resort town of Eilat in recent months.

Military spokesman Daniel Hagari on July 20 accused the Houthis of using Hodeida "as a main supply route for the transfer of Iranian weapons", such as the drone that hit Tel Aviv.

In a statement on social media, top Houthi official Mohammed Abdulsalam reported "brutal Israel aggression against Yemen".

The attack targeted "fuel storage facilities and a power plant" in Hodeida "to pressure Yemen to stop supporting" Palestinians in the Gaza war, he said.



Smoke rising from a fire following an Israeli air strike in the Houthi-controlled Yemeni port of Hodeida on July 20. Millions of Yemenis are dependent on aid supplied through the port. PHOTO: REUTERS



Air strikes were launched against the Houthi-controlled port city of Hodeida in Yemen on July 20.

STRAITS TIMES GRAPHICS

An AFP correspondent in Hodeida reported hearing several large explosions and seeing smoke over the port.

Footage aired by the rebels' Al-Masirah television, which AFP could not independently verify, showed casualties being treated in hospital, many of them bandaged and lying on stretchers in packed rooms.

A man interviewed by the broadcaster said many of the wounded were port employees.

"The city is dark, people are on the streets, petrol stations are closed and seeing long queues,"

said a Hodeida resident, who spoke on condition of anonymity, citing safety concerns.

The Oil Ministry sought to reassure Yemenis there were "large and sufficient amounts of oil reserves" in a statement published by the Houthi-run Saba news agency.

Maritime security firm Ambrey said it observed four merchant vessels in the port at the time of the air strike and another eight in the anchorage.

"No damage to merchant vessels has been reported at this time," it said.

The US, which, along with Britain, has carried out several rounds of air strikes against the Houthis in an attempt to put an end to their attacks on shipping in the Red Sea, said it played no part in the July 20 strikes.

"The United States was not involved in today's strikes in Yemen, and we did not coordinate or assist Israel with the strikes," a National Security Council spokesman said. Separately, the US Central Command said on July 20 that it had "successfully destroyed" a Houthi drone during the past 24 hours over the Red Sea.

Saudi Arabia distanced itself from the Yemen strikes, with a Defence Ministry spokesman saying that Riyadh had "no links to or involvement in targeting Hodeida". "The kingdom will not allow its airspace to be infiltrated by any

party," said Saudi Brigadier-General Turki al-Maliki.

Hodeida port, a vital entry point for imports and international aid for rebel-held areas of Yemen, had remained largely untouched through the decade-long war between the Houthis and the internationally recognised government propped up by neighbouring Saudi Arabia.

The Houthi control swathes of Yemen, including much of its Red Sea coast, and the war has left millions of Yemenis dependent on aid supplied through the port.

"Traders now fear that this will exacerbate the already critical food security and humanitarian situation in northern Yemen, as the majority of trade flows through this port," said Mr Mohammed Al-basha, senior Middle East analyst for the US-based Navanti Group.

UN chief Antonio Guterres had appealed for "maximum restraint" after the Tel Aviv drone strike and urged all parties to avoid "further escalation in the region".

The Houthis' Lebanese ally, Hezbollah, warned that the Israeli strikes on Hodeida marked a dangerous turn nine months into the Gaza war.

"The foolish step taken by the Zionist enemy heralds a new, dangerous phase," said the group, which has exchanged nearly daily fire with the Israeli army throughout the war. AFP

## Netanyahu to speak to US Congress amid Gaza tensions

JERUSALEM – Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is set to deliver a landmark speech to the US Congress on July 24 as he fights off intense pressure to quickly cut a Gaza war ceasefire deal with Hamas.

Mr Netanyahu, Israel's longest-serving premier, will become the first foreign leader to address a joint meeting of the two chambers four times – pulling ahead of Britain's Winston Churchill on three.

But analysts say the Gaza war since the Oct 7 Hamas attacks has created worrying tensions between Israel and the US, its main military and diplomatic backer.

Washington fears a backlash from the mounting civilian toll in the Gaza Strip, while protests in Israel by families of hostages taken by Hamas are also causing headaches for Mr Netanyahu.

US President Joe Biden and some Israeli ministers say a deal negotiated through Qatari, Egyptian and US mediators is possible.

A plan outlined in May proposed a six-week ceasefire where some Israeli hostages would be swapped for Palestinians held in Israeli prisons.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken on July 19 said negotiators were "inside the 10-yard line and driving towards the goal line".

Hamas has accused Mr Netanyahu of seeking to block a deal, however, and Mr Blinken said he wants to "bring the agreement over the finish line" when Mr Netanyahu is in Washington.

Mr Netanyahu will meet Mr Biden on July 23, according to a statement issued by his office on July 21.

Israel has intensified its air strikes on Gaza in recent weeks, and Mr Netanyahu has insisted that only piling on military pressure can free the hostages and beat Hamas.

"This double pressure is not delaying the deal – it is advancing it," he told troops in Gaza on July 18.

The Oct 7 attack on Israel resulted in the deaths of 1,195 people, mostly civilians, according to an AFP tally based on Israeli figures.

Hamas militants also seized 251 hostages, 116 of whom are still in Gaza, including 42 the Israeli military says are dead.

Israel's retaliatory campaign has killed at least 38,919 people in Gaza, also mostly civilians, according to data from the Health Ministry in the Hamas-ruled territory.

Publicly, Mr Biden has voiced strong support for Israel. But he expressed concern over an offensive on the southern city of Rafah in May and for a while suspended deliveries of heavy bombs to Israel. Supplies of 907kg bombs re-



Israeli Premier Benjamin Netanyahu is battling intense pressure to quickly cut a Gaza war ceasefire deal.

main embargoed.

"Never before has the atmosphere been so fraught," said Dr Steven Cook, a Council on Foreign Relations Middle East specialist.

"There is clearly tension in the relationship, especially between the White House and the Israeli Prime Minister," Dr Cook said.

While US Republicans pressed to invite Mr Netanyahu to address Congress, he has lost support among Democrats.

One Jewish senator, Democrat Brian Schatz of Hawaii, announced he would boycott the July 24 speech, saying he would not listen to "political rhetoric that will do nothing to bring peace in the region".

Mr Netanyahu said after being invited to Congress again that he would "present the truth about our just war against those who seek to destroy us".

Dr Cook said the Israeli leader has two aims for his Washington trip.

First, to show that he has not "undermined" Israel's relations with the US.

Second, Mr Netanyahu also "will endeavour to shift the conversation away from the conflict in Gaza towards the threat that Iran and its proxies pose" to Israel and the US, Dr Cook said.

Much attention will be focused on whether Mr Netanyahu meets former US president Donald Trump or a figure close to the Republican presidential candidate.

Despite the tensions, the US has defended Israeli interests, while taking a key role in mediation efforts, and the military relationship remains strong, according to officials.

Washington's support could prove crucial as Israel faces increasing international criticism over the growing humanitarian toll from nearly 300 days of war.

The International Criminal Court's (ICC) prosecutor in May asked judges to issue arrest warrants for Mr Netanyahu and Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant. Warrants for three Hamas leaders have also been requested.

The Republican majority in the House of Representatives has called for sanctions against the ICC.

The International Court of Justice found Israel's occupation of Palestinian territories illegal on July 19 and in February called for the country to prevent any acts of genocide in its Gaza offensive. AFP

Volunteers removing debris at Okhmatdyt, the biggest children's hospital in Ukraine, on July 12 after a Russian strike. The July 8 attack killed two people and damaged large portions of the surrounding buildings of the clinic treating about 600 patients. PHOTO: AFP



# Russia's war efforts boosted by key arms parts made in West

## Moscow using alternative supply chains to import commercial products for military use

WARSAW – The Kh-101 cruise missile that struck a children's hospital in Kyiv in early July perfectly illustrates the ability of the Russian defence industry to overcome Western efforts to cut its supply of key components.

The attack on July 8, which killed two people and damaged large portions of the surrounding buildings of the clinic treating about 600 patients, provoked international outrage.

Yet, "just since the beginning of this week, Russia has used more than 700 guided aerial bombs, more than 170 attack drones of various types and almost 80 missiles against Ukraine", said Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky.

Long gone are the days when Western military officials would report that Russian military production capacity was insufficient to sustain the war in Ukraine, or when a Ukrainian official said Russian strikes would soon stop because of a lack of ammunition.

The Financial Times reported, without naming its sources, that Russia is now producing eight times as many Kh-101s as before its 2022 invasion of Ukraine.

Experts consulted by AFP would not confirm the figures, but all underscored Russia's increased capacity to build more of these crucial cruise missiles.

"I would say the real number might be even higher," said Mr Vla-

dislav Inozemtsev, a Russian economist who lives in exile. He estimates that Russia will make 700 to 750 missiles in 2024, and that production could reach 1,000 units in 2025.

"In April 2024, Ukrainian sources reported monthly production of 40 Kh-101 missiles", much higher than the 56 produced over the whole of 2021, said a Western source in the arms sector.

However, the operating systems of these missiles require many components that are made in countries that support Kyiv and have imposed sanctions on Russia.

US-made AMD memory cards, Texas Instruments micro-circuits and Dutch-made Nexperia buffer chips have all been found in the debris of Kh-101 strikes, according to war-sanctions.gur.gov.ua.

Dr Pavel Luzin, a specialist in Russian defence policies, said:

"Not all the electronic components inside of Russian missiles are military-grade. Many of them, if not most, are consumer-grade or industrial-grade and still available for Russia on the global market.

"Moreover, there was a storage of electronic components in Russia made before 2022."

With the help of friendly countries, Russia has set up trading companies and "shows no signs of vulnerability in its supply chains", said an industrial source.

Mr Inozemtsev said: "First, there are the Chinese who supply the Russians with many kinds of dual-use products which are successfully used by the military industry."

The industrial source added: "The main foreign components found on the Kh-101 wrecks today are American or Taiwanese commercially available processors, purchased by Russian trade missions in embassies abroad or through shell companies."

Some countries have become important hubs.

In a report published in late 2023, British research institute Rusi said that "faced with losing access to essential supply lines, Russia adapted, rerouting trade flows through friendly jurisdictions and bordering countries, often using complex front-company networks to evade scrutiny".

"For example, in 2022, Armenia's micro-electronics imports from the US and EU increased by over 500 and 200 per cent, respectively, with most of these later re-exported to Russia."

Rusi also noted that the value of Kazakhstan's micro-electronics exports to Russia increased from around US\$250,000 (S\$336,000) in 2021, to more than US\$18 million in 2022.

But sometimes, these sales pass directly through Western countries, Rusi said, such as purchases by Russian company Compel JSC from Germany.

On July 17, a Stuttgart court sentenced a 59-year-old Russian-German man to almost seven years in prison for having supplied 120,000 components and other pieces of equipment to Russia between January 2020 and May 2023.

Mr Inozemtsev said: "There is little that can be done to stop these flows. The only efficient thing would be to consider sanctions against Western semiconductor producers to force them to better vet their clients. But such measures would be too painful for Western companies."

**Russian economist Vladislav Inozemtsev said: "First, there are the Chinese who supply the Russians with many kinds of dual-use products which are successfully used by the military industry." An industrial source added: "The main foreign components found on the Kh-101 wrecks today are American or Taiwanese commercially available processors, purchased by Russian trade missions in embassies abroad or through shell companies."**

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# S. Korea beats rivals in bid to build Czech nuclear reactors

Win paves way for Korean companies to score string of similar deals across Europe

SEOUL – South Korea's long-held ambition of exporting its nuclear power technology has received a major boost, potentially setting it up to be the reactor provider of choice to several countries.

State-owned Korea Hydro & Nuclear Power Co was chosen to build two multibillion-dollar reactors in the Czech Republic, beating out rivals and paving the way for Korean companies to potentially score a string of deals across Europe.

"Now, a bridgehead has been established for us to export nuclear plants to Europe," South Korea's Trade, Industry and Energy Minister Ahn Duk-geun declared after the win.

The project, once finalised, could put the Asian nation in pole position to build reactors in Europe, which is once again warming to nuclear energy to wean itself off expensive fossil fuels and hit ambi-

tionous pollution-reduction targets. Thanks to their cost competitiveness and an export strategy honed over decades, the Koreans are edging out rivals mired in budget overruns and delays or geopolitical and trade tensions.

Korea Hydro & Nuclear Power is conducting a feasibility study for a nuclear plant in the Netherlands, while Sweden's Vattenfall is considering using Korean technology. The country is also in talks to supply reactors to Britain, Poland and Slovenia, putting it on track to achieve the Korean government's pledge to export 10 units by 2030.

Its rise will not be without contest. US President Joe Biden earlier this month signed a Bill that promises to revive the US' nuclear industry, and even facilitate the export of technology. Westinghouse Electric Co has filed a lawsuit claiming South Korea is using its intellectual property and should be barred from sharing it. The US company warned that it may file legal challenges over the Czech deal.

Much of South Korea's ascent is due to its ability to deliver reactors as all-inclusive packages – from

equipment, construction and fuel supply to commissioning, maintenance and even financing – while largely meeting deadlines and containing costs.

"A nuclear plant is so much more than a reactor," said Mr Mark Nelson, managing director at Radiant Energy Group, a consultancy.

"It is civil engineering, it is blueprints, crane operators. And Korea has that," he said. "They can offer the most competitive package."

South Korea was picked to build the reactors in the Czech Republic for 400 billion koruna (\$23.2 billion). By contrast, Electricite de France said earlier in 2024 that two reactors at Hinkley Point in Britain would cost as much as £35 billion (\$60.9 billion) in 2015 terms, and take years longer than planned.

Seoul's nuclear export strategy has been decades in the making. Back in 1987, its state-run utility agreed to a technology transfer with US-based Combustion Engineering, then developed the design to create its own home-grown reactor. Since then, it has built 28 reactors domestically, with four more scheduled to operate before 2040.

Its first reactor export, to the United Arab Emirates, was announced in 2009. The Arab world's first commercial nuclear facility grappled with delays and came in 25 per cent over budget, but that did not stop South Korea's export push.

"Korea has a full domestic, expe-

**Seoul's nuclear export strategy has been decades in the making. Back in 1987, its state-run utility agreed to a technology transfer with US-based Combustion Engineering, then developed the design to create its own home-grown reactor. Since then, it has built 28 reactors domestically, with four more scheduled to operate before 2040.**

rienced, supply chain," said Mr Jeremy Gordon, an independent nuclear energy consultant. "And their industry has the assurance of a government that is committed to nuclear, strategically, for energy security, economic and climate reasons, which gives the whole Korean nuclear ecosystem the confidence to invest."

This means the Asian nation is well placed to scoop up opportunities as the world returns to atomic energy after it was shunned for decades due to the worst nuclear accident in history at Chernobyl. Russia's invasion of Ukraine has served as a wake-up call for European leaders to reduce dependence on imported gas, and 25 countries, including more than a dozen in Europe, have set a goal to triple global capacity by 2050.

But it is a small pool of reactor builders out there. Western companies struggle to deliver on time and on budget. And European governments are reluctant to sign off on projects with state-owned giants from Russia and China – currently dominant in global reactor construction – due to security concerns as nuclear plants are particularly sensitive pieces of infrastructure.

"If South Korea manages the construction of the reactors in the Czech Republic at least reasonably well, it wouldn't surprise me if they go on to sell more to other countries," said Mr Matt Bowen, a senior researcher at the Centre on Global Energy Policy at Columbia University. "And then, yes, South Korea would become more important to world nuclear energy supply."

BLOOMBERG

# Seoul steps up broadcasts in response to North's trash balloons

SEOUL – North Korea on July 21 floated balloons carrying trash towards South Korea, South Korea's military said, declaring it would respond with "full-scale" loudspeaker broadcasts.

The South Korean military said the North's actions raising tensions near the heavily armed border could have fatal consequences, adding that the North Korean regime would be solely responsible, reported Reuters.

"As we warned several times, the military will carry out loudspeaker broadcasts in full scale and on all

fronts starting (from) 1pm (local time) today," the South's Joint Chiefs of Staff said, calling the North's launch of balloons vulgar and shameful.

The two Koreas have engaged in a tit-for-tat balloon campaign, with the North sending nearly 2,000 trash-filled balloons southwards since May, saying it is retaliation for propaganda balloons launched by South Korean activists.

"The North is launching another batch of rubbish-carrying balloons," the Joint Chiefs of Staff said

in a statement on July 21, noting that they were flying towards the northern part of Gyeonggi.

"Please report them to the military or police and refrain from direct contact with the objects."

The latest batch of balloons comes three days after Seoul announced it had resumed loudspeaker propaganda broadcasts directed at North Korea.

Seoul warned that it will broaden the scope of such broadcasts if the North persists in sending the trash-carrying balloons, describing them as "low-class actions".

"We can increase the number of broadcast speakers in the frontline areas if the North continues its provocations," a military official told Yonhap news agency on July 20.

Blaring propaganda, world news and K-pop music, South Korea's broadcasts are considered by military officials and activists as an effective form of psychological warfare.

The North's balloons have disrupted more than 100 flights carrying 10,000 passengers, a South Korean lawmaker said earlier in July.

In response to the North's actions, Seoul has fully suspended a tension-reducing military agreement and announced in June that it was resuming propaganda broadcasts along the border.

In addition to anti-Kim Jong Un leaflets sent from the South, isolated North Korea is extremely sensitive about its people gaining access to South Korean pop culture products, with a recent South Korean government report pointing to a 2022 case where a man was executed for possession of content from the South.

The two Koreas remain technically at war because the 1950 to 1953 conflict ended in an armistice, not a peace treaty.

The propaganda broadcasts – a tactic which dates back to the Korean War – infuriate Pyongyang, which previously threatened artillery strikes against Seoul's loudspeaker units.

Prior to the latest propaganda broadcasts, Seoul recently resumed live-fire drills on border islands and near the demilitarised zone that divides the Korean peninsula. AFP, REUTERS

# Yoon's wife questioned over Dior bag, stock trading case

SEOUL – Prosecutors questioned Ms Kim Keon-hee, wife of President Yoon Suk-yeol, face to face for the first time over allegations that she received a Christian Dior handbag and other luxury gifts in exchange for favours, and her supposed involvement in a stock manipulation case, the South Korean prosecution confirmed on July 21.

This marks the first time in history that the wife of a sitting president has been summoned for a prosecution investigation.

The Seoul Central District Prosecutors Office announced on July 21 that Ms Kim was questioned for around 12 hours, from 1.30pm on July 20 to 1.20am on July 21, at an undisclosed government building behind closed doors "for security and safety reasons".

Ms Kim's legal representative, lawyer Choi Ji-woo, stated on July 21 that Ms Kim "diligently cooperated with the investigation and truthfully testified to all the facts". He added that she had fully explained her position.

The scandal centres on accusations that Ms Kim illegally received a Dior handbag worth about 3 million won (\$2,900) and other expensive gifts from Korean-American pastor Choi Jae-young in September 2022, allegedly in exchange for favours.

Ms Kim's close aide, surnamed Yoo, conceded during questioning in early July that the First Lady did receive the handbag but claimed she had ordered that it be returned to the pastor the same day.

However, Ms Yoo said she forgot to return it because of other tasks, and the handbag has since remained unused and stored by the presidential office, emphasising that there was no intent to use the bag.

During the questioning, prose-



South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol and his wife Kim Keon-hee arriving in Honolulu, Hawaii, on July 8. Ms Kim was questioned by prosecutors in Seoul for around 12 hours – this marks the first time in history that the wife of a sitting president has been summoned for a prosecution investigation. PHOTO: EPA-EFE

cutors mainly focused on how the bag was received, and any solicitations made by Pastor Choi.

South Korea's local media reports suggested that the prosecutors mainly examined whether receiving the Dior handbag from Pastor Choi constituted a violation of the Improper Solicitation and Graft Act.

The luxury handbag investigation began in December 2023 when Mr Baek Eun-jong, head of the media outlet Voice of Seoul, accused Ms Kim of violating the act.

In November 2023, Voice of Seoul, a liberal YouTube-based news channel, published a video showing Pastor Choi handing over a Dior handbag to Ms Kim during their September 2022 meeting in Seoul.

The pastor secretly filmed the video with a camera disguised as a watch, and the bag was reportedly provided by Voice of Seoul.

Ms Kim has also been accused of manipulating the stock prices of Deutsch Motors, a BMW dealer, from 2009 to 2012.

She allegedly conspired with Deutsch Motors chairman Kwon Oh-soo and trader Lee Jong-ho, former CEO of Black Pearl Invest and known as the "control tower" of the scheme.

Prosecutors focused on the circumstances and extent of her involvement in the Deutsch Motors stock transactions during the questioning, according to multiple local reports.

This included questions about her role as a main investor, her ties with the chief conspirators and

her account usage.

The investigation into Deutsch Motors began in April 2020 after Mr Choe Kang-wook, a former National Assembly lawmaker, filed a complaint against Ms Kim for alleged violations of the Capital Market Act.

Ms Kim is the third First Lady in South Korean history to face questioning.

Ms Lee Soon-ja, wife of authoritarian leader Chun Doo-hwan, was questioned in 2004 regarding Chun's slush fund case.

Ms Kwon Yang-sook, wife of former president Roh Moo-hyun, was investigated in 2009 in connection with an alleged graft scandal involving her family. However, both Ms Lee and Ms Kwon were questioned as witnesses. THE KOREA HERALD/ASIA NEWS NETWORK

# Poland urges EU to promote US ties to counter Russia

BRUSSELS – Poland wants the European Union to launch a campaign in the US to raise awareness with the American public about the importance of the joint relationship.

In a paper prepared for an EU foreign ministers' meeting on July 22, Poland calls for positive action ahead of the US presidential election on Nov 5 to counter what it describes as Russian "disinformation" aimed at sowing division between the EU and Washington.

"At this critical moment in history, it is imperative that we collectively take swift and robust action to strengthen the transatlantic relations through strategic communication about the EU in the US," the paper, seen by Reuters, says.

It adds: "This means scaling up our de-bunking and, even more importantly, pre-bunking of Russian disinformation and launching campaigns which set the record straight about where Europe stands today and about the benefits of diplomacy, collective security and open society."

The Kremlin has said it would not meddle in the November US election. It has also dismissed US allegations that it orchestrated campaigns to sway the 2016 and 2020 US presidential elections.

Poland's paper said Russian state media and online accounts tied to the Kremlin were spreading and amplifying misleading content about US immigration and border security, misstating the impact of immigration, highlighting stories about crimes committed by immigrants, and warning of dire consequences if the US does not crack down at its border with Mexico.

"We should expect much more is to come, as eroding support for Ukraine remains Russia's top priority. We need to remind the American public, especially the younger generation, of the deliverables our decades-long partnership has brought to the US economy," the paper said.

Poland has said it has been the target of numerous Russian attempts at destabilisation and election interference because of its role in supplying military aid to its neighbour Ukraine, allegations Russia has dismissed.

"We should raise awareness among the American public about the size of European aid to Ukraine and how that effort helps save Ukrainian lives," the Polish paper said, in reference to claims by US presidential candidate Donald Trump that European aid to Ukraine was much smaller than that of the US.

Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022, the EU has provided €107 billion (\$157 billion) to Ukraine and has agreed on a further €50 billion for the next four years.

The US Council on Foreign Relations estimates US support for Ukraine at US\$107 billion (\$144 billion). REUTERS

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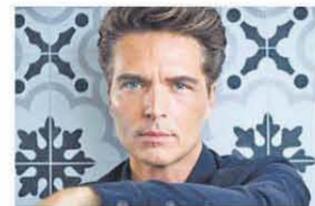


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The name of ST's Telegram bot is similar to the title of a 1992 American musical drama film produced by Walt Disney Pictures.

# SINGAPORE

## Dedicated centre to serve needs of lower-income transnational families

Households where one spouse is S'porean or a PR can now tap legal, social assistance

**Theresa Tan**  
Senior Social Affairs  
Correspondent

Madam R, an Indonesian woman in her 60s, has been the sole caregiver of her three Singaporean grandchildren since they were young.

Her Singaporean son-in-law was jailed and is estranged from his children, while her daughter had been deported back to Indonesia.

Madam R began to worry about her ability to look after her grandchildren after she had a fall in 2022 and the back pain affected her mobility, said Ms Kanak Muchhal, manager of South Central Community Family Service Centre's (FSC) The Inclusive Fund.

Madam R also fretted about her medical bills.

As a foreigner, she does not get the subsidies Singaporeans and

permanent residents (PRs) get at public hospitals here. Thankfully, the fund paid for her medical treatment in Batam.

It also linked her up to the Mount Alvernia Hospital Community Outreach Team, which has a programme that supports needy transnational spouses by providing them with heavily subsidised primary care at the Mount Alvernia Outreach Medical and Dental Clinics, among the forms of healthcare aid given.

In Singapore, transnational families often comprise a Singaporean man with his foreign wife and their children.

Madam R went through a procedure to treat the fracture in her vertebrae, among the host of diagnostic tests and consultations she had at Mount Alvernia, a not-for-profit hospital.

The total cost of treatment came up to about \$26,000, said the hos-

pital's assistant director of community outreach Anthea Neo, but the hospital and the doctors waived their fees.

Meanwhile, Pro Bono SG, a charity which provides pro bono legal aid to the needy, is helping the grandmother to apply for a long-term visit pass so she can stay in Singapore for a longer period of time.

Ms Muchhal said: "Madam R shared that she is truly grateful and happy for the help she has received. It has significantly reduced her worries and struggles."

The grandmother is among those supported by Pro Bono SG and South Central Community FSC's The Inclusive Fund. The fund was set up in 2021 to help lower-income transnational families.

Both non-profit organisations took a step further in 2024 by setting up the Transnational Family Care Centre, the first social service centre in Singapore dedicated to serving the needs of lower-income transnational families.

The centre, which had its official launch on July 15, offers a range of

**In 2023, 26.2 per cent of all citizen marriages involved a Singaporean and a non-resident, or someone who is not a Singaporean nor PR. This is up from 23.7 per cent in 2022, but the 2023 figure is lower than in some of the years before the Covid-19 pandemic struck.**

legal and social assistance for these families, which are households with at least one Singaporean or PR.

Representatives from Pro Bono SG and South Central Community FSC said the new centre would enable them to provide more integrated care for these vulnerable families.

Transnational families face problems in almost every aspect of life, from health problems and

marital woes to education and employment challenges.

The transnational spouse often seeks help for divorce and maintenance issues and immigration matters, they added.

Ms Sadhana Rai, head of representation at Pro Bono SG, said, referring to the foreign family member: "If we don't help them, they are stuck in a cycle of systemic challenges, from healthcare to accommodation, as they don't get the same financial support Singaporeans get."

Ms Rai said that the foreign family member does not qualify for pro bono help under the national legal aid schemes, such as from the Legal Aid Bureau, so Pro Bono SG has a Family Justice Support Scheme which provides pro bono legal aid to lower-income foreign spouses with Singaporean children.

Ms Muchhal said The Inclusive Fund was started to bridge gaps in services for transnational families and it is funded by private donors and foundations.

Among the range of help given,

the fund supports these families' educational and employment needs, provides them with medical care and helps them with their immigration issues.

For example, some of the foreign wives have children from their previous marriages who are now living with them in Singapore. But if the child is a foreigner, they have to pay foreigners' rates, and the family cannot afford the school fees.

So far, the fund has supported 28 families, seven of which have also received legal help from Pro Bono SG.

The new centre comes as the proportion of citizen marriages involving a Singaporean and a non-resident has increased, as data released on July 15 by the Ministry of Social and Family Development in its Family Trends report showed.

In 2023, 26.2 per cent of all citizen marriages involved a Singaporean and a non-resident, or someone who is not a Singaporean nor PR. This is up from 23.7 per cent in 2022, but the 2023 figure is lower than in some of the years before the Covid-19 pandemic struck.

A citizen marriage is one that has at least one Singaporean.

Of these Singaporean and non-resident marriages in 2023, about seven in 10 were between a Singaporean groom and a non-resident bride.

The report also showed that a larger proportion of these non-resident brides were older and more educated.

For example, the share of such brides under the age of 25 fell from 21.2 per cent in 2013 to 7.9 per cent in 2023.

Professor Jean Yeung, director of social sciences at the Agency for Science, Technology and Research's Singapore Institute for Clinical Sciences, said that border closures due to the Covid-19 pandemic had led to fewer transnational marriages in 2020 and 2021. Since borders have reopened, the numbers of such marriages have risen, she said.

Prof Yeung, who is also a professor at NUS' Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine, said that women are getting more educated globally. They are also marrying at a later age, as they pursue higher education.

She added: "In general, this is good for all involved, as education is positively related to one's knowledge, skills and health, (which are) crucial components of human capital that are likely to contribute to better psychological and economic well-being for themselves and for their families."

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Representatives from Pro Bono SG and South Central Community Family Service Centre said the new Transnational Family Care Centre - which had its official launch on July 15 - would enable them to provide more integrated care for such vulnerable families. PHOTO: LIANHE ZAOBAO



## Vietnamese wife kicked out of home, prevented from seeing baby

A month after their son was born, Lily's husband kicked her out of his home and blocked her from seeing their baby.

That marked the start of a long ordeal for the 30-year-old Vietnamese bride, who did not see her

son for about 10 months.

"I feel it's very unfair. I'm not in the wrong and I have not been unfaithful," Lily (not her real name) said in Mandarin, adding that her husband gave her no reason why he wanted to cut ties.

"I missed the first 10 months of my child's life and this is very painful for me."

Lily came to Singapore four years ago to look for a better-paying job, and she found one as a kitchen helper at a restaurant.

A compatriot introduced her to her Singaporean husband, a twice-divorced mechanic 15 years her senior. The couple dated for a few months before she became pregnant, and they tied the knot.

But their relationship started to fray during her pregnancy.

She said: "He kept criticising me and comparing me to other women, saying I was so fat during my pregnancy and I'm not pretty enough. He kept saying I was not gentle with him like the beer ladies."

They also fought over a sum of money that Lily lent him.

One day after she went to see the doctor after giving birth, her husband kicked her out of his flat.

She called the police and was referred to a crisis shelter, where she stayed for six months.

Her husband told her he wanted a divorce and did not let her see their son.

A social worker referred her to Pro Bono SG's Family Justice Support Scheme, which offers pro bono legal aid to lower-income fore-

ign spouses with Singaporean children.

Lawyer June Lim took up her case, and she obtained a court order for Lily to see her son once a week for two hours each time.

Ms Lim said Lily's husband has to comply with the court order, or he faces penalties for failing to do so.

Lily said: "Without my social workers and my lawyer June Lim, I wouldn't have known what to do and if I can even see my son."

Theresa Tan



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## Online

**THE USUAL PLACE PODCAST**

**The Fomo over old buildings**

Host Natasha Ann Zachariah and her guests discuss different ways people connect with Singapore history and its old buildings. What can be done to keep young people interested in the country's built history and heritage before some of them go?

<https://str.sg/tup-oldbuildings>



Collision near Pedra Branca

# Salvage experts find no visible flames on S'pore-flagged tanker

Ship's operator says pollution levels around vessel 'still undetermined'; probe under way

Chin Hui Shan

An initial assessment by salvage experts who boarded the Singapore-flagged tanker Hafnia Nile on July 20 confirmed that no flames were visible on board the stricken vessel, which had caught fire a day earlier following a reported collision with another vessel.

On July 19, 36 crew members from two ships were rescued in waters about 55km north-east of Pedra Branca after the vessels caught fire. Pedra Branca is an island located about 24 nautical miles east of Singapore.

Both ships - Hafnia Nile, and the Sao Tome and Principe-flagged tanker Ceres I - caught fire at about 6am, in a part of the sea that falls within Singapore's Maritime Search and Rescue Region, the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA) said on July 19.

In a statement sent to The Straits Times on July 21, a spokesman for Hafnia said: "A first assessment on board the vessel confirms that no visible flames are observed."

He added that a marine chemist would board the vessel later for a further assessment, and that pollution levels around the vessel were "still undetermined".

Shipping company Hafnia is the operator of the Hafnia Nile.

The spokesman said the salvage experts had established a towing connection with one of the attending tugs and that "currently, discussions are under way with Malaysian authorities to safely move the vessel, as well as cooperation with Singapore as the flag state on investigations".

The 22 crew members of the Hafnia Nile who arrived in Singapore on July 20 following their evacuation from the vessel remain in good condition and are residing in company-arranged accommodation, he added.

Investigations into the incident that occurred in the South China Sea are ongoing, he added.

"Hafnia again would like to thank the Singapore maritime rescue and coordination centre, the Republic of Singapore Navy, Republic of Singapore Air Force, MPA, the Malaysian Coast Guard, and other authorities and parties for their support and efforts during ongoing operations," the spokesman said.

On July 21, Reuters reported that the Malaysian coast guard said it had located and intercepted the Ceres I, which was found in Malaysian waters.

The coast guard said the tanker

and the two tugboats that were tugging it have been detained by the coast guard for further investigation. A day earlier, the coast guard said the Ceres I had left the location of the collision and was also believed to have turned off its tracking system.

Mr Matt Stanley, head of market engagement for EMEA & APAC with Kpler, said on July 19 that the Ceres I had "gone dark" many times, referring to vessels switching off their AIS tracking transponders, also known as the automatic identification system.

Reuters reported that the Ceres I is a very large crude carrier (VLCC) supertanker, which ship-tracking data last showed was carrying around two million barrels of Iranian crude.

Citing Ms Michelle Wiese Bockmann, principal analyst at Lloyd's List Intelligence, it said the area where the Ceres I had been anchored is known to be used by so-called dark fleet ships for the transfer of Iranian oil in contravention of US sanctions.

However, Iran's oil ministry denied on July 20 that either ship had been carrying Iranian crude.

Reuters also reported on July 21 that the Spanish oil and gas company Cepsa said Hafnia Nile was carrying naphtha loaded from the company's energy park in Huelva, Spain.

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# Sharing of cultures as migrant workers, S'poreans mark Racial Harmony Day

Samuel Devaraj

In Hindu culture, a baby is named at a ceremony 16 days after he or she is born - a tradition that is significant to Indian national Anandha Pradeep.

The 33-year-old, an engineer at offshore and marine firm Seatrium, took the opportunity to share this unique tradition with others, including Singaporeans, at the first Racial Harmony Day celebration organised by the Ministry of Manpower (MOM) for migrant workers.

During an interfaith dialogue at the event on July 21, participants delved into beliefs, rituals and life stages across various cultures.

Speaking to The Straits Times at Sembawang Recreation Centre, where the event was held, Mr Anandha said: "Usually I don't have much opportunity to speak with locals. This event was a good opportunity for me to interact with them."

Over 1,200 migrant workers attended the event, organised by MOM's Assurance, Care and Engagement (ACE) Group and the Alliance of Guest Workers Outreach - a movement of Hope Initiative Alliance, an inter-racial and inter-religious platform for social service organisations.

It was also supported by 24asia, a volunteer group led by migrant workers in Singapore, and other community partners.

Among the participants were 200 students from Dunman High School, Millennia Institute, Eunoia Junior College and National Junior College, and youth from the Indian Muslim Social Service Association and the Singapore Indian Development Association Youth Club.



Migrant workers enjoying a lion dance performance by West Coast CC PAE Dragon and Lion Dance Troupe during Racial Harmony Day celebrations at Sembawang Recreation Centre on July 21. ST PHOTO: BRIAN TEO



Engineer Anandha Pradeep, 33, shared that in Hindu culture, a baby is named at a ceremony 16 days after birth.

The event featured several cultural performances from countries like India, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Vietnam and the Philippines. There was a kabaddi - an ancient Indian sport - competition and a display of ethnic outfits worn by both locals and migrant workers.

ACE chief Tung Yui Fai said the first of two objectives of the event was to help the migrant workers understand what it is like living in Singapore. "The other objective is to allow our community, including our Singaporeans and other people living in Singapore, to also appreciate our migrant workers - who they are, what their prefer-

ences are," he added.

"Through this sharing and through this coming together, we hope that we can build a more harmonious society, a more harmonious place for our migrant workers to work in."

Mr Clement Goh, 22, a student from Millennia Institute and the president of its Service-Learning Club, shared his Buddhist religion with the migrant workers.

Through the dialogue, he said he learnt that there are many similarities between his faith and those of the Muslim and Hindu religions. One example is the celebration of the success of the fight against evil.

Mr Goh hopes that more of such events can be held to involve more Singaporeans. "If we do not know about the migrant workers - their beliefs, attitudes - we will not be able to understand them," he said.

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Medical Mysteries

# Double vision... and then she collapsed

Medical Mysteries is a series that spotlights rare diseases or unusual conditions.

Zhaki Abdullah

Two years after moving from Johor Bahru to Singapore for work and further studies, Ms Stella Mui began experiencing double vision.

Over the course of six months in 2009, Ms Mui, then 22, visited a number of general practitioners and optometrists to figure out what was wrong with her eyesight.

But they were unable to diagnose her, prescribing eye drops instead, or suggesting that there might be a problem with her contact lenses.

Then, one evening in July that year, she suddenly felt weak as she was leaving her accounting class and collapsed.

"It was very sudden. I lost all my strength, and then I fell down," said Ms Mui, now 37 and working in the financial sector.

Her boyfriend helped her up and accompanied her home.

However, she experienced the same thing the following morning, suddenly losing her balance and falling down.

It was then that Ms Mui began to suspect something was wrong.

She returned home to Johor Bahru and visited a hospital, where - after going through a battery of tests - doctors diagnosed her with generalised myasthenia gravis.

Seeking a second opinion, Ms Mui visited the National University Hospital (NUH) in Singapore, where doctors confirmed the diagnosis.

Myasthenia gravis is an autoimmune condition involving the development of the harmful acetylcholine receptor antibodies that can attack the patient's own muscles.

Globally, generalised myasthenia gravis affects about 12 in 100,000 people. While there are no local statistics, NUH sees about 10 to 20 new cases each year.

"It can be difficult to diagnose as signs and symptoms may have a fluctuating course, where patients can appear normal at times but show signs only after exertion or at the end of the day," said Dr Kay Ng, a senior consultant with NUH's



Ms Stella Mui, who was diagnosed with generalised myasthenia gravis, with her two-year-old son Oon Ee Kai. Myasthenia gravis is an autoimmune condition involving the development of the harmful acetylcholine receptor antibodies that can attack the patient's own muscles. ST PHOTO: SHINTARO TAY

neurology division.

"Initial symptoms also may be minimal, such as blurred vision, mild breathlessness or difficulty swallowing, and these symptoms may not only change throughout the day, but also differ from patient to patient," she added.

While women are more commonly affected by the condition before the age of 40, a higher proportion of patients aged 50 and above are men, though the reasons for this are not well understood.

"It may be due to an interplay of differing reproductive hormones and age on the patient's immune system in the development of autoimmune diseases," said Dr Ng.

She added that while its root cause is unknown, risk factors for myasthenia gravis include genetic susceptibility, a personal or family history of autoimmune disease, and the presence of thymic tumours or abnormalities.

Ms Mui told The Straits Times

HARD TO ACCEPT

To me, it felt like my world had stopped.



MS STELLA MUI

she had difficulty accepting her condition, which has no cure and would require her to be on medication for the rest of her life.

"To me, it felt like my world had stopped," she said.

Her condition slowly worsened, and she found it difficult to perform other daily tasks, such as walking unsupported or even drinking water without a straw.

During her wedding in 2014, Ms Mui refused to allow photos of herself to be taken due to her drooping

eyelids at the time.

Between 2014 and 2017, she found herself admitted to the intensive care unit annually as she experienced issues such as breathlessness and low blood oxygen level.

It was then that Ms Mui decided to undergo surgery to remove her thymus gland, which had been suggested to her before but which she had previously declined due to concerns over side effects.

The thymus gland is a small organ in the chest which produces white blood cells to help fight infection, and is also believed to be the source of the antibodies which attack the body's muscles in myasthenia gravis. Thymectomy, or the removal of the thymus, has in recent years become a widespread procedure in the treatment of myasthenia gravis.

"Surgery offers the possibility of (alleviating) myasthenia gravis in two out of three patients," said As-

sociate Professor John Tam, head and senior consultant of the thoracic surgery division at the National University Heart Centre, Singapore.

The surgery caused Ms Mui's condition to come under control, her symptoms went away, and she started taking a smaller amount of medication.

It was in 2018, after her surgery, that Dr Ng asked Ms Mui if she wanted to have children - something she had never considered given her condition.

Pregnant myasthenia gravis patients face a higher risk of complications such as pre-term delivery and poor foetal growth, in addition to the possibility of passing the condition, which is genetic, to the child.

However, the usual drugs used to treat the condition can be taken while attempting to conceive and during pregnancy to keep it under control as the benefits outweigh

any risks, said Associate Professor Chan Shiao-Yng, a senior consultant with the division of maternal and foetal medicine at NUH.

"With well-controlled disease, the chance of a successful pregnancy - defined as having a healthy baby to take home - is high," she said.

After adjusting Ms Mui's medication and ensuring that she was strong enough, Dr Ng said it was okay for Ms Mui to try to conceive in 2020, and she gave birth to a healthy baby boy the following year.

Though she will have to continue taking her medication to live normally for the foreseeable future, Ms Mui said she is thankful to be able to live a normal life, adding that her focus is now on taking care of her two-year-old son.

"As a mother, all your thoughts are on your child," she said.

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A Maori tribe authority, chaired by Mr Hayden Hape (left), has invested \$1 million in Hidden, co-founded by Mr Lim Yee Hung (right). ST PHOTO: SHINTARO TAY

## S'pore-made game to promote Maori heritage in New Zealand

Joyce Lim  
Senior Correspondent

A Singapore-made game that takes players on journeys through local neighbourhoods and communities will be going to New Zealand to tell the stories of the country's indigenous Maori people's heritage.

The company behind the game called Hidden has received a \$1 million investment from Ngati Kahungunu ki Tamaki-nui-a-Rua, which represents one of New Zealand's largest Maori tribes.

Hidden, the gaming company, will establish an office in New Zealand and hire a local team to create games that weave Maori stories into the country's landscapes.

Since it was launched in 2022, the game has attracted more than 40,000 players in Singapore, according to 38-year-old co-founder Lim Yee Hung.

The self-guided game format uses WhatsApp messages and an artificial intelligence chatbot to take players on journeys to find hidden gems in the city's neighbourhoods, including Tiong Bahru, Dakota and Toa Payoh.

It has generally received positive reviews from players, who find it both informative and entertainingly immersive.

A standard game is priced at \$29.90 a person in Singapore.

For each game, players solve a trail of clues around a neighbourhood on foot. Clues will be delivered to all players' phones via WhatsApp. A player who successfully solves each clue will get to unlock hidden secrets and the next clue.

Players can ask for hints if they get stuck.

In April, Hidden was part of a national effort to promote the rich heritage of Singapore's neighbourhoods. Partnering the National Heritage Board, Hidden provided a virtual quest in the Katong-Joo Chiat precinct.

In New Zealand, the game will be called Hidden Aotearoa, a Maori-language name for the country.

Players there will journey through landscapes imbued with Maori heritage. They might even explore *whakapapa* (genealogy), or the spirit of *kotahitanga*, which emphasises unity and togetherness.

The investor, Ngati Kahungunu ki Tamaki-nui-a-Rua, represents the Ngati Kahungunu people in the Tararua District, near the south-east corner of New Zealand's North Island, and advocates for the interests of the community.

Through a tribe member who knew Hidden's Mr Lim, the gaming company and the New Zealand investor met about a year ago and started a conversation about the collaboration.

As part of the investment deal, the Maori partner will receive equity in Hidden and hold a director position in the Singapore company's board of directors.

Mr Hayden Hape, chair of the tribe authority, told The Straits Times: "People will be able to guide themselves and see the underlying stories of our history through Hidden Aotearoa... We have a beautiful, rich history that goes right back to Taiwan. We believe that we originated from Taiwan."

He added that he aims to reach out to people from other Maori tribes to share their stories through the game, and also has plans to reach out to tourism companies and local government agencies to promote Hidden Aotearoa.

The game will not be limited to any particular part of New Zealand, he said.

For example, a visitor who arrives in Auckland can scan a QR code, join the game on WhatsApp and be guided throughout his trip to Wellington.

"We are excited to also give domestic and international visitors to our country the opportunity to personally engage directly with our culture," said Mr Hape.

He said many tribal groups have heavily invested in tourism to promote Maori culture for many generations, but they lack a tool that can connect with people. He believes Hidden Aotearoa is the solution.

Mr Lim said: "The Maori are the best storytellers in the world, and we are so excited to be able to work with them to create a potent combination of storytelling and technology to share with the world."

Mr Lim added that the partnership in New Zealand is the first step for Hidden's internationalisation plans.

The next stop could be London or Perth.

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### UNCOVERING A RICH HISTORY

**People will be able to guide themselves and see the underlying stories of our history through Hidden Aotearoa... We have a beautiful, rich history that goes right back to Taiwan. We believe that we originated from Taiwan.**



**MR HAYDEN HAPE**, chairman of tribe authority  
Ngati Kahungunu ki Tamaki-nui-a-Rua.

# In different ways, NDP 2024 touches the lives of people



## Singers get closer to their roots for parade performances

Benson Ang  
Lifestyle Correspondent

To prepare to sing the Malay song, Anggerik Singapura, for the 2024 National Day Parade (NDP), singer Amni Musfirah hired a Malay traditional voice teacher.

The 29-year-old Malay Singaporean, who usually performs pop and R&B songs, did so to learn tra-



A film during the We Uplift One Another segment at the National Day Parade will feature (in light blue) Arc Children's Centre co-founders Geraldine Lee and Ronita Paul; (back row, centre) Starlight Voices choir members and sisters Christie and Genevieve Klassen; (front row, from left) Starlight Voices conductor Tham Pei Wen; Mental ACT co-founder Devananthan Tamilselvii and student volunteer Natasha Zain. ST PHOTO: DESMOND WEE

## Amateur film-maker shares his 'adventures' in videos of rehearsals

Elaine Lee

Mr Teng Chia Ping says he is "too old to feel any deep sort of patriotic pride" over the National Day Parade (NDP).

Yet the 44-year-old amateur film-maker has spent several weekends recording parade rehearsals and brisk walking from location to location, despite having a bad knee from an old injury.

Mr Teng, who works in real estate, took time to compile a spreadsheet listing the times and locations of the rehearsals - such as for the Uncasing of the Colours ceremony on Anderson Bridge and the 21-gun presidential salute in Mari-

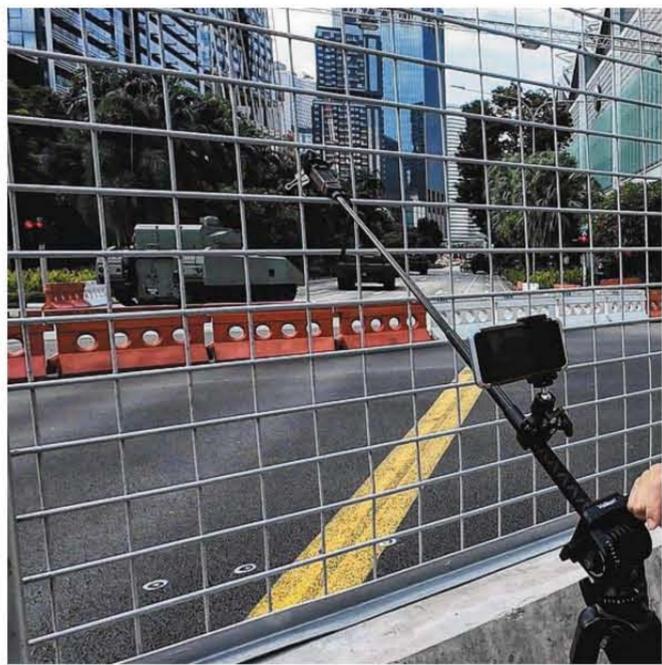
na Bay - which mirrors the schedule of the actual parade.

He then shared it on social media platform Reddit.

Mr Teng, who attended an NDP at the old National Stadium in Kallang as a teenager in the 1990s, told The Straits Times he hopes the timetable will help both him and others to better anticipate the different segments of the parade, whether it is for filming purposes or to just enjoy the festivities.

After capturing the footage he wants, the self-taught film-maker posts a video on his YouTube channel, Vicarious Walker, offering his viewers an "unofficial multi-location perspective of the NDP".

He has posted three videos on the 2024 parade rehearsals so far.





Left: Amni Musfirah hired a voice teacher to help her learn traditional Malay singing inflections to incorporate into her performance of the song, Anggerik Singapura, at the National Day Parade. ST PHOTOS: KUA CHEE SIONG

Above: Singer Shazza will perform the Tamil classic, Andru Vanthathum Ithe Nila, as a duet with Ebi Shankara, one of the parade's hosts. She took on the project to pay homage to her heritage as an Indian Muslim.

ditional Malay singing inflections to incorporate into her performance.

"As a 21st-century Singapore girl, I unfortunately did not grow up with traditional Malay music blasting in my ears," she said.

"(Undergoing training for the inflections) was an eye-opening experience for me, as I have never sung a traditional Malay song. My performance on the day will be a mix of traditional style and my personal style."

Amni, who is performing at the NDP for the first time, also took pains to understand the lyrics. The title of the song translates to "The Orchids Of Singapore".

She said: "(The lyrics) position Singapore as a blooming orchid, and this is such an interesting and poetic idea to me. My white dress (which I'll be wearing when I perform) also has these beautiful wings, and I feel like a fantastical creature wearing it."

With this performance, Amni will open the parade's Chapter Three, where the show segment begins. The 2024 NDP show features theatrical elements across four chapters, each designed to captivate and uplift.

Later on, she will perform the original composition, Hold Up The Sky, with an ensemble from the Music and Drama Company.

The rousing number, which symbolises unity in nation building, has an uplifting, explosive chorus, which Amni feels will inspire listeners. Hold Up The Sky is written by Kaylene Tan and composed by Bang Wenfu.

To Amni, the two numbers show a continuation between past and present.

"Anggerik Singapura expresses a wish by our forefathers for a prosperous Singapore, while Hold Up The Sky feels like a 21st-century prayer for the modern generation. It seems like the dreams of our forefathers have come true, and we are still pursuing our dreams. "We still have more to accom-

plish," she said.

The singer, who performed at 2008's ChildAid charity concert, the 2009 Asian Youth Games' opening and closing ceremonies, the Chingay Parades in 2022, 2023 and 2024, as well as at concerts in cities such as Shanghai, Guangzhou and Bangkok, added: "Performing at NDP has been on my bucket list for a long time."

"When I was 10, I watched Singaporean singers Taufik Batisah and Rui En sing Reach Out For The Skies on television for NDP in 2005. Their performance was so moving and magical, and that was when I dreamed of performing at NDP one day."

SHOWCASING LOCAL TALENT

The fact that this song is by a lesser-known Singaporean band makes it suitable to showcase on a national platform, so more people can be aware of it.



SHAZZA, on covering You're The Boy by Shirley Nair & The Silver Strings.

In Chapter Four, local singer Shazza will perform the Tamil classic, Andru Vanthathum Ithe Nila, as a duet with Ebi Shankara, one of the NDP's hosts. The sweet song, about the timeless concept of love, comes from the Indian romantic comedy film, Periya Idathu Penn (1963).

Shazza, 22, is not fluent in Tamil, as she studied Malay in school. But the Singaporean, whose real name is Shareefa Aminah, took on the project as she wanted to pay homage to her heritage as an Indian Muslim.

"The movie (Periya Idathu Penn) was released when my grandparents were young, and three of them – all Singaporean – are still around. I really wanted to do this for them, and also as a tribute to my late grandfather," she said.

To prepare for the song, she turned to her father, a 50-something who works in the media industry, and is a self-taught Tamil speaker and lover of Tamil films.

The night before the song's recording, they sat in her room running through the song over and over again.

Shazza said: "It was a bit difficult to remember where to place my tongue when pronouncing certain words. I practised by recording the correct pronunciations which he approved, and trying to replicate them."

She even took him with her to the studio the next day to sit in during her recording.

"He sat in the corner next to me; whenever I got something wrong, he would let me know, so we could go over it again."

Having her father in the studio was a good decision, she added.

"It ensured the quality of the recording, and I was also very thankful that he took time off from work to be there for me. He has always played an instrumental role in my career and musical journey."

In the same chapter of the NDP show, Shazza will also sing a cover of You're The Boy, a local song from the 1960s by Shirley Nair & The Silver Strings, while dressed in a hijab and a colourful retro outfit reminiscent of a traditional Indian *salwar kameez*. The rendition, she promised, will be playful, fun and lively.

Shazza said: "The fact that this song is by a lesser-known Singaporean band makes it suitable to showcase on a national platform, so more people can be aware of it. It being a love song is also a pleasant surprise to what you would normally expect from NDP."

In Chapter Six, both Shazza and Amni will return to the stage for a medley of past National Day songs, together with other performers such as Joanna Dong, Benjamin Kheng and weish. Shazza will lead the singalong for Tomorrow's Here Today (2016), and Amni will do the same for Home (1998).

Shazza said: "The finale will be awesome, with everyone singing and dancing. A lot of effort has been made to incorporate elements not seen in previous NDPs, with new faces, new music and people from all walks of life."

"The inclusivity of the show seems very sincere, and I believe it will speak to so many people."

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SEE FORUM • B5

# Spotlight on everyday Singaporeans who uplift others

Ariel Yu

The National Day Parade (NDP) returns to the Padang on Aug 9. The six-chapter show will kick off after a pre-parade segment, with the theme of Together, As One United People.

We Uplift One Another, the fifth segment of the show, will reflect on Singapore as a caring and compassionate society.

It will feature 700 performers from Buddhist organisation Soka Gakkai Singapore, in its 39th year performing at the NDP, as well as 234 performers from non-profit arts organisation Voices of Singapore (VOS).

The performance is anchored by a short film titled Care And Compassion, which is accompanied by emotive songs.

NDP 2024 creative producer Noorlinah Mohamed told The Straits Times on July 19 that the ordinary Singaporeans featured are the heroes of the film – she and her team looked for different Singaporeans to put a spotlight on those going above and beyond to uplift the community and those around them.

ST spoke with four participants featured in this segment to find out more.

**SOCIAL WORKER WHO HOPES TO BREAK MENTAL HEALTH STIGMA**

Mr Devananthan Tamilselvi, the co-founder and executive director

of non-profit organisation Mental ACT, experienced the grief of losing a close friend to suicide while serving national service.

After dealing with the loss, and compounded by his personal problems, the social worker was diagnosed with depression and had suicidal ideations. He also wondered where people like him would belong in the community, being someone with a mental health condition.

In 2015, Mr Devananthan received training as a suicide interventionist and began providing support to people who were suicidal. On a date night in 2017 with his then girlfriend Priyahisha Noorulla, who is now his wife, he received a call in the wee hours of the morning from someone who needed help. The couple went to the Housing Board block where the person lived, and sat with him for two hours, listening.

It was this incident that inspired the creation of Mental ACT.

"Towards the end of our time with him, he asked: 'Why aren't there more people like you guys? Why isn't there an organisation or any form of agency that caters to mental health, especially suicide, within the South Asian community?'" Mr Devananthan recalled.

"That's how Mental ACT was born – along the streets, from the ground – by just two individuals who wanted to do something, so that someone else like us wouldn't be alone with thoughts of suicidal ideation."

The couple co-founded the non-

profit in 2017, with the aim of providing mental health programmes and services to the South Asian community and the wider Singapore population.

NDP creative director Brian Gothong Tan, speaking to ST at a media event on July 19, said he thought Mr Devananthan's story was quite hard-hitting, especially when he talked about the death of his friend.

NDP is a platform through which Singaporeans can learn about ordinary people who are doing extraordinary work, Mr Tan added.

"Let's talk about the things that we don't talk about in Singapore. You know, I felt it was just very important to make the invisible visible. Things that we don't talk about (such as) mental health... How can we celebrate Singapore when we leave out certain people? That's just not who we are," he said.

Mr Devananthan hopes that his organisation will shutter one day – for a good reason.

"It's because we are no longer relevant, because we will have reached a stage where the community is empathetic and knowledgeable, and mental healthcare is affordable and accessible... where common men can get the necessary intervention."

**SINGER WITH AUTISM AND SISTER HOPE FOR MORE INCLUSIVE ARTS SCENE**

Neurodivergent singer Christie Klassen, 21, will be performing at the NDP for the first time.

MAKING THE INVISIBLE VISIBLE

Let's talk about the things that we don't talk about in Singapore. You know, I felt it was just very important to make the invisible visible. Things that we don't talk about (such as) mental health... How can we celebrate Singapore when we leave out certain people? That's just not who we are.



MR BRIAN GOTHONG TAN, National Day Parade creative director.

Ms Klassen, who has autism, performed at the National Day Concert 2023 as part of a virtual choir and the President's Star Charity in 2015.

She is a member of VOS Starlight Voices – a choir of talented people with special needs.

She started singing in the choir at Pathlight School – the first autism-focused school here – when she was a Primary 3 pupil.

"Singing makes me happy," Ms Klassen said.

Her sister Genevieve, 29, is a special educator at the school and supports Ms Christie Klassen in her pursuits.

"We have the same interests; I also like to sing. For Christie, we are trying to develop her talent. So, wherever I can support her, I would like to do it."

"When she does well, I think all of us feel happy for her as well," the

older Klassen sibling said.

Ms Tham Pei Wen, conductor of Starlight Voices, said that Christie seemed quite afraid of the cheering at the end of their performances during NDP rehearsals, because the clapping from audiences could be quite overwhelming for her.

She hopes that, through education and advocacy, Singaporeans will become more aware of how to support people with special needs.

"I know you want to show support. You are cheering, but the way to show support might be a little bit different for this group of children. We share... how to behave around them and, hopefully, the audience will also become a bit more educated in this way," she added.

Genevieve will be performing alongside Christie at the NDP with the Starlight Voices choir.

She hopes that the arts scene in

Singapore will become more inclusive in the future, citing Starlight Voices as an example.

**STUDENT VOLUNTEER WISHES TO OFFER HUMANITARIAN AID GLOBALLY IN THE FUTURE**

Student Natasha Zain, 18, volunteers with non-profit organisation SG Beach Warriors to help with island-wide beach cleanups, as well as charitable organisation Blossom World Society to clean the homes of seniors.

Currently in her second year of studies at Tampines Meridian Junior College, Ms Zain grew up learning about the importance of gratitude and service.

"Growing up, my parents instilled in me the importance of service to the community and giving back. My primary school, secondary school and junior college experiences reinforced the importance of service to the community. So that's how I grew up, with these shaping my personal values and beliefs," the student volunteer said.

Ms Zain started volunteering in 2022, after her O-level examinations. She used to volunteer two to three times a month in 2023 before reducing the frequency of her volunteer work to once a month because of her A-level examinations in 2024.

"I have a bigger goal: I would like to offer humanitarian aid to different countries around the world," said Ms Zain.

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Mr Teng Chia Ping has spent several weekends recording National Day Parade rehearsals. He compiled a spreadsheet listing the times and locations of the rehearsals, and shared it on social media platform Reddit. PHOTO: COURTESY OF TENG CHIA PING

His spreadsheet on Reddit, which is accompanied by screenshots of rehearsal videos he has taken, has received more than 95 upvotes, and he has been praised by netizens for the nice visuals he captured.

Having previously filmed and shared two similar videos – combining footage from the rehearsals and the actual parade – of the 2023 NDP, Mr Teng said some watch his videos to figure out the best vantage points from which to watch their favourite segment of the parade.

Mr Teng, who is single, watched videos posted by other YouTubers before coming up with the idea of compiling and sharing a spreadsheet with information on the various NDP segments.

He told ST he was unaware of any other YouTuber compiling anything similar, though some may include the timings of the events in their own NDP rehearsal videos.

"I have come to realise that there are many viewers online who enjoy the spectacle of the NDP, but are unable to watch it in person, which is why I'd like to share my adventures with them," he added.

Mr Teng said he decided to start making videos during the Covid-19 pandemic after he watched "walking ASMR" videos on YouTube.

ASMR, or autonomous sensory meridian response, is usually described as a pleasant tingling sensation, and is usually accompanied by a sense of calm and relaxation.

DIFFERENT PLACES AND TIMES

My favourite event is the NDP because it is challenging to shoot and figure out the timing and locations of all the points of interest as there are many elements of the parade happening at the same time. It cannot be filmed in a single day



MR TENG CHIA PING

Seeing how people were creating this type of videos on social media platforms, Mr Teng, who studied economics and finance, bought a high-resolution camera and followed suit.

He started exploring cultural events such as Ramadan, Thaipusam and Vesak Day, and he discovered a different side to Singapore that he did not know.

"It was an eye-opening experience as I was able to explore Singapore like a tourist," he said.

"Breaking fast with Muslims in the mosques during Ramadan and walking beside the kavadi bearers – who carry milk offerings via wooden or metal structures – during Thaipusam were some of the memorable moments I've had since I started this hobby."

The NDP, though, is a bigger challenge than the cultural events that he has filmed, he added.

"My favourite event is the NDP because it is challenging to shoot and figure out the timing and locations of all the points of interest as there are many elements of the parade happening at the same time. It cannot be filmed in a single day,"

said Mr Teng.

He said he would sometimes bump into other amateur filmmakers at the rehearsals, some of whom he now counts as his friends.

Mr Teng added that he has recently learnt to enjoy the moment. "When that happens, I look away from my camera and mentally absorb a few moments of the event that is right in front of my eyes," he said.

After balloting unsuccessfully for a ticket to the Bay Celebration at The Promontory, Mr Teng will be back in the City Hall area this weekend to cover aspects of the parade rehearsals that he missed in previous weeks.

His favourite moment of the NDP?

"The colourful fireworks segment because of the magical atmosphere it creates," he said, adding that the crowd also plays a part in enhancing the romantic ambience.

"I just need to make sure that my camera focus is set correctly before I sit back and enjoy the fireworks."

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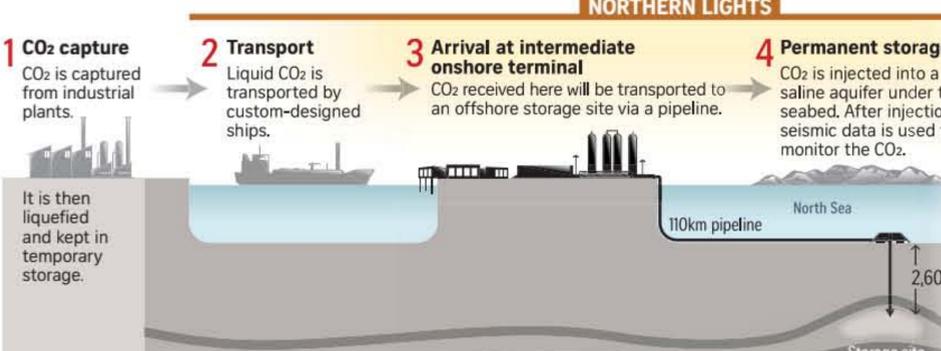
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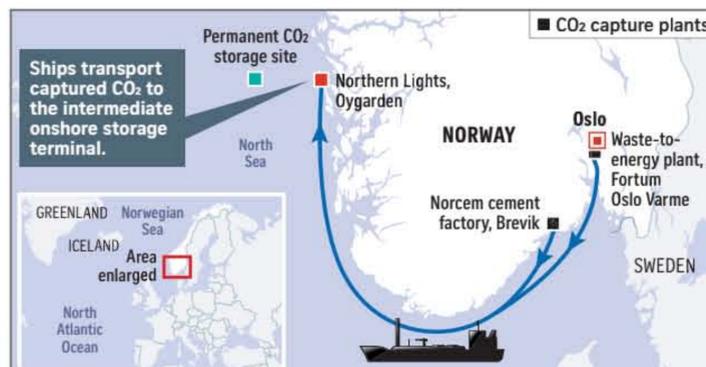
## How carbon waste is stored

At Northern Lights' carbon storage facility in the municipality of Oygarden in western Norway, ships carrying CO<sub>2</sub> unload the greenhouse-warming gas. It is then pumped under the seabed and locked away. Here's a look at the process and the facilities at the terminal.

**NORTHERN LIGHTS**

- 1 CO<sub>2</sub> capture**  
CO<sub>2</sub> is captured from industrial plants.  
*It is then liquefied and kept in temporary storage.*
- 2 Transport**  
Liquid CO<sub>2</sub> is transported by custom-designed ships.
- 3 Arrival at intermediate onshore terminal**  
CO<sub>2</sub> received here will be transported to an offshore storage site via a pipeline.
- 4 Permanent storage**  
CO<sub>2</sub> is injected into a saline aquifer under the seabed. After injection, seismic data is used to monitor the CO<sub>2</sub>.  
*It takes around 1½ days to fully pump one ship's CO<sub>2</sub> underground. For now, the saline aquifer is approved to store 37.5 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>; it may hold more if future permit applications are approved.*





Ships transport captured CO<sub>2</sub> to the intermediate onshore storage terminal.

Permanent CO<sub>2</sub> storage site

Northern Lights, Oygarden

Waste-to-energy plant, Fortum Oslo Varme

Norcem cement factory, Brevik

Area reserved for future expansion/import jetty

PIPELINE FOR OFFSHORE STORAGE

STORAGE TANKS

- Liquefied CO<sub>2</sub> is transferred by pipes to 12 interim storage tanks on land.
- Each tank is 32.5m tall and has a capacity of 700 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>.

Sources: EQUINOR, NORTHERN LIGHTS  
PHOTOS: NORTHERN LIGHTS  
STRAITS TIMES GRAPHICS

**Visitor Centre**

- The centre, officially opened in October 2022, is part of Northern Lights' efforts to share knowledge and promote carbon capture and storage technology.
- Over 3,700 visitors from 53 countries, including from different authorities, industry and academia, were hosted at the site in 2023.

**Jetty**

- Capable of receiving ships with a cargo capacity of 7,500 cubic m, or over 8,000 tonnes of liquid CO<sub>2</sub>.
- The jetty was designed to handle the capacity of the first ships from the initial few customers.

Boom arms used in the transfer of liquefied CO<sub>2</sub> from ships carrying it.



Aerial view of Northern Lights facility at Oygarden.

## Europe's pioneering cross-border carbon capture project on track

### Northern Lights venture in Norway to help hard-to-abate industrial sectors decarbonise

Lee Li Ying  
Correspondent

BERGEN, Norway – On a cold, blustery island in Norway's North Sea lies a trailblazer project aimed at fighting back against climate change.

By burying planet-warming carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) generated by European industrial companies in the depths under the seabed, it hopes to help several hard-to-abate industrial sectors decarbonise.

The \$1.7 billion Northern Lights joint venture, touted as Europe's first cross-border industrial carbon capture and storage (CCS) project, has caught the world's attention, like its auroral namesake.

The Straits Times toured the Northern Lights receiving terminal in the municipality of Oygarden in western Norway in June, along with a delegation of Singaporean companies, academics and government representatives.

The trip was organised by Norway's trade representative Innovation Norway and the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Singapore.

Northern Lights' director of communications and governmental affairs Benedicte Staalesen said construction at the Northern Lights facilities broke ground around December 2020, and is now 98 per cent complete.

The project is on track to receive CO<sub>2</sub> in the fourth quarter of 2024, with a storage capacity of up to 1.5 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> per year, with an aim to expand to five million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> per year eventually.

Northern Lights is owned by a trio of oil giants – Equinor, Shell and TotalEnergies – and spearheaded by the Norwegian government, with it footing 80 per cent of the bill for the first stage of development.

In exchange, the project will not charge two emitters, a cement factory and a waste-to-energy plant in Oslo, for storage of CO<sub>2</sub> during phase 1 of the project.

Subsequent expansion of the project will be shaped by commercial demand, and phase 2 of the project already has two clients confirmed.

Carbon capture projects used to be met with raised eyebrows as it is technologically and economically unproven at scale, with multiple concerns including around whether CO<sub>2</sub> can be captured and stored permanently.

But more are warming to the idea, with increased investment and policy support, and recognition of its necessity after the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change affirmed in 2022 that CCS is critical for mitigating climate change.

When Northern Lights is operational, specialised ships will transport liquefied CO<sub>2</sub> from emitters to the receiving terminal. The CO<sub>2</sub> is then injected into a geological formation about 2,600m below the seabed.

Commenting on the testing that is being done to ensure carbon can be received and stored successfully, Ms Staalesen said: "There is a process to ensure facilities are built according to design, followed by a commissioning programme to ensure the facilities work according to design objectives. We are in the

commissioning phase now."

On how Northern Lights will ensure that stored CO<sub>2</sub> does not leak, Ms Staalesen said that the underground storage complex consists of sand reservoirs and a sealing layer of caprock. The CO<sub>2</sub> will be injected into a porous space filled with salt water in the rock formation, where it will be trapped.

"These are the same mechanisms that have kept oil and natural gas underground for millions of years," she said.

Mr Magnus Killingland, global segment lead for hydrogen, ammonia and sustainable fuels at classification society DNV, said that Northern Lights CCS is an important first step to establishing value chains that can be replicated globally.

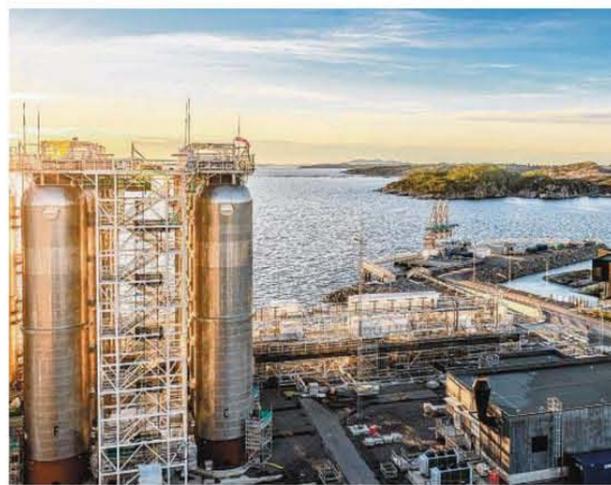
"The project serves as a demonstration of the feasibility and effectiveness of CCS, and clarifies several technical challenges, principles and possible best practices, demonstrating this for further investment and development in the technology," said Mr Killingland.

According to a 2023 report by the International Energy Agency, to reach the global target of net-zero emissions by 2050, a global storage capacity of 1,000 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> is needed by 2030.

While planned capacities for CO<sub>2</sub> transport and storage have surged in recent years, it is estimated to reach 615 million tonnes per year by 2030, which is still insufficient.

But developments have been gathering pace, with countries like Singapore announcing in 2024 its intentions to set up a cross-border CCS project with Indonesia.

Senior Minister of State for Sustainability and the Environment Amy Khor, who was at the Northern Lights visit in June, said that CCS is emerging in Asia as a promising solution to help countries



Storage tanks for holding liquefied carbon dioxide before it is transported via a pipeline to an offshore storage site for injection into the seabed. The project is on track to receive CO<sub>2</sub> in the fourth quarter of 2024. PHOTO: NORTHERN LIGHTS

transition to a low-carbon future.

"Companies such as Northern Lights offer Singapore useful insights on monitoring, reporting and verification processes, which will be key to upholding the environmental integrity of such projects. Similarly, it is also important to explore research and development efforts to help lower costs and improve outcomes for CCS projects. These will be useful learning points as we plan and develop a CCS project in our region."

For CCS projects to be successful, the dollars and cents need to make sense. Commercial viability will allow CCS projects to scale up to levels needed to make a significant impact on global emissions.

DNV's Mr Killingland pointed out that a CCS business case is profitable only if the emission cost is higher than the cost of permanently storing it. Given that North-

ern Lights is a pilot project, it is not expected to make high profits, and its partners look at this as a first step for developing a new industry.

Ms Staalesen said that expansion plans for phase 2 of Northern Lights will have to move in line with market developments and maturation of additional commercial agreements. She added that the project is talking to industries across Europe like bio-energy, chemicals and steel.

Voluntary carbon markets are expected to play a significant role in advancing CCS, said Ms Staalesen, raising the example of Danish power plant Orsted.

Voluntary carbon markets allow private players to buy and sell carbon credits that represent reductions or removals of greenhouse gases from the atmosphere.

Orsted has signed a commercial agreement to store 430,000

tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions a year with Northern Lights, and also entered into an agreement with Microsoft for the tech company to purchase 3.67 million tonnes of carbon removal credits from the power plant.

Underpinning the voluntary carbon market are carbon offsetting methodologies that provide the scientific and technical backbone for ensuring that credits traded are real, measurable and verifiable.

Northern Lights is playing a key role in Europe's CCS+ Initiative, which aims to develop robust carbon accounting methodologies for carbon capture, utilisation and storage.

"Confidence in the quality of the carbon credits generated depends on whether the methodology developed is robust and can stand up to international scrutiny," said Mr Anshari Rahman, director of policy and analytics at Temasek-backed investment platform Gen-Zero.

"Revenue from carbon finance can help improve the economics of CCS projects and finance the adoption of costly CCS technologies," said Mr Anshari. He pointed out that costs for CCS projects vary greatly and can range from US\$15 (S\$20) to US\$120 per tonne of carbon capture, depending on specifics such as emissions source and capture technology.

In the case of CCS, its technologies are complex and vary significantly across different geologies and industrial applications, said Mr Anshari.

"Developing a one-size-fits-all methodology that accurately captures these differences and balances scientific rigour with practicality is challenging," he said.

"However, this may be a necessary investment to enable market participation for new actors and new solutions. Credible methodologies can unlock the full potential of CCS projects by attracting investment through informed economics."

Singapore's stable political climate and strong rule of law position the nation as a conducive venue to convene industry leaders, governments and environmental experts to drive the development of carbon markets and methodologies, said Mr Anshari.

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# ExxonMobil to transfer ops of Malaysia oil, gas assets to Petronas



ExxonMobil staff would be transferred to Petronas as part of the deal, according to a source cited in a media report. PHOTO: AFP

Tapis oilfield in Terengganu, which began production in 1978, Reuters reported on July 19, citing three people.

ExxonMobil staff would be transferred to Petronas as part of the deal, one of them said.

The terms of the deal were not immediately known.

In an article on its website dated Nov 12, 2023, ExxonMobil said it remained a significant energy producer in Malaysia, contributing about 40 per cent and 50 per cent, respectively, to Peninsular Malaysia's crude oil and natural gas production.

The company operates 35 oil and gas platforms in 12 fields in offshore Terengganu, and has a working interest in another 10 platforms in five fields in the South China Sea.

The combined operations produce about 15 per cent of Malaysia's crude oil and condensate of 600,000 barrels a day, and more than half of Peninsular Malaysia's natural gas of more than 56.6 million cubic m per day. REUTERS

## Move is not a sale; no changes to working interest in production-sharing contracts

ExxonMobil Corporation intends to transfer the operations of all assets of two production-sharing contracts in Malaysia to state energy company Petronas, ExxonMobil said on July 20.

Reuters had reported on July 19

that ExxonMobil had agreed to sell its Malaysian oil and gas assets to Petronas, citing two people with direct knowledge of the matter.

"This is not a sale and there will be no changes to Emepmi's working interest in the production-

sharing contracts," ExxonMobil Exploration and Production Malaysia, or Emepmi, said in a statement to Reuters.

"This does not impact our other businesses in Malaysia - we remain committed to conducting business here as we have for more than 130 years," it added.

In a separate statement earlier on July 20, Petronas said Petronas Carigali is engaged in discussions

with Emepmi regarding the transfer of operations for two production-sharing contracts located offshore Peninsular Malaysia.

"The discussions are subject to further agreements between both parties," it said in response to a Reuters query. "Petronas Carigali remains committed to safe operations, as well as maintaining reliable and uninterrupted energy supply for our customers throughout the process."

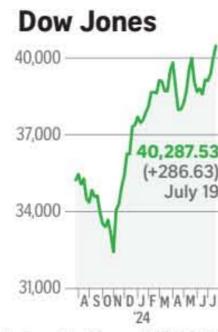
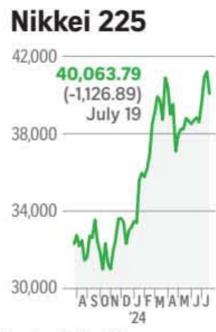
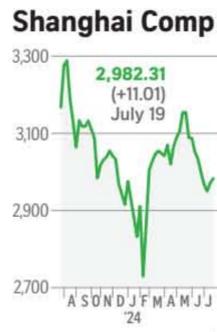
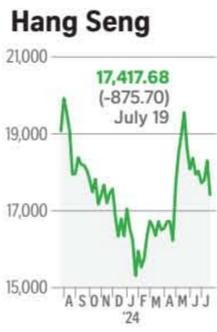
The Malaysian media has reported that ExxonMobil has been trying to sell its ageing upstream assets in the country since 2020.

Under the transfer plan, Petronas was taking over operations of ExxonMobil assets, including the

**Straits Times Index**  
July 19, 2024  
**3,447.56** ↓  
-50.22 (-1.44%)  
Current streak  
**2 days**  
Week high  
**3,499.89**  
Week low  
**3,447.56**  
52-week high  
**3,499.89** (July 15, 2024)  
52-week low  
**3,053.36** (Oct 23, 2023)



**FTSE ST Catalyst Index**  
July 19, 2024  
**166.99** ↑  
+1.01 (+0.61%)  
Current streak  
**3 days**  
Week high  
**166.99**  
Week low  
**165.82**  
52-week high  
**207.40** (July 20, 2023)  
52-week low  
**164.16** (May 14, 2024)



NOTE: Based on Friday's figures compared with last week's. Source: BLOOMBERG

### Straits Times Index stocks

| 52-WEEK HIGH | LOW   | COMPANY              | LAST SALE | +OR- | 'VOL '000 | GROSS YIELD % | P/BV |
|--------------|-------|----------------------|-----------|------|-----------|---------------|------|
| 305          | 247   | CapLand Ascendas REI | 270       | -2   | 42456     | 5.6           | 1.2  |
| 213          | 168   | CapLand IntCom T     | 205       | -7   | 90329     | 5.2           | 1    |
| 345          | 244   | CapLand Ascott T     | 90        | +0.5 | 43516     | 7.3           | 0.9  |
| 750          | 516   | CityDev              | 538       | -11  | 5483      | 2.2           | 0.5  |
| 3855         | 28191 | DBS Grp              | 3669      | -124 | 24846     | 5.2           | 1.7  |
| 288          | 175   | DFIRG USD            | US184     | -4   | 2331      | 1.6           | -    |
| 233          | 201   | Fraser's Cpt Tr      | 219       | -3   | 13133     | 5.5           | 1    |
| 130          | 92    | Fraser's L&C Tr      | 99.5      | -0.5 | 37693     | 7.1           | 0.9  |
| 106          | 815   | Genting Sing         | 85        | -2   | 93478     | 4.1           | 1.3  |
| 377          | 278   | HongkongLand USD     | US337     | +3   | 7973      | 6.5           | 0.2  |
| 5009         | 3372  | JMH USD              | US3590    | -26  | 1303      | 6             | 35.5 |
| 3453         | 2376  | Jardine C&C          | 2519      | -62  | 1963      | 6.2           | 1    |
| 746          | 615   | Keppel               | 658       | -14  | 13265     | 5.2           | 1.1  |
| 253          | 209   | Mapletree Ind Tr     | 229       | +4   | 40868     | 5.9           | 1.3  |
| 175          | 124   | Mapletree Log Tr     | 136       | unch | 69407     | 6.6           | 1    |
| 170          | 118   | Mapletree PanAsia Co | 131       | -3   | 76779     | 6.8           | 0.7  |
| 1538         | 1217  | OCBC Bank            | 1497      | -31  | 24743     | 5.5           | 1.2  |
| 335          | 240   | SATS                 | 324       | cd   | 25727     | 0.5           | 2    |
| 998          | 887   | SGX                  | 977       | -3   | 7410      | 3.3           | 6.1  |
| 760          | 587   | SIA                  | 704       | cd   | 22256     | 6.8           | 1.3  |
| 448          | 364   | ST Engineering       | 243       | unch | 1757      | 3.3           | 1.6  |
| 294          | 136   | Seatrium Ltd         | 146       | -2   | 99206     | -             | 0.8  |
| 610          | 450   | Sembcorp Ind         | 466       | -14  | 16294     | 2.8           | 1.8  |
| 310          | 225   | Sheng Siong          | 147       | -2   | 8402      | 4.3           | 4.5  |
| 615          | 425   | Singtel              | 302       | cd   | 240106    | 5             | 2    |
| 3333         | 2682  | UOB                  | 3263      | -42  | 12550     | 5.2           | 1.2  |
| 714          | 507   | UOL                  | 538       | -5   | 3157      | 3.7           | 0.4  |
| 1505         | 1136  | Venture Corp         | 1482      | -4   | 2751      | 5.1           | 1.5  |
| 393          | 307   | Wilmar Intl          | 310       | -7   | 16727     | 5.5           | 0.7  |
| 253          | 137   | YZJ Shipbldg SGD     | 231       | +5   | 86562     | 2.8           | 2.3  |

### 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       | -8   | 10619     | -             | 1.2  |
| 135          | 117  | AIMS APAC Reit    | 130       | -1   | 4221      | 7.2           | 1    |
| 107          | 69.5 | Aztech Gbl        | 100       | unch | 5360      | 4.5           | 2.1  |
| 244          | 160  | BRC Asia          | 239       | cd   | 70        | 6.7           | 1.5  |
| 252          | 144  | Best World        | 249       | unch | 1935      | -             | 1.8  |
| 79.5         | 54   | Bumitama Agri     | 71.5      | +0.5 | 3803      | 1.7           | 0.9  |
| 105          | 65.5 | CapLand China T   | 68.5      | -2   | 13618     | 9.8           | 0.6  |
| 120          | 95   | CapLand India T   | 103       | -1   | 5565      | 6.3           | 0.9  |
| 97.5         | 73   | China Aviation    | 88        | +0.5 | 2089      | 5.7           | 0.6  |
| 92           | 73   | Civmec            | 91.5      | +4.5 | 1079      | 4.9           | 1.2  |
| 176          | 10.8 | Cosco             | 151       | -0.1 | 42491     | -             | 0.7  |
| 162          | 112  | Cromwellreit EUR  | 138       | +1   | 1567      | 11.4          | 0.7  |
| 68           | 50   | Daiwa Hse Log Tr  | 56        | +0.5 | 4138      | 9.3           | 0.8  |
| 139          | 81   | Delfi             | 83.5      | -4   | 3217      | 6.9           | 1.5  |
| 67.5         | 43.5 | DigiCore Reit USD | 64        | unch | 14536     | 5.8           | 0.9  |
| 51.5         | 20   | Dyna-Mac          | 49        | +0.5 | 44578     | 1.7           | 7.3  |
| 30.5         | 28   | EC World Reit     | 28        | susp | -         | 131           | 2.2  |
| 68           | 56   | Far East HTrust   | 62        | -2   | 5797      | 6.6           | 0.7  |
| 27           | 20.5 | First Reit        | 25        | unch | 6224      | 9.9           | 0.8  |
| 147          | 96   | Food Empire       | 101       | +1   | 3367      | 9.9           | 1.4  |
| 53.5         | 41.5 | Fraser's HTrust   | 43        | unch | 4562      | 5.7           | 0.6  |
| 174          | 80.5 | Frencfen          | 151       | -12  | 24048     | 1.5           | 1.6  |
| 99.5         | 80   | Hong Fok          | 81        | -1.5 | 1331      | 1.2           | 0.2  |
| 35           | 17.6 | Japfa             | 31        | unch | 5814      | -             | 0.6  |
| 38.5         | 12.2 | KeppelPacReitUSD  | 16.9      | +2   | 45592     | 14.8          | 0.8  |
| 68.5         | 49   | Lendlease Reit    | 59        | -1.5 | 29048     | 8             | 0.8  |
| 116          | 4    | ManulifeReit USD  | 77        | +0.5 | 85885     | -             | 0.2  |
| 128          | 59.5 | Nanofilm          | 93.5      | +6   | 40688     | 0.7           | 1.6  |
| 26.5         | 8.7  | Prime US REIT USD | 15.7      | +2.8 | 67893     | 17.3          | 0.3  |
| 108          | 78.5 | PropNex           | 83.5      | unch | 355       | 7.2           | 4.9  |
| 103          | 56.5 | Riverstone        | 98        | -1.5 | 11484     | 5.1           | 2.9  |
| 107          | 56.5 | SamuderaShipping  | 94.5      | -1   | 15817     | 11.6          | 0.7  |
| 73           | 61   | Sassec Reit       | 67        | -1   | 2492      | 9.3           | 4.3  |
| 52           | 37   | SingPost          | 44.5      | cd   | 31428     | 1.7           | 0.7  |
| 53           | 44   | StarhillGbl Reit  | 50        | +0.5 | 6864      | 7.6           | 0.7  |
| 212          | 133  | Straits Trading   | 142       | unch | 585       | 5.6           | 0.4  |
| 158          | 102  | UMS               | 117       | -1   | 25798     | 2.9           | 2    |
| 53           | 34.5 | UtdHampshReitUSD  | 43        | +1.5 | 727       | 11.1          | 0.6  |
| 67           | 49.5 | Valuetronics      | 65        | cd   | 3515      | 6.7           | 1.1  |
| 37           | 28.5 | YZJ Fin Hldg      | 34        | -1   | 11277     | 6.5           | 0.3  |
| 82           | 39   | Yanlord Land      | 44        | -1.5 | 3665      | -             | -    |
| 17.4         | 3.9  | Yoma Strategic    | 12.5      | -0.4 | 252143    | -             | 0.6  |

### Gainers

|                 | CLOSE | UP   | %    | 52w high/low |
|-----------------|-------|------|------|--------------|
| Azeus           | 1007  | 27.0 | 2.8  | 1080/740     |
| UOI             | 726   | 25.0 | 3.6  | 727/583      |
| F & N           | 129   | 23.0 | 21.7 | 140/99       |
| 17LIVE GROUP    | 68    | 21.0 | 44.7 | 167/42.5     |
| Powermatic Data | 367   | 19.0 | 5.5  | 399/235      |

### Losers

|              | CLOSE | DOWN   | %     | 52w high/low |
|--------------|-------|--------|-------|--------------|
| AMTD IDEA OV | 360   | -640.0 | -64.0 | 1000/360     |
| DBS Grp      | 3669  | -124.0 | -3.3  | 3855/2819    |
| Jardine C&C  | 2519  | -62.0  | -2.4  | 3453/2376    |
| UOB          | 3263  | -42.0  | -1.3  | 3333/2682    |
| JMH USD      | 3590  | -34.8  | -0.7  | 5009/3372    |

### Most active

|                  | VOLUME      | VALUE(\$)   |
|------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Yoma Strategic   | 252,143,400 | 921,945,399 |
| Singtel          | 240,106,500 | 729,639,554 |
| ThaiBev          | 181,889,300 | 412,316,748 |
| Seatrium Ltd     | 99,206,000  | 373,938,000 |
| MarcoPolo Marine | 95,270,300  | 206,028,225 |
| Genting Sing     | 93,478,100  | 187,921,759 |
| CapLand IntCom T | 90,329,000  | 157,262,373 |
| YZJ Shipbldg SGD | 86,562,000  | 146,770,733 |
| ManulifeReit USD | 85,885,400  | 115,172,219 |
| Wilton Resources | 84,119,300  | 101,596,529 |

### Government securities

| Period  | Issue code | Coupon rate(%) | Maturity  | Close Bid | High   | Day's Low |
|---------|------------|----------------|-----------|-----------|--------|-----------|
| 2-Year  | NX15100Z   | 2.375%         | 01-Jun-25 | 3.17      | 0.00   | 0.00      |
| 5-Year  | NX18100A   | 2.625%         | 01-May-28 | 3.04      | 0.00   | 0.00      |
| 10-Year | NZ13100V   | 3.375%         | 01-Sep-33 | 3.07      | 102.80 | 102.65    |
| 15-Year | NZ19100S   | 2.375%         | 01-Jul-39 | 3.09      | 0.00   | 0.00      |
| 20-Year | NA12100N   | 2.750%         | 01-Apr-42 | 3.05      | 0.00   | 0.00      |
| 30-Year | NA21200W   | 1.875%         | 01-Oct-51 | 2.93      | 0.00   | 0.00      |

### Bonds

| Company       | Lasts sale | +or- | Vol ('000) |
|---------------|------------|------|------------|
| CityDev NCCPS | 97.2       | -    | -          |
| Hyflux 6% CPS | 6537       | susp | -          |
| UE Pref       | 190        | -    | -          |

### SGX derivatives trading

|                                  | OPEN     | HIGH     | LOW      | SETT     | VOL    | OP/INT |
|----------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|--------|--------|
| SGX MSCI Singapore Index Futures |          |          |          |          |        |        |
| Jul24                            | 322.40   | 322.90   | 318.80   | 320.45   | 30054  | 225538 |
| Aug24                            | 317.70   | 317.70   | 314.10   | 314.95   | 358    | 2703   |
| SGX FTSE China A50 Index Futures |          |          |          |          |        |        |
| Jul24                            | 12275.00 | 12337.00 | 12143.00 | 12269.00 | 302032 | 938511 |
| Aug24                            | 12255.00 | 12320.00 | 12144.00 | 12265.00 | 2379   | 6097   |
| SGX FTSE China H50 Index Futures |          |          |          |          |        |        |
| Jul24                            | 11877.50 | 11877.50 | 11597.50 | 11610.00 | 2223   | 7409   |
| Aug24                            | -        | -        | -        | 11645.00 | 0      | 201    |
| SGX FTSE Taiwan Index Futures    |          |          |          |          |        |        |
| Jul24                            | 1955.75  | 1975.25  | 1911.25  | 1918.00  | 97215  | 98827  |
| Aug24                            | 1966.25  | 1974.00  | 1911.50  | 1916.50  | 625    | 1028   |
| SGX FTSE Indonesia Index Futures |          |          |          |          |        |        |
| Jul24                            | 3568.000 | 3568.000 | 3532.000 | 3562.000 | 689    | 809    |
| Aug24                            | -        | -        | -        | 3579.000 | 0      | 290    |

### FTSE ST Large & Mid-Cap Index stocks

| 52-WEEK HIGH | LOW   | COMPANY              | LAST SALE | +OR- | 'VOL '000 | GROSS YIELD % | P/BV |
|--------------|-------|----------------------|-----------|------|-----------|---------------|------|
| 120          | 93    | CDL HTrust           | 98.5      | -0.5 | 8107      | 5.8           | 0.7  |
| 305          | 247   | CapLand Ascendas REI | 270       | -2   | 42456     | 5.6           | 1.2  |
| 113          | 84    | CapLand Ascott T     | 90        | +0.5 | 43516     | 7.3           | 0.9  |
| 213          | 168   | CapLand IntCom T     | 205       | -7   | 90329     | 5.2           | 1    |
| 345          | 244   | CapitaLandInvest     | 271       | -10  | 33256     | 4.4           | 1    |
| 750          | 516   | CityDev              | 538       | -11  | 5483      | 2.2           | 0.5  |
| 150          | 122   | ComfortDelGro        | 139       | unch | 21674     | 4.8           | 1.1  |
| 3855         | 28191 | DBS Grp              | 3669      | -124 | 24846     | 5.2           | 1.7  |
| 288          | 175   | DFIRG USD            | US184     | -4   | 2331      | 1.6           | -    |
| 35           | 25    | ESR-LOGOS REIT       | 28.5      | -0.5 | 61721     | 9             | 0.9  |
| 53.5         | 40    | Emperador Inc        | 42.5      | unch | 3813      | -             | -    |
| 161          | 132   | First Resources      | 146       | +1   | 4220      | 4.2           | 1.3  |
| 233          | 201   | Fraser's Cpt Tr      | 219       | -3   | 13133     | 5.5           | 1    |
| 130          | 92    | Fraser's L&C Tr      | 99.5      | -0.5 | 37693     | 7.1           | 0.9  |
| 106          | 815   | Genting Sing         | 85        | -2   | 9347      |               |      |

# A rocky week for markets amid political rhetoric and rotational plays

With monetary policy seen playing bigger role, there is still scope for more upside

## Market Watch



Ven Sreenivasan  
Senior Columnist

A week which started with an attempted political assassination, then progressed into unsettling Republican National Convention rhetoric, and ended with a Y2K bug threat-like global IT systems collapse had all the ingredients to cause major panic in the markets. But the fact that markets, though retreating, did not go into a nosedive, says a lot about the

resilience of investor sentiment and confidence in underlying fundamentals. That said, some Wall Street marquee names had their worst week in recent memory as money rotated away from heavyweights and big tech to mid-caps and undervalued plays.

The blue-chip Dow Jones Industrial saw sharp falls on July 18 and 19 which shaved its weekly gain to just 0.72 per cent as it closed at 40,287.53 points on July 19. Still, the marquee Wall Street index is up almost 7 per cent for the year.

The S&P 500 had its worst week since April as it slipped almost 2 per cent to 5,505 points, while the tech-heavy Nasdaq snapped a six-week winning streak to close in negative territory as it fell 3.65 points for the week at 17,726.94 as big tech stocks softened.

In Singapore, the Straits Times Index ended the week down 1.4 per cent at 3,447.56, giving back 50 points after hitting a six-year high two weeks ago and a 165 points gain in July.

While the benchmark index has given back a third of its recent gains in a week, it is consolidating ahead of the local earnings season which starts this week. While the

early July gains were driven by the moderately more dovish US rate outlook, the coming weeks could be earnings-driven.

Thai Beverage, Singtel and Yangzijiang were the top index performers last week, while Capitaland Investment, Capitaland Integrated Commercial Trust and DBS Bank weighed down the benchmark.

One stock to watch is Sats, which has risen 15 per cent over the past month. Analysts see more upside as the much enlarged entity, following the purchase and integration of Worldwide Flight Services, gains more global market share in a buoyant aviation market.

Last week's late selldown on Wall Street was sparked by a long overdue rotation to more undervalued segments of the market after a year-long tech stock-driven rally.

"Investors are taking money out of big tech stocks which have performed so well and moving that money into other areas of the market," said Mr Glen Smith, chief investment officer at GDS Wealth Management.

But tech stocks were also impacted by comments by former US president Donald Trump, who said that he would force Taiwan to pay for the protection it receives from the United States, and speculation that the Biden administration could be looking into restricting certain

semiconductor equipment makers' sales to China.

Nvidia, AMD and Broadcom get about 20 per cent of their total sales from China, according to FactSet data. That said, much of the output of these companies can easily be diverted to countries which are benefiting from the China-plus-one manufacturing strategy, analysts say.

The biggest risk to markets in 2024 could come from increased policy uncertainty and geopolitical risk surrounding the US election in November and its global ramifications. With Trump leading in polls following the June US presidential debate and the hoopla of the Republican gathering in Milwaukee last week, market insiders are redoing their sums to ascertain the impact of a Trump presidency on the US economy, the US dollar and global markets.

"Democratic victory would bring risks, but Congress would be gridlocked, while the Republican agenda is more proactive, unilateral and disruptive," noted BCA Research. "The GOP (Grand Old Party or Republican Party) would make major changes to fiscal, immigration, trade and foreign policy. So global policy uncertainty will rise rather than fall."

Indeed, US President Joe Biden and Trump have different views on how to manage the economy.

While Mr Biden favours higher taxes and a more active government role in industry, Trump wants less immigration, lower taxes and higher tariffs. These could be inflationary.

While acknowledging the prospect for higher volatility for the Treasury market and the US dollar, Mr Mark Haeefe, chief investment officer at UBS Global Wealth Management, thinks investors should not make major adjustments to their investment plans by taking election rhetoric at face value.

"The Trump plan would be a departure from current norms, but it is unlikely to be implemented in its entirety," he wrote.

"Campaign rhetoric and future policy are often very different things. In his previous term, Trump voiced support for policies like the gold standard but did little to implement them once in office."

In short, stay calm and stick to the fundamentals.

Seasoned market insiders also see monetary policy playing a bigger role in determining the market's direction than political rhetoric. They point out that with inflation numbers subsiding, interest rates are headed down.

The US Federal Reserve has indicated its inclination to cut rates in 2024, and the market is now factoring in two rate cuts by December. Mr Vasu Menon, managing director for investment strategy at OCBC Bank, sees the first rate cut coming as early as September amid growing confidence that price stability is within sight.

"The Fed has laid the groundwork for the coming move in speeches over recent weeks," he pointed out.

"Fed chairman Jerome Powell could flag it more explicitly after a policy meeting later this month. The Fed fund futures market now expects the US central bank to cut rates by two to three times this year, which is in stark contrast to a few weeks ago when only one rate cut was expected in the second half of this year."

As stated in this column before,

there is some US\$6 trillion (\$58.07 trillion) of funds sitting in money market deposits, earning good interest rate returns. If rates start declining, this money will find its way into higher-yielding assets, namely stocks and bonds. This will trigger the next leg-up for the market. Not just Wall Street, but all global markets.

That being the case, the current pullback offers an opportunity to accumulate desirable names which have hitherto torn away in a liquidity-fuelled rally since late 2023. While mega-caps and big tech saw some selldowns last week, money will flow back into them soon enough, given the tech- and artificial intelligence-driven future of the world.

Such opportunistic rotations were on full display on July 19. The selldown on cyber-security firm CrowdStrike, whose stock tumbled 11 per cent on July 19 after it caused the global tech blackout, saw funds flowing into the stocks of its rivals like Palo Alto Networks and SentinelOne. Expect such opportunistic rotational plays to become increasingly common in the months ahead.

So here's the thing. While the market had a turbulent week, it still has legs for more upside, especially if the US economy heads towards a soft landing and the Fed starts cutting rates.

All eyes this week will be on the US personal consumption expenditures (PCE) inflation rate for June scheduled for release on July 26. If the Fed's preferred inflation gauge confirms the disinflation narrative, it will enhance market confidence of a September rate cut even further.

The PCE inflation rate aside, a slew of other US data, offering clues about the US economic outlook, is also on tap this week. The data includes second-quarter economic growth figures, personal income and spending data, purchasing managers' index and manufacturing data, and the University of Michigan's consumer sentiment and inflation expectations indicators.

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## Why the US oil industry is booming

MIDLAND, Texas – For all the focus on an energy transition, the US oil industry is booming, extracting more crude than ever from the shale rock that runs beneath the ground in West Texas.

After years of losing money on horizontal drilling and hydraulic fracturing, the companies that have helped the United States become the leading global oil producer have turned a financial corner and are generating robust profits. The stocks of some oil and gas companies, such as Exxon Mobil and Diamondback Energy, are at or near record levels.

The industry's revival after bruising losses during the Covid-19 pandemic is due largely to market forces, though Russia's war in Ukraine has helped. US oil prices have averaged around US\$80 a barrel since early 2021, compared with roughly US\$53 in the four years before that.

That the price and demand for oil have been so strong suggests that the shift to renewable energy and electric vehicles will take longer and be more bumpy than some climate activists and world leaders once hoped.

Oil companies' success is not just the result of higher prices. Under pressure from Wall Street to improve financial returns, the companies that survived the 2020 oil price crash generally ditched the debt-fuelled growth strategy that had propelled the US shale boom.

Many pared spending and cut costs by laying off workers and automating more of their operations.

Since 2021, oil and gas wells in the US' lower 48 states have generated more than US\$485 billion (\$652 billion) in free cash flow, the money left over after spending on operations and new projects, according to estimates by Rystad Energy, a research and consulting firm. In the decade prior, the industry spent nearly US\$140 billion more than it took in.

"People used to call us drunken sailors," said Mr Steve Pruett, chief executive of oil and gas producer Elevation Resources, which is based in Midland, Texas, an industry hub in the Permian Basin. "Hopefully we're shaking off that reputation now."

In an odd twist, the financial success of US oil companies has been a political orphan, with neither President Joe Biden nor former

president Donald Trump celebrating the industry's recent wins.

Mr Biden has been reluctant to cheer oil companies, given the importance he has placed on addressing climate change. The President and his aides have, however, taken credit for the decline in petrol prices after they spiked in 2022 when Russia invaded Ukraine.

Trump has largely ignored the industry's success and has cast it as a victim in need of saving. He has promised, if elected, to undo Mr Biden's climate policies and to encourage oil companies to "drill, baby, drill", which could drive down oil prices and corporate profits.

The environmental consequences of the oil industry's financial turnaround are mixed. Producing and burning fossil fuels releases greenhouse gases that are warming the planet. But higher oil prices are also making cleaner forms of energy more attractive, said Ms Samantha Gross, a director at the Brookings Institution, a non-partisan research group.

"We're not going to get out of this business because supply was squeezed, because there's plenty of it," Ms Gross said. "We're going to get out of the business because demand went down."

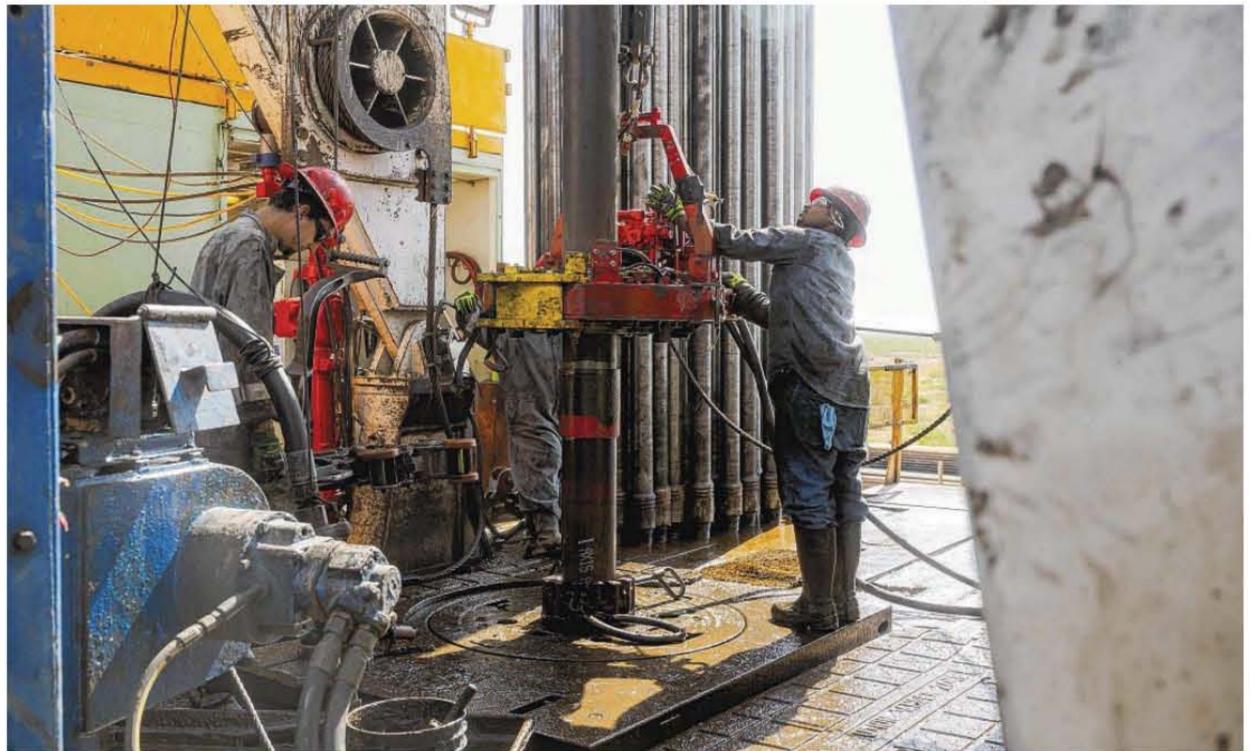
That has not happened so far. While oil makes up a smaller portion of the global energy mix than it did before the pandemic, partly because of the growth of electric vehicles, thirst for the fuel has continued to climb. Global demand reached a record of more than 100 million barrels a day in 2023, up 2.6 per cent from 2022, according to the Statistical Review of World Energy.

The Permian Basin, a vast expanse of oil pump jacks and mesquite shrubs that stretches from West Texas into eastern New Mexico, supplies roughly 6.4 million barrels a day of crude, or nearly half of all US production.

Booms and busts are the norm here, the economy inhaling and exhaling with the price of crude.

With oil trading around US\$80 a barrel, hotels are filling up, highways are jammed with trucks, and unemployment is low – 2.4 per cent in May in the Midland area. The national unemployment rate in June was 4.1 per cent.

Average oil production in the region is expected to rise 8 per cent this year from 2023, according to



Workers of oil and gas producer Elevation Resources in the Permian Basin. Oil companies' success is not just the result of higher prices. Companies generally ditched the debt-fuelled growth strategy that had propelled the US shale boom. Many also pared spending and cut costs. PHOTO: NYTIMES

federal estimates.

"We're going to be drilling wells like this for the next 40 years," said Permian Deep Rock Oil general manager Kyle Hammond. The company is a small operator that is drilling and fracking dozens of horizontal wells beneath the city of Midland. Towering sound barriers shield the surrounding neighbourhoods from the hum of a generator and the beeping of trucks moving in reverse.

Many oil companies are betting big on the Permian. Exxon, now the largest producer in the region, is aiming to increase oil and gas production here by some 50 per cent by the end of 2027.

GROWING DEMAND FOR OIL

We're going to be drilling wells like this for the next 40 years.



MR KYLE HAMMOND, general manager of Permian Deep Rock Oil, a small operator that is drilling and fracking dozens of horizontal wells beneath the city of Midland.

"That's reflective of the fact that there's demand out there," said Mr Bart Cahir, who leads the company's shale division.

Yet the same fiscal restraint and technological improvements that have made many oil producers more profitable have also weighed on the many contractors and vendors that serve them.

In late 2018, companies were running roughly 490 drilling rigs in the Permian and pumping around four million barrels of oil per day, federal data shows. Today, they are cranking out more than six million barrels with around 310 active rigs.

That means less business for the companies that operate drilling equipment and provide housing to the workers who commute into the oil field.

"It's not like booms of the past where – Katy, bar the door – let's just go," said Mr John Odette, chief operating officer of Crew Support Services, which operates a dozen mobile-home complexes throughout the Permian. "People have been a little more reserved."

The company's complexes, known as man camps, are around 85 per cent full, but rates are much lower than they were before the pandemic, Mr Odette said. A room

that would have fetched US\$100 a night in 2018 now brings in US\$50 to US\$80, he added.

And while oil prices are well above what most companies need to generate a healthy return, natural gas is so plentiful here that at times there has been nowhere to put it. There is not always sufficient capacity on pipelines to send it to states or countries where there is strong demand for that fuel.

For several days in July, natural gas prices in West Texas were negative, dropping to almost US\$4 below zero per million British thermal units, a standard unit of measurement for natural gas, according to S&P Global Commodity Insights. That means that instead of being paid for the fuel, producers had to pay other businesses to take it.

Languishing prices have amplified the frustration of many executives with Mr Biden, who in 2024 suspended approvals of new natural-gas export terminals. In July, a judge ordered the Biden administration to lift the pause, though analysts said the ruling would most likely have little immediate effect. Even in the best of circumstances, new terminals take many years to plan, permit and build.

"We need these terminals des-

perately right now to make a market for the gas," said Ms Suzie Boyd, a Midland-based consultant who helps producers sell their oil and gas.

Within the industry, the presidential campaign is stoking a simmering anxiety about the future. A large majority of oil and gas executives support Republicans, but some of them acknowledge that their industry often performs better with a Democrat in the White House. Democrats tend to impose tighter regulations, which limit production, keeping prices higher than they would be in a more laissez-faire environment, the thinking goes.

Whatever happens in the November election, the oil industry's future hinges on a larger question: What will happen to global demand for crude?

The International Energy Agency, a Paris-based multilateral organisation, expects global oil demand to peak before the end of the decade as more people and businesses buy electric cars and rely on wind and solar energy. But many oil executives and the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries say consumption will grow well into the 2030s, if not beyond. NYTIMES

OCBC Bank's head of wealth advisory Aaron Chwee speaking at the panel discussion at the Lifelong Learning Institute on July 19, with (from left) ST assistant business editor Alyssa Woo who moderated the session, DBS Bank's head of financial planning literacy Lorna Tan and The Woke Salaryman co-founder He Ruiming. ST PHOTO: MARK CHEONG



# Big Tech earnings to offer peek at AI growth potential

NEW YORK - Over the next two weeks, the quarterly results of Big Tech giants will offer a glimpse on the bankability of artificial intelligence (AI) and if the major investments AI requires are sustainable for the long haul.

Analysts at Wedbush Securities, one of Wall Street's biggest believers in AI's potential, expect "growth and earnings to accelerate with the AI revolution and the wave of transformation" it is causing.

The market generally agrees with this rosy AI narrative.

Analysts forecast double-digit growth for heavyweights Microsoft and Google, in contrast to Apple, a latecomer to the AI party, with only 3 per cent growth expected.

The iPhone maker, which releases its results on Aug 1, unveiled its new Apple Intelligence system only in June and plans to roll it out gradually over the coming months, and on the latest models only.

CFRA analyst Angelo Zino believes that the impact of these new features will not be felt until the iPhone 16 launches in September, the first to feature the new AI powers built in across all options. But he expects Apple's upcoming earnings to show improvement in China sales, a black spot since 2023.

"Apple's forecasts for the current quarter will be important" in assessing the company's momentum, Mr Zino said.

But "if there's one that we were maybe a little bit more concerned about, versus the others, it would be Meta", he added.

He pointed out that Mr Mark Zuckerberg's company raised its investment projections in April as it devoted a few billion dollars more on the chips, servers and data centres needed to develop generative AI.

CFRA expects Meta's growth to decelerate till the end of 2024. Combined with the expected increase in spending on AI, that should put earnings under pressure.

As for the earnings of cloud giants Microsoft on July 30 and Amazon on Aug 1, "we expect them to continue to report very good results, in line with or better than market expectations", Mr Zino said.

Microsoft is among the best positioned to monetise generative AI, having moved the fastest to implement it across all its products, and pouring US\$13 billion (S\$17.5 billion) into OpenAI, the start-up stalwart behind ChatGPT.

Winning the big bet on AI is "crucial" for the group, said Mr Jeremy Goldman of Emarketer, "but the market is willing to give them a level of patience".

The AI frenzy has helped Microsoft's cloud computing business grow in the double digits, something that analysts said could be hard to sustain.

"This type of growth cannot hold forever, but the synergies between cloud and AI make it more likely that Microsoft holds on to reliable cloud growth for some time to come," Mr Goldman said.

As for Amazon, "investors will want to see that the reacceleration of growth over the first quarter wasn't a one-off" at Amazon Web

Services (AWS), the company's world-leading cloud business, Mr Matt Britzman of Hargreaves Lansdown said.

Since AWS leads "in everything data-related, it should be well placed to capture a huge chunk of the demand coming from the AI wave", he added.

The picture "might be a little less clear" for Google parent Alphabet, which will be the first to publish results on July 23, "because of their search business" online, Mr Zino warned.

"Scepticism around AI Overviews", introduced by Google in mid-May, "is certainly justified", Emarketer analyst Evelyn Mitchell-Wolf said.

This new feature, which offers a written text at the top of results in a Google search, ahead of the traditional links to sites, got off to a rocky start.

Internet users were quick to report strange, or potentially dangerous, answers proposed by the feature that had been touted by Google executives as the future direction of search.

According to data from BrightEdge, relayed by Search Engine Land, the number of searches presenting a result generated by AI Overviews has plummeted in recent weeks as Google shies away from the feature.

Still, many are concerned about the evolution of advertising across the internet if Google pushes on with the Overviews model, which reduces the necessity of clicking on links. Content creators, primarily the media, fear a collapse in revenues.

But for Emarketer's Ms Mitchell-Wolf, "as long as Google maintains its status as the default search engine across most smartphones and major browsers, it will continue to be the top destination for search and the top destination for search ad spending". AFP

**Microsoft is among the best positioned to monetise generative AI, having moved the fastest to implement it across all its products, and pouring US\$13 billion (S\$17.5 billion) into OpenAI, the start-up stalwart behind ChatGPT. Winning the big bet on AI is "crucial" for the group, said Mr Jeremy Goldman of Emarketer, "but the market is willing to give them a level of patience".**

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| Singapore Government Bond UCITS ETF | IC | 16/07/2024 | 148.94 SGD |
| US Treasuries UCITS ETF             | ID | 16/07/2024 | 193.38 USD |

# 'Fire' lifestyle not for all but set financial goals early: Experts

Instead of 'financial independence, retire early', aim to live and retire meaningfully

Sue-Ann Tan  
Business Correspondent

The popular financial independence, retire early (Fire) movement is not for everyone, but what matters more is setting financial goals and having clear retirement and investment plans, said experts on a personal finance panel discussion.

Fire involves having a low-maintenance and frugal lifestyle while prioritising saving and investing, so people can retire early.

While this lifestyle has garnered buzz online, it is not universally suitable.

Instead, people should aim to live and retire meaningfully, while ensuring they save enough and invest according to their risk appetites, the finance experts on the panel said.

The panel was put together by HeadStart, The Straits Times' careers and personal finance newsletter for young people, and was held at the Lifelong Learning Institute in Paya Lebar on July 19.

It was also part of a July 18 to 20 event at PLQ Plaza and the institute called Thrive@libraries, organised by the National Library Board and SkillsFuture Singapore.

It was moderated by ST assistant business editor Alyssa Woo. Around 135 people attended the panel discussion.

Panelist He Ruiming, co-founder of personal finance blog The Woke Salaryman, said: "Fire

shouldn't be pursued by everyone. Back in the day, Fire in the US was pursued by people who work in software companies, earning big bucks in California.

"That's the richest of the richest people in the US, and I don't think you should extend that as a standard that should be applied to everyone."

Responding to a question on whether someone with children can pursue Fire, he noted that having children will set back retirement plans, but kids bring people joy if they decide to have them.

"What you can achieve is financial independence."

"You don't have to retire early, but you can retire at some point, which, for those who want kids and the joy the kids bring, is a worthy sacrifice," he said.

Ms Lorna Tan, head of financial planning literacy at DBS Bank, noted that there are three types of Fire: Lean Fire, which is about lowering your standard of living to achieve early retirement; Barista Fire, which means you still need to work to supplement passive income; and Fat Fire, which refers to having enough passive income to retire early and very comfortably.

Ms Tan is leaning more towards Fat Fire, but added that it is not about retiring early but retiring meaningfully.

"You don't have to be so fixated on retiring early, especially if you're enjoying the work that you do. Let's look at this term called Firm - financial independence, retire meaningfully.

"Work towards your financial freedom and, at the same time, understand your life purpose and align your money goals so they support your life purpose," she said.

She added that people also need to have plans for their retirement, such as studying or travelling, so it is not just about playing golf or watching Korean dramas all day at home.

Mr Aaron Chwee, head of wealth advisory at OCBC Bank, said regardless of Fire, people should have deliberate plans that consider what they need to retire and what sort of lifestyle they want, and then construct their portfolio and finances around that.

The principles of diversification and ensuring that people invest according to their personality and risk appetites still apply, he said.

His advice for those who want to achieve Fat Fire is to start young.

"You should be disciplined, and because you have that length of time, you're able to deploy more resources each time."

"You can go more into equities, such as those that are global and as a result more diversified," he said.

But the sandwiched generation who have to provide for parents and children might have fewer resources and can include fixed income in their portfolio instead, while ensuring they have enough finances in case of crises, he added.

Mr He said a guideline is that your age should equal the amount of portfolio allocation that you put into bonds, while subtracting your age from 100 is the amount you should put in equities.

This ensures that as one grows

older, the shift between fixed income and equities will reflect how much risk one can take, as equities are more volatile.

Ms Tan said, ultimately, compounding is a vital way for people to achieve Fat Fire so they have passive income.

She added that especially when pursuing Lean Fire, people fixate on getting income flows earlier in life and there is no effect of compounding over the years.

Ms Tan said: "I think it's good to adopt a long-term investment approach so that you can stay invested instead of timing the market."

"It also means not being so worried when the market goes up and down aggressively because you know you can ride through this time period."

"You know that whatever you've allocated into different investments has a strong foundation."

She advised upgrading one's financial knowledge and speaking to financial professionals.

Software engineer Tsai Hao Wei, 33, said the explanation of the different types of Fire was helpful, and he was looking at applying Lean Fire to his own life.

"I currently don't have many expenses and I lead a minimalist lifestyle, so it could be the easiest way forward for me," he said.

Mr Foo Fangwen, 41, who works in data analysis in private healthcare, said his main takeaway from the panel was that regardless of whether one tries Fire, the most important thing is to be disciplined and well versed in money matters.

"Those are principles that will work for all age groups," he said.

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# BUSINESS

## Firms using 'buy now, pay later' services see rise in sales

Mode of payment popular among younger people, say merchants and observers

**Chor Khieng Yuit**  
Senior Business Correspondent

Merchants in Singapore offering "buy now, pay later" (BNPL) plans are seeing an increase in sales, boosted by providers' promotions and marketing.

BNPL allows consumers to split their purchases into three or four equal interest-free monthly instalments.

Cosmetic dental start-up Zenyum is among merchants that have seen an uptick in sales from its use of BNPL services.

Zenyum's products, which include electric toothbrushes, electric water flossers, and invisible braces, can cost up to \$5,490. Customers can use BNPL, cash or credit cards to fund their purchases.

Mr Bhavin Mehta, Zenyum's managing director, said having the BNPL payment option has allowed the company to market its products according to how much they would cost customers monthly. They can see their purchases in a few monthly bills, instead of the full amount upfront.

The use of BNPL has also driven up sales for desk furniture retailer Omnidesk.

Mr Jason Tay, head of growth and strategy at Omnidesk, said the company recorded a 20 per cent uplift in the average order value when the BNPL option was offered.

Industry observers noted that younger people form the majority of those taking up BNPL services, and businesses are taking note.

Assistant professor of finance John Kuong at business school Insead told The Straits Times that the BNPL mode of payment is popular among millennials – those aged 28 to 43 – and members of Gen Z, aged 12 to 27.

Zenyum's sales manager Beatrice Lim said 40 per cent of its customers who use BNPL are Gen Zs, and 30 per cent are millennials.

Mr Tay said the majority of Omnidesk's customers who use BNPL



Optician Jarrell Chong attending to a customer using a "buy now, pay later" (BNPL) payment option on June 2 at eyewear retailer Spectacle Hut's Bedok Mall outlet. ST PHOTO: LUTHER LAU



Cosmetic dental start-up Zenyum said 40 per cent of its customers who use BNPL are Gen Zs, and 30 per cent are millennials. PHOTO: ZENYUM



Desk furniture retailer Omnidesk recorded a 20 per cent uplift in the average order value when the BNPL option was offered. PHOTO: OMNIDESK

are aged between 25 and 45.

Essec Business School's associate professor of information systems Jan Ondrus said BNPL instalment plans result in big-ticket items looking more affordable on a monthly basis.

As a result, consumers are more willing to make a purchase and spend more each time they buy something, he added.

Mr Mehta said BNPL customers prefer a zero-interest payment plan over credit cards. This is because BNPL allows them to spread out their payments over a longer period of three or four months without incurring interest charges. This is as opposed to credit cards, which have high interest charges if customers do not pay back in full a month later.

At Omnidesk, BNPL accounts for 25 per cent of all purchases, with the remaining 75 per cent being funded using a credit card or with cash.

Mr Tay said having the BNPL option has allowed Omnidesk to reach out to a new group of customers – those who may be feeling cash-strapped at the moment.

"BNPL caters to people who

could be trying to work out their finances or trying to save some money for rainy days," he said.

For example, some of these customers could have an existing home loan and monthly instalments to service.

Thus, they may not have enough cash left for other items, and appreciate the flexibility to break down their purchases into manageable amounts.

Prof Ondrus said even if these customers subsequently fail to pay their instalments on time, the merchants will be protected from potential financial losses as they would already have received the full payment for their products or services upfront from the BNPL service providers.

There are four accredited players here – Atome, Grab, SeaMoney and Abnkl.

Mr Tay explained how BNPL works with Atome, one of its BNPL providers: "Everything will be paid out by Atome. If a customer buys a desk for \$1,000, we receive the \$1,000 straight away. The customers' instalment payments go to Atome."

Prof Kuong and Prof Ondrus said

there are other benefits of working with a BNPL platform.

These platforms can provide valuable insights into customer behaviour and preferences when they analyse purchase transaction data.

In addition, Prof Ondrus said BNPL platforms offer special promotions and discounts to customers, so merchants can leverage these to grow their businesses.

But all this comes at a cost, with merchants having to pay fees to the BNPL service providers.

Prof Kuong said the fees are usually higher than those charged by credit card players.

Merchants view the costs as a necessary expense of being on a BNPL platform.

A spokesperson for Spectacle Hut said it has observed a "notable increase in sales" as BNPL platforms drive traffic and new customers to the eyewear retailer.

Ms Peggy Lin, marketing manager at Zenyum, said the fees charged by the BNPL providers depend on the volumes each brand brings to their platforms.

Mr Mehta said: "It is a cost that companies have to bear. The uplift

in conversion most often covers the fees that we have to pay for it."

Omnidesk's Mr Tay said: "We see it as an investment in marketing. They have such a big pool of customers. They have so many merchants on board with them."

"With a push of their marketing to say 'Omnidesk is having deals you can look out for, we have offers available that can be paired with Omnidesk' – that is where it is able to capture a bigger market for us."

Prof Ondrus said while merchants see an uplift in sales, consumers have to be cognisant that BNPL can encourage impulse buying or lead them to overspend.

If they subsequently cannot meet their monthly bill payments, they have to pay a fee for late payments.

For example, Atome charges an administrative fee of between \$15 and \$30 for each late payment.

As for Grab, the consumer's BNPL account will be temporarily suspended until he has made the outstanding payment. He will need to pay \$15 to reactivate his account.

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GIVES CUSTOMERS FLEXIBILITY

**BNPL caters to people who could be trying to work out their finances or trying to save some money for rainy days.**



**MR JASON TAY**, head of growth and strategy at Omnidesk, who said that the majority of the company's customers who use BNPL are aged between 25 and 45.

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**Online**



**COMMENTARY**  
**'Giving for good'**

The landscape of philanthropy in Singapore is going through a sea change, with new players, new incentives and innovative financing mechanisms.

str.sg/opinion-philanthropy

# OPINION

## Anxiety and optimism power China's fresh technological push

A strong belief in the potential for tech to improve lives remains a strong growth tailwind to Chinese aspirations.



A robot dog at the 26th China Beijing International High-Tech Exhibition in Beijing on July 16. China views technology as key to economic growth, military modernisation and global influence. PHOTO: AFP



**Lim Min Zhang**  
China Correspondent

BEIJING – In China's high-tech society today, much of a Chinese citizen's daily life invariably goes through smartphones and "super-apps" like WeChat and Meituan that enable many conveniences.

These include making food orders, renting a bicycle, booking holidays, hailing a taxi ride, buying movie tickets and sending parcels.

Mass adoption of such everyday tech here is high. China today is among the leaders in cashless payments. It also has a massive e-commerce and live-streaming industry, where one can buy anything from lipsticks to cars from some 15 million professional online hosts.

Beneath this phenomenon is an optimism, both among the public and in the government, about tech and its ability to propel the country forward that dovetails with a national agenda to achieve those goals. Beijing has made no secret of its desire to be a science and tech powerhouse, or *kejì qiángguó*, and views tech as key to economic growth, military modernisation and global influence.

While there are a variety of reasons for China's rapid tech rise in the past decade or so,

sinologists have traced this relentless desire among its people for technological progress to a longstanding "civilisational anxiety" that grew out of foreign subjugation towards the end of the Qing dynasty right through World War II.

That anxiety spawned the modernisation movement of the early 20th century that embraced science and technology as a solution to China's problems, with recent successes made possible with the proliferation of the internet.

Today, Chinese firms are spurred to find alternatives to modern technology designed by the West, beneath the shadow of a growing US-China tech war.

Yet whether this optimism can be sustained is an open question. Worries over jobs lost to artificial intelligence (AI) and automation

are growing and the regulatory crackdown has dampened the sheen of the private sector, which had driven much of the tech that improved people's lives.

### A TECH-DRIVEN SOCIETY

On many indicators of tech adoption, China today is among the top performers, even when compared with other populous countries like India. China is the world's largest e-commerce market, supported by an internet user base of 1.09 billion.

Payments in China are dominated by smartphones and QR codes, with Alipay and WeChat Pay being the most used digital wallets.

The growth of the domestic electric vehicle (EV) market has been particularly visible, powered by strong government support.

China accounted for just under 60 per cent of new global EV registrations in 2023, compared with around 25 per cent for Europe and 10 per cent for the United States.

An enthusiasm permeates developer conferences and tech forums in China. Hardly do months go by without new milestones in AI innovation reported in the news.

In April, Baidu claimed its Ernie AI chatbot – one of the most established Chinese alternatives to ChatGPT – had more than 200 million users. A United Nations report released in July 2024 found that China-based inventors are filing the highest number of generative AI patents, ahead of the US.

A reason for this zeal is that many home-grown technologies have become globally

competitive. In other words, China is no longer playing catch-up to their foreign counterparts in many consumer tech categories.

This is also a story of what doesn't kill you makes you stronger. Take, for example, the cut-throat industry of mobile devices, where a US export ban on cutting-edge computer chips has spurred indigenous innovation.

Telecoms giant Huawei has eaten into Apple's share of the domestic smartphone market. Apple's smartphone shipments in China fell 19 per cent in the first quarter of 2024, while Huawei's sales jumped 70 per cent, although Apple regained some ground in May.

Dr Lance Gore, a senior research fellow at the East Asian Institute in Singapore who has studied China's economic development, said Chinese people used to prefer foreign brands because they are more prestigious, as well as of better quality. "Now, Chinese consumer products have caught up with foreign products. Post-Covid, people no longer engage in conspicuous consumption that much."

Brands must now work harder to push sales. They are turning to innovation to deliver better features and more improvements. "Chinese brands are cheaper but with equally good or even better quality," he said.

The belief in the power of science and technology to achieve national progress has taken hold more broadly in Chinese society, argues Harvard University's Professor of Sociology Lei Ya-Wen, who is also author of the 2023 book, *The Gilded Cage: Technology, Development, And State Capitalism In China*. She points to Chinese respondents to the World Values Survey having some of the most positive attitudes towards science and technology.

The poll is a global research project conducted regularly since 1981, with the seventh iteration done between 2017 and 2020. One of the four science and tech-related questions asks whether more emphasis on technology in the future is a good thing.

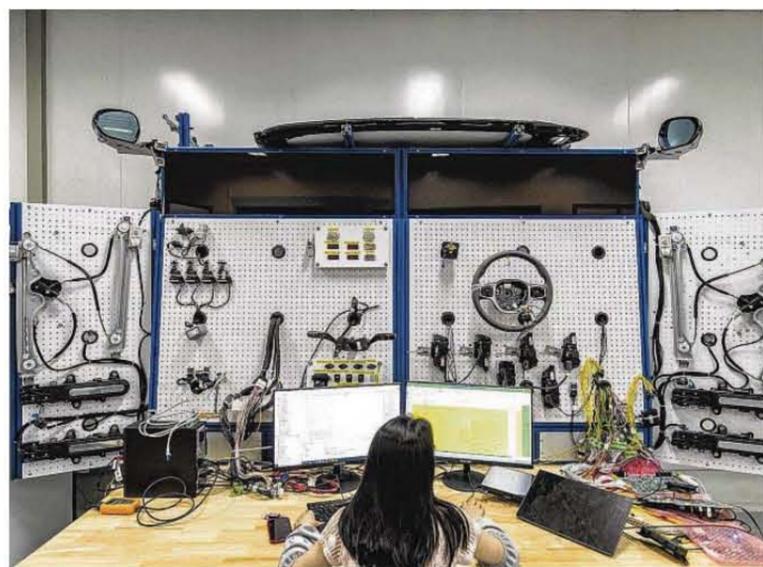
Among respondents from China, 92.5 per cent said this was a good thing. This puts the country second out of 54 countries or territories. In comparison, Singapore ranked 37th at 73.3 per cent and the United States was 47th at 54.2 per cent.

### 'CIVILISATIONAL ANXIETY'

There is a restlessness among the Chinese in seeking greater technological progress which can be seen in how they continue to look for a better and faster method of inputting Chinese characters on a standard Roman script keyboard when existing ones already do the job well.

The most widely used Chinese input editor uses *hanyu pinyin*, based on how Chinese words

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### COMMENTARY The Paris formula

The Olympic Games show must go on despite the carbon footprint as it remains a rare chance to bring humanity together on a level playing field, writes David Fogarty.

str.sg/olympics-climate

# China is the West's corporate R&D lab. Can it remain so?

Foreign firms want Chinese boffins. America and China may have other plans.

China is, famously, the world's factory and a giant market for the world's companies. More unremarked is its growing role as the world's research and development laboratory.

Between 2012 and 2021, foreign firms increased their collective Chinese research personnel by a fifth, to 716,000. Their annual R&D spending in the country almost doubled to 338 billion yuan (\$56.25 billion). Add investments by local firms, and China now matches Europe's R&D tally. Only America splurges more.

In 2022, despite harsh Covid-19 lockdowns, 25 new foreign R&D centres opened in Shanghai.

When overall foreign direct investments in China shrivelled by 80 per cent in 2023, those in R&D rose by 4 per cent. In the process, Western R&D centres in China have been re-engineered, from places to learn about the domestic market to hotbeds of innovation whose fruits can be found in products sold everywhere.

Foreign chief executives now believe that China's brainpower

and its innovation-curious regulatory regime are crucial ingredients of their companies' global success. Nowhere else in the world can newfangled technologies, from novel drugs to flying taxis, be tested as quickly as in China, marvels a foreign diplomat.

So even as the Chinese economy slows – it grew by a surprisingly tepid 4.7 per cent in the second quarter year on year – and multinational businesses try to reduce their reliance on Chinese supply chains amid mounting geopolitical tension, global CEOs are desperate to protect this critical third function of their Chinese operations.

In 2023, Volkswagen invested more than US\$1 billion (\$1.35 billion) in an innovation centre in the inland city of Hefei. Bosch, a fellow German firm that supplies parts to Volkswagen and other car giants, is building its own US\$1 billion R&D outpost in nearby Suzhou. HSBC, a British bank, employs thousands of people at an R&D centre in southern China, where they are working on uses

of AI, as well as other advanced technology such as blockchains and biometrics.

In February, AstraZeneca, a British pharmaceutical company, said it would turn its Shanghai operation into a global R&D hub. In March, Apple, the maker of the iPhone, unveiled new R&D initiatives around Shenzhen. The next month, Bayer, a German drugs-and-chemicals firm, said it was increasing its presence in Shanghai to bring "more technology from China to the world". In June, Tesla, an American electric-vehicle (EV) pioneer, was granted permission by Shanghai's authorities to conduct tests of its most advanced autonomous-driving systems on the city's streets.

A big reason for doing lots of R&D in China is the country's surplus of young engineers and scientists. Southern China is full of small companies developing all manner of clever technologies, from new chemicals to artificial intelligence (AI). This is a giant talent pool in which foreign multinationals can fish.

The Chinese boffins are certainly quite a catch. They are no less talented than their counterparts in the West, where

many of them studied and worked but still command considerably lower pay. The average monthly salary for a newly minted PhD at a foreign company in China is around 13,000 yuan, a third of what they would make in America. One multinational's China boss reckons he gets 30 per cent more working hours out of his research staff in China than his company manages to coax from similar workers in Europe.

A lot of this work is focused on D rather than R. In many areas China still produces less basic research than America but, by many accounts, more applications. Its app economy is the world's most sophisticated and, as one AI researcher at a foreign firm in Shanghai explains, leads the world in bringing machine learning to the masses. Cosmetics companies tend to launch more products in China than in other places – and also discontinue more. This lets them test consumers' reactions more rapidly than in other places, says a marketing specialist. Products that pass the Chinese test can then be offered abroad.

Pharmaceutical companies, among the world's biggest spenders on R&D, can tap a burgeoning network of world-class contract-research outfits that carry out trials more cheaply than in the West. They have also found that the Chinese are keener to participate in clinical trials than people in other places. China's population of 1.4 billion means that it is also easier to recruit sufficient numbers of patients even for trials of drugs targeting rare diseases, adds Dr Eric Bouteiller of China Europe International Business School.

Trials, whether of cosmetics, apps, medicines or autonomous vehicles, are made simpler by China's regulatory forbearance. Local governments vie with one another, and with other countries,

**A big reason for doing lots of R&D in China is the country's surplus of young engineers and scientists. Southern China is full of small companies developing all manner of clever technologies, from new chemicals to artificial intelligence (AI). This is a giant talent pool in which foreign multinationals can fish.**

to be leaders in emerging industries that will undergird what China's President Xi Jinping calls "high-quality growth".

Pharma executives praise Chinese rules for clinical studies that are independently designed and conducted by researchers rather than drugmakers. In some fields, such as cell therapies for cancer, these investigator-initiated trials in China are identifying successful treatments faster than in other places, says Ms Susan Galbraith of AstraZeneca.

Developers of passenger drones are similarly complimentary about rules that allow them to fly their contraptions in designated zones springing up in Chinese cities. Volkswagen began testing a prototype drone in the province of Inner Mongolia in 2022, a world first for a legacy carmaker. Forget San Francisco, says a foreign executive participating in such tests. If you want to set up a testing programme quickly, you had better come to China.

Western companies would understandably hate to be shut out of this R&D paradise. Some are nonetheless bracing

themselves for such an eventuality. In June, the US Treasury Department issued draft rules that would ban American firms from investing in AI, semiconductors, microelectronics and quantum computing in China. These could come into force later in 2024.

## LAB LEAKS

At the same time, Mr Xi's paranoid security apparatus is making it harder to move some intellectual property (IP) generated in China outside its borders, ignoring economically minded officials' concomitant efforts to attract foreign investment.

Exports of some AIs, such as speech- and text-recognition software or even TikTok's recommendation algorithm, now need permission from the Commerce Ministry. So far, this has not stopped most IP from leaving the country. But this may change at any moment, says Mr Alex Roberts of Linklaters, a law firm. "We are at a tipping point."

In anticipation of tougher US and Chinese IP regimes, some foreign companies have started to move research staff out of China. Even as Apple doubles down on its Chinese R&D, Microsoft, its big-tech rival, is said to be offering AI researchers in Beijing relocation packages as it winds down more sensitive R&D in China. Although AstraZeneca and Bayer remain ostensibly bullish on Chinese research, some pharmaceutical companies are seeking more clarity about the rules for cross-border transfer of data and IP, says an industry insider, and are rethinking new investments.

The flying-taxi firms are staying put for now. One day they, too, may have no choice but to take flight. © 2024 THE ECONOMIST NEWSPAPER LIMITED. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

## Innovations by firms help ease tech adoption

FROM BI

sound, but other methods allow them to be typed far more quickly – with one allowing up to 222 characters per minute, or 3.7 per second, as seen at a national competition in 2013.

Sinologist Thomas Mullaney in his 2024 book, *The Chinese Computer*, argues that one reason for the continued search for ever-better input methods is the "two-centuries-long, crucible-like period of civilisational anxiety" when China was confronted with Western-style modernity.

"Chinese input is yet another part of this anxiety-ridden history of 'compensation,'" said the Stanford University professor.

As Prof Lei put it: "Science and technology have been seen as solutions to rejuvenate China since the late Qing period in the context of Western imperialism."

Cultural and historical reasons aside, a more practical reason for China's tech rise and the associated adoption has been the innovations by private tech giants, notably Alibaba and Tencent, in making instant messaging and paying for online shopping, among others, easy to do.

The Chinese government has helped by building infrastructure such as those for mobile telecommunications, and China is among countries that lead in deploying 5G networks.

Assistant Professor Cao Xuenan of The Chinese University of Hong Kong said the low cost and wide coverage of mobile data in China has been democratising. By some measures, China has some of the lowest average cost of mobile data in the world.

This means farmers in rural areas can also hawk their own products on e-commerce platforms like the Alibaba-owned Taobao, said Prof Cao, adding that Alibaba has also done well in



Fintech giant Ant Group's headquarters in Hangzhou, China. A more practical reason for China's tech rise and the associated adoption has been the innovations by private tech giants in making instant messaging and paying for online shopping, among others, easy to do. PHOTO: BLOOMBERG

linking digital payments with e-commerce and social media promotions.

"I don't think there is such a thing as Chinese people having some inherent openness towards tech. Given the size of the population, there will be some segments that will adopt tech slower than others," she said.

### CAN THE OPTIMISM CONTINUE?

The bigger question is whether China can sustain this ethos of optimism fuelled by restlessness that powered the years of rapid growth and experimentation.

The growth of the internet had heralded a golden era for Chinese tech firms, especially in the 2010s. Alibaba's 2014 initial public offering, which raised US\$25 billion (\$33.5 billion), was by far

the largest in history.

But a crackdown on the industry from 2020 to 2022 – including antitrust probes on Baidu, Meituan and JD.com – signalled the growing primacy of political control and national interest over wealth generation and entrepreneurship.

Positive Chinese attitudes will likely remain a tailwind to China's tech ambitions, providing fertile ground for continued adoption of new technologies.

Ms Rui Ma, who is the founder of the Tech Buzz China podcast and newsletter, suggested that people who came of age during the past 40 years of rapid changes in Chinese society have gotten used to this speed of tech change.

"There is a general expectation that what's new is better. People

are trained to upgrade in pretty short cycles. In addition, most of these truly had little negative impact – environmental concerns notwithstanding – and really were mostly improvements to daily life.

"However, I definitely see more pushback, now that robots could be threatening human jobs such as with autonomous driving, and that's a relatively new thing," she said.

Concerns that tech could replace jobs might indeed dampen optimistic sentiments. In June, Baidu's fleet of commercial autonomous cabs in Wuhan, which started operations in 2022, drew a petition from a local taxi operator accusing such self-driving robotaxis of "taking jobs from the grassroots". Another key issue is the tech

rivalry with the US. Mr Alex Capri, author of *Techno-Nationalism: How It's Reshaping Trade, Geopolitics And Society*, sees the "techno-nationalist Cold War" as detrimental to Chinese companies, particularly as Silicon Valley AI firms build upon their lead in innovation.

Many open-source platforms used to build AI, such as GitHub and TensorFlow, sprang forth from the open American tech landscape, and in a more liberal trading environment, benefited Chinese companies hugely, he noted.

Additionally, as Beijing attempts to ring-fence and control more data in the digital commons, and as Chinese firms lose access to these data sources, their machine learning

capabilities have been hamstrung, said Mr Capri.

Beijing wants tech development on its own terms. This is shaping the behaviour of the private sector, including foreign firms, to its benefit. Tesla has partnered Baidu to roll out its full self-driving assistance system on Chinese roads. Apple is reportedly searching for a Chinese partner to push out AI features on its devices for the Chinese market, given that ChatGPT and other Western AI models are not available in China.

With China going all in on innovation, including training the next generation and funding basic research, there may yet be more wind in China's tech sails.

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At attractions such as KidZania Singapore (above), dynamic pricing is becoming increasingly common in the global leisure sector, including in the Republic. ST FILE PHOTO

# Why dynamic pricing makes family outings less fun

It will be harder for families on tighter budgets to access attractions if the prices keep changing based on algorithms.

**Kelvin Law**

The orderly queues and predictable pricing at Japan's theme parks feel like a world away from Singapore's latest entertainment pricing trend. On a recent family trip, we were amazed at the consistency – from the months-long advance reservations for popular attractions like the Wizarding World of Harry Potter and Ghibli Park to the identical prices on Japanese and English menus. Yet, upon our return, we were confronted with a stark contrast: KidZania Singapore's new dynamic pricing model, where prices change according to demand. This isn't just about KidZania; it's part of a broader shift. At venues such as theme parks and concerts, dynamic pricing is becoming increasingly common in the global leisure sector, including in Singapore. This trend raises pressing questions: How does dynamic pricing affect family outings and entertainment? Is it something unavoidable for businesses or a potential barrier to accessible leisure? As we grapple with these

fluctuating prices, it's clear that the economics of fun time is becoming a complex equation for consumers and businesses alike.

**WHAT'S DYNAMIC PRICING?**

Dynamic pricing, also known as demand-based pricing, has roots in traditional market practices but has evolved significantly with the advent of data analytics and machine learning. This pricing strategy allows businesses to adjust prices in real time based on market demand, competitor actions and other external factors. Imagine a seesaw at a playground. On one end sits demand, on the other, price. As more children (demand) pile onto one end, the price end rises to balance it out. This is the essence of dynamic pricing – a constant balancing act between what people want and what they're willing to pay. It's important to distinguish between dynamic pricing and other pricing models. While dynamic pricing includes a broad range of price adjustments, surge pricing specifically refers to significant price hikes in periods of exceptionally high demand. Take Grab as an example. Grab exemplifies both dynamic and

surge pricing concepts. Its standard fare adjustments throughout the day represent dynamic pricing, while the multiplied fares during peak hours constitute surge pricing. Dynamic pricing in ride-hailing services in general reduce wait times by increasing driver supply, as well as reducing consumer demand. If an amusement park is charging a different rate on weekends than weekdays or holiday seasons (like KidZania Japan), that's not dynamic pricing – it's tiered pricing.

**THE ECONOMIC CASE AND CONTROVERSIES**

From an economic standpoint, dynamic pricing is often touted as a tool for optimising resource allocation and maximising efficiency. By balancing supply and demand in real time, it can potentially reduce wait times, improve service quality and increase market accessibility for price-sensitive consumers. Research shows some evidence supporting these theoretical benefits. From a business perspective, dynamic pricing can lead to increased revenue, which could theoretically be reinvested into improving services, expanding facilities or hiring additional staff. However, these potential benefits are not guaranteed and may vary significantly based on

market conditions and implementation strategies. But not every implementation of dynamic pricing is well received by consumers. In February, Wendy's announced plans in the US to implement dynamic pricing in its restaurants. It means that the price of the same burger could be lower during off-peak hours at 10am or higher during dinner times. While this approach should increase firm profitability, consumers perceived it as potential price gouging. The backlash was immediate. #BoycottWendys trended on social media, and competitors like Burger King capitalised on the situation with promotions like "No urge to surge". This controversy highlights the delicate balance companies must strike when implementing dynamic pricing strategies. While fast food and ride hailing are one thing, the application of dynamic pricing to family leisure activities raises unique concerns. When applied to theme parks or cultural attractions, it can significantly impact the accessibility of these experiences, particularly for families on tight budgets. **HARD ON FAMILIES** At the heart of dynamic pricing lies a complex computer algorithm – lines of proprietary computer codes that few

consumers truly understand. Unlike traditional pricing methods where costs and markups are relatively transparent, these algorithms operate in near-total opacity. No consumer can tell for sure how the dynamic pricing works or how high the surge multiplier can go. Companies crunch vast amounts of data – from historical visits to weather forecasts, and allegedly even your remaining phone battery life – to set prices that can change in real time within minutes. The algorithms take into account a wide range of factors to determine prices. For example, if the computer predicts that the weather will be extremely hot during the coming weekend, the price of entry to an amusement park could be higher. Similarly, if the algorithm detects a high volume of inquiries from internet traffic in Singapore on a specific day, it might increase the price for that date, even if the venue is not at full capacity. For consumers, this can feel like trying to hit a moving target. A family planning a trip to an amusement park might find ticket prices fluctuating not just day to day, but hour to hour or even minute to minute because of the real-time feature. Such unpredictability can make budgeting for leisure activities particularly challenging, especially for families on tight

budgets. Moreover, the lack of transparency surrounding these algorithms raises questions about fairness. Are all consumers treated equally, or could the algorithms inadvertently discriminate based on factors like location or browsing history? The black box of dynamic pricing makes it difficult for consumers to know if they are being treated fairly, leading to concerns about the equitable distribution of prices. This could exacerbate the perception that leisure and entertainment have become yet another marker of social status and privilege, which could have profound implications on our social fabric. If the primary goal is to maintain the quality of family experience, venues with fixed capacity could consider alternatives to dynamic pricing, such as limiting visitor numbers with predictable tiered pricing announced months in advance. Operators can leverage historical data on visitor patterns to anticipate peak times and factor in school holidays and national holidays in various countries. A clear, pre-announced tiered pricing structure based on these data could offer visitors the transparency they need for planning and budgeting. This approach stands in stark contrast to the opaque nature of dynamic pricing algorithms. Moreover, it raises important questions about equity and access. Is it fair to charge higher prices on days that are traditionally more convenient for families, like local school holidays? How does this impact the accessibility of leisure activities for different segments of society?

**FINDING THE RIGHT BALANCE**

The debate between dynamic pricing and more traditional approaches ultimately reflects a broader tension in the leisure industry: balancing profitability with social responsibility. As Singapore's leisure sector evolves, finding the right equilibrium between these competing interests will be vital for maintaining public trust and ensuring fair access to leisure activities for all residents and visitors alike. To strike this balance, businesses should carefully navigate several key factors before implementing dynamic pricing. First, businesses should provide clear and pre-announced information about how prices are determined, how frequently they change and what factors influence these changes. Second, they should explore alternative approaches such as tiered pricing with visitor limits, which can offer more predictability for consumers while still managing demand. Third, businesses must regularly assess the impact of their pricing strategies on accessibility and inclusivity, particularly for vulnerable segments or price-sensitive consumers. If regular family outings become seen as a luxury rather than a norm, it could influence decisions around family formation and childbearing. While economic theories provide valuable insights, businesses must not lose sight of their social responsibilities to ensure that the price of fun remains fair, transparent and accessible for all.   
 • Kelvin Law is associate professor of accounting at Nanyang Technological University's Nanyang Business School.

# When it comes to work, age isn't just a number

Despite the risks highlighted by Biden and Labour's plans to force peers to retire at 80, setting a cut-off age is not a simple matter.

**Emma Jacobs**

At 91, Mr Alf Dubs has two measures guiding his decision to continue as a Labour peer in the UK's House of Lords. The first is personal: can he make a contribution, particularly on refugee issues, an area he has some expertise on, not least

because in 1939 he fled Czechoslovakia on Kindertransport to arrive in Britain. The second is whether family and colleagues think he has the mental fitness. If there's any sign he "is losing it", they are to "please, please tell me", he says. The former MP does not want the same fate as elderly peers he has seen "wandering around the

Lords looking totally lost". The new Labour government is expected at a later date to force peers to retire from the House of Lords at the end of the Parliament during which they turn 80. "I'm not sulking," says Mr Dubs, who personally has "no problem" with such a proposal. Under more urgent plans outlined in last week's King's Speech, Labour axed hereditary peers. But Mr Dubs wants to go further, favouring an elected second chamber. He believes age is a "very blunt instrument... one has to be careful you don't discriminate". There are peers, such as Mr Neil Kinnock, 82, and Mr Michael Heseltine, 91, "who make important contributions". Tenure rather than age may be a more useful guide. Debate over whether one can be too elderly for a job had become pressing in the US before the attempted assassination of Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump. Political discourse was focused on whether, at 81, President Joe Biden was capable

of a second term – or let's face it, even manage a blunder-free public appearance. Introducing Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky as "President Putin" at the recent Nato summit was just the latest misstep, ratcheting up worries over his competence. Discussion about the US President's age feeds into a wider debate, articulated by Irish writer Fintan O'Toole: "Biden, fairly or otherwise, is the lightning rod for deep generational discontents." In other words, anger over older generations hoarding jobs and wealth. Globally, Mr Biden and Trump, who is 78, are in the minority. Pew Research found the median age of national leaders to be 62 on May 1. The largest share of global leaders (34 per cent) were in their 60s. Roughly a fifth (22 per cent) were in their 50s; 19 per cent in their 70s; and 16 per cent in their 40s. Mr Biden was among the 5 per cent of leaders in their 80s. The latest UK prime minister, Mr Keir Starmer, is 61, replacing 44-year-old Mr Rishi Sunak.

Working older is a prospect for more of us as pension ages increase in tandem with life expectancy. But also as economics professor Andrew Scott points out in his book, *The Longevity Imperative*, "given fertility trends, firms will find themselves competing with one another for fewer younger workers and increasingly turning to older workers". To do so, they will have to overcome ageism. While this has only been exacerbated by Mr Biden and the House of Lords, it is a persistent problem. In his 1974 book, *Working*, oral historian Studs Terkel wrote that while "the science of medicine has increased our life expectancy", employers had not caught up. "The science of business frowns upon the elderly." Mr Terkel cited labour economist John Coleman who took – and lost – a number of blue-collar jobs as part of his research, leaving him feeling "demoralised". "I had an inkling of how professionals my age feel when they lose their job and their

confidence begins to sink," Dr Coleman said. He was 51. Dr Emily Andrews, the deputy director of work at the Centre for Ageing Better, says that rather than seeing employees solely "through an age lens", it is more important "whether people can do their jobs". Prof Scott agrees it is reasonable for someone elected to a senior job to prove their cognitive ability and fitness for the role. "The problem is demanding it only from those aged, say, over 80. We think of age only in terms of decline – health, cognition – but some things increase, for example, experience," he says. To make way for fresh talent and dynamic teams, Prof Scott says employers need to remain innovative while avoiding ageism and "denying older people rights and opportunities". That means making sure institutions adjust and adapt to include all ages. This isn't about special pleading – the young might not believe it, but ageing happens to them too. FINANCIAL TIMES

This is the tenth of a series of 12 primers on current affairs and issues in the news, and what they mean for Singapore.



**Joyce Teo**  
Senior Health Correspondent

Like smoking, using electronic cigarettes, or vaping, carries the danger of addiction to nicotine.

These e-cigarettes also generate toxic substances, some of which are known to cause cancer, while others increase the risk of heart and lung disorders, said the World Health Organisation (WHO).

The use of these products can also affect brain development and lead to learning disorders in young people, it added.

To prevent these health problems, governments around the world are tackling the issue head on, with measures that can include a ban on the use and sale of e-cigarettes.

In Singapore, vaping is illegal, but vaping offences are on the rise.

Schools are working with the health authorities to make students aware of the harms of vaping. Teens who are caught vaping may have to attend cessation programmes to help them kick the habit.

It underscores the challenges faced by the health authorities in helping their populations make healthy choices such as not smoking, exercising regularly, eating healthy diets and prioritising mental well-being.

Many of these choices are dictated by factors outside of people's control, such as the environments they live in, the food they can afford to buy, and their access to healthcare.

But as health expenditures rise, especially in rapidly ageing populations like Singapore's, governments have identified preventive healthcare – along with other measures like devolving more care to community and home-based services, and implementing appropriate healthcare financing – as a vitally important strategy to slow the increase.

In a speech to the Securities Investors Association (Singapore) on July 12, Health Minister Ong Ye Kung warned: "Governments spend a lot on healthcare, typically 10 per cent to 12 per cent of gross domestic product amongst developed countries, and 17 per cent in the United States, with very suboptimal outcomes.

"Singapore spends under 5 per cent (of its) GDP on healthcare, with widely regarded good outcomes. So our returns on healthcare are not too bad, but this is bound to rise as our population gets older."

In the same speech, Mr Ong said it was "modest investments" in getting exercise, eating better, sleeping better, and having periodic health screenings and vaccinations that would yield "bountiful paybacks" in more years of happy, fulfilled lives.

For this reason, he said, Singapore is anchoring its long-term healthcare strategy on Healthier SG, a preventive care programme. The scheme seeks to pair every individual with a primary care doctor who will give them support and guidance on managing their health.

Compared with other parts of health spending, preventive health programmes do not cost all that much. A study led by the

**Primer**

# Health prevention doesn't cost much but reaps rich dividends



Healthier SG is a major health reform that shifts the anchor for healthcare from acute hospitals to the community. One challenge faced by doctors is that people have the tendency to be less motivated about maintaining good health until they are sick and want to get better. PHOTO: LIANHE ZAOBAO

Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation in Seattle, that reviewed healthcare expenditures in 195 countries, found that the lion's share of global health spending goes to curative care and medical goods, at 51 per cent and 17 per cent, respectively.

Looking at data reported by countries between 2000 and 2017, researchers found that low-income countries spent a greater proportion of their total health expenditures on preventive care, at 17.6 per cent, than lower middle-income, upper middle-income and high-income countries, which spent 9.8 per cent, 8 per cent and 3.7 per cent, respectively.

The WHO says: "Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity."

Preventive healthcare focuses on addressing the root causes and social factors that cause disease, and usually includes implementing vaccination programmes and health education, making screening available to detect diseases at an early stage, and providing restorative care and rehabilitation.

It may take capacity building. The WHO notes that secondary prevention, which involves early detection of diseases through screening programmes, is of limited value unless the country's healthcare system is able to correct or treat the abnormalities detected promptly.

But for as long as humans have organised into societies, they have tried to prevent diseases from spreading.

As far back as 1388, there was a sanitation Act in England that prohibited animal filth and refuse from being thrown into rivers or

## About The Straits Times-Ministry of Education News Outreach Programme

For 12 Mondays between March 18 and Aug 5, this paper's journalists examine different contemporary topics in the Opinion section. The primers broach subjects as wide-ranging as trust in the digital age, the future of transport, and the modern definition of success. Each includes a local

perspective to help students draw links to the issues' implications for Singapore. The primer articles are part of The Straits Times-Ministry of Education News Outreach Programme, which aims to promote an understanding of local and global issues among pre-university students.

ditches. In the Middle Ages, quarantines were enforced during plague outbreaks.

Then in 1796, the world's first successful vaccination was carried out by English physician Edward Jenner, using cowpox against the deadly smallpox virus.

A breakthrough came in the 19th century with French chemist and microbiologist Louis Pasteur's discovery that infectious diseases are caused by live

microbes. He developed the first vaccine for rabies in the laboratory, with weakened microbes.

The discovery of X-rays in 1895 opened the door to new diagnostic methods. This and other technological developments in the 20th and 21st centuries allowed for screening of non-infectious diseases like cancer now.

While infectious diseases were

**The lynchpin of Healthier SG will be the doctors at more than 1,000 general practitioner (GP) clinics, as well as the polyclinics who have been tasked with drawing up and managing care plans for their patients. For them to play this wider role, however, GPs must first be empowered to transcend their traditional roles as "cough and cold doctors", noted a commentary by local public health experts published in medical journal The Lancet in July 2023.**

once the dreaded killers, it is preventable diseases such as cancer, heart disease and diabetes that cause the majority of deaths today.

The WHO said that about 41 million people die each year of non-communicable chronic diseases, equivalent to 74 per cent of all deaths globally. Of these, cardiovascular disease is the top killer, accounting for 17.9 million deaths each year, followed by cancers (9.3 million), respiratory diseases (4.1 million), and diabetes (1.5 million).

Many of these deaths could have been avoided through effective public health and primary prevention programmes.

"We often hear calls for investment in hospital capacity and in our medical manpower. But what is more important for the long term is capacity expansion in communities and society, in its ability to prevent sickness and build health. We are doing so via Healthier SG," said Mr Ong in March at the debate on his Ministry's budget.

"And we are starting to see a change. More residents are coming forward to exercise, cycle, run or brisk-walk. People are watching their sugar intake."

### MEASURING PEOPLE'S LEVEL OF HEALTH AND OPTIMISING THOSE

Healthier SG is a major health reform that shifts the anchor for healthcare from acute hospitals to the community.

MOH introduced it in July 2023 to empower Singaporeans to take charge of their health, with the support of a trusted family doctor. Upon enrolment, they will get a care plan that may include recommended vaccinations, screenings, and lifestyle health advice.

Like other preventive health programmes, Healthier SG depends on multiple stakeholders and partners such as family doctors, community service providers, and people receiving care to be effective.

According to Dr Tom Frieden, former director of the US Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, the successful implementation of a public health initiative requires five elements: good data, rigorous analysis, sensible guidance, broad buy-in, and effective action.

For instance, an outbreak of an infectious disease like Covid-19 needs scientists and analysts to collect and understand constantly changing data, experts and the authorities to develop strategies and marshal the medical professionals, the relevant agencies to implement them, and the public to comply with advisories.

The lynchpin of Healthier SG will be the doctors at more than 1,000 general practitioner (GP) clinics, as well as the polyclinics who have been tasked with drawing up and managing care plans for their patients.

For them to play this wider role, however, GPs must first be empowered to transcend their traditional roles as "cough and cold doctors", noted a commentary by local public health experts published in medical journal The Lancet in July 2023.

The article's first author, Dr Foo Chuan De, a research fellow at the Saw Swee Hock School of Public Health, said patients must trust their GPs to be their predominant point of contact within the health system.

For GPs to be effective, their needs must be heard and attended to, he said.

"Private GPs tend to operate as solo practices and might not have the additional manpower to fulfil certain requirements under Healthier SG policy. Additional administrative or clinical requirements might cause GPs to wonder if the juice is worth the squeeze," Dr Foo told The Straits Times.

Furthermore, doctors may have to be their patients' health coach and cheerleader.

Professor Chong Yap Seng, dean of the Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine at NUS, said that there is no magic pill they can prescribe for good health.

One challenge faced by doctors is that people have the tendency to be less motivated about maintaining good health until they are sick and want to get better.

Prof Chong suggested that family physicians should work with researchers on how to measure people's levels of health and optimise those, to shift the conversation away from illness.

"Rather than saying, I diagnose the disease and treat, now, I want to diagnose your level of health, and I want to treat it to make it better," he said.

Family physicians may also need retraining in understanding human behaviour and how to dispense health advice, subjects not much taught in medical schools.

The healthcare system will also have to modify or refine interventions to persuade the public to comply with their doctors' advice, he said.

In the future, preventive care could become a ubiquitous aspect of the healthcare system, making it the norm right from birth.

When a child is born, he is screened to make sure that medical problems or signs of diseases are picked up early. He will have routine health checks, get the vaccines he needs, and be urged to follow a healthy lifestyle.

When healthy choices are the investment, right into old age, the rich dividends could be a life enjoyed with less time in ill health.

joyceteo@sph.com.sg

## Will Healthier SG spur Singaporeans to be healthy?

The answer may take decades.

No one says no to health but building it takes effort. This is why the Ministry of Health (MOH) is giving Singaporeans a helping hand with the July 2023 launch of Healthier SG, a national initiative that aims to empower them to take charge of their health before ill health descends to destroy their quality of life.

Adults aged 40 and above are eligible for Healthier SG. Enrolling in the programme means signing up with a family clinic of their choice, so that a

relationship can be established with a trusted family doctor. This way, any medical advice dispensed is more likely to be heeded, and the treatment options complied with.

The doctor won't just be recommending appropriate vaccinations and health screenings, but will also connect people to community resources such as interest groups or support providers to address the non-medical factors that can greatly impact health. Those with chronic conditions can also be

managed at the clinic.

The hope is that this will help many people to have a relatively good quality of life, particularly in the later years, which so many spend in ill health. The healthcare system will also benefit, with fewer people becoming so sick that they need expensive hospital treatments, for instance.

Singaporeans already enjoy a high level of health, and are living longer than before. However, the population is rapidly ageing and for many, the

last years of life are often spent in ill health.

"Our average lifespan is about 84 years. Our average health span is 74 years. This means the average Singaporean suffers 10 years of ill health before passing away," said Health Minister Ong Ye Kung at an ageing symposium in October 2023.

One in four Singaporeans will be aged 65 and above by 2030. And, the prevalence of preventable chronic diseases, such as hypertension, diabetes and obesity, which has risen over

the years even among younger people, will continue to go up unless lifestyles change.

Nearly a year after the launch of this preventive care strategy, MOH said close to 890,000 people have signed up for it.

Taking steps to be healthy does not always feel like an urgent matter when one is healthy. As an incentive to take the first step, participants get \$20 worth of healthpoints, which they can exchange for vouchers or credits. To get these, they need to complete the first consultation.

Eligible Singaporeans will get recommended vaccinations or screenings at no cost, and participants with chronic medical needs can get certain common drugs from their Healthier SG GP clinics at prices comparable with those at polyclinics.

It will take more than time to encourage people to be mindful of their health from an early age.

Healthier SG is just the start of a long journey that may eventually create many more healthy older adults, by instilling a mindset of self-empowered healthy living, which would benefit future generations.

The question is: Are Singaporeans ready to take the steps towards better health?  
**Joyce Teo**

# FORUM

Letter of the day

## Social changes a reason to look at extending HDB lease

The 99-year lease on HDB flats continues to be a contentious issue for Singaporeans, especially given how expensive flats have become (Future of HDB flats: A delicate balancing act, says sociologist Chua Beng Huat, July 13; and Don't allow 99-year HDB lease issue to remain unresolved, July 19).

This is not simply a matter of rising costs. The Housing Board began its 99-year lease model for its public housing flats in the 1960s. This lease model means that the ownership of the flats will revert

to the state after 99 years. Addressing Parliament, National Development Minister Desmond Lee has said that HDB flats of 99-year leasehold strike a good balance between providing a home for life, asset appreciation, rejuvenating our city and building homes for the new generation.

However, it should be recalled that in the 1960s, the life expectancy of Singaporeans was just 60-plus years. Moreover, Singaporeans married and had children very early then, often in their 20s.

Taken together, the 99-year lease would have allowed the children of the original buyers to live in that HDB home for life if desired. Socially, this makes sense, and provides families with stability and the intimate memories of growing up in that home.

It also helps buyers whose children have a permanent disability or serious illness, giving families the peace of mind that, regardless of finances, the children can spend the rest of their lives in their parents' home if need be.

Moving forward to the present, the life expectancy of Singaporeans has increased significantly to more than 80 years. Singaporeans are also marrying later and delaying having children, if they have any at all.

These seismic social changes in Singapore ought to be considered in determining anew the length of HDB flat leases. For instance, extending the leases of HDB flats to, say, 150 years may help allay some of these concerns.

Daniel Ng Peng Keat

**Moving forward to the present, the life expectancy of Singaporeans has increased significantly to more than 80 years. Singaporeans are also marrying later and delaying having children, if they have any at all. These seismic social changes in Singapore ought to be considered in determining anew the length of HDB flat leases.**

## Insurance • Will those who give up IPs have adequate coverage?

It was reported that the number of people with Integrated Shield Plans (IPs) has gone down, and that more older people are giving up their plans (Fewer people on private hospital IPs; more older people giving up their plans altogether, July 16).

With fewer people buying IP policies, coupled with medical inflation and higher claims due to an ageing population, should IP policyholders expect higher premiums? (ST Explains: What Singapore IP insurers' numbers say about how premiums will rise, July 19).

If these trends continue, will

there be insurers that exit the IP business because they no longer find it sustainable? If so, are there contingency plans in place to help the policyholders who would be affected?

It is concerning and alarming that some seniors are terminating their Integrated Shield Plans due to the relatively high premiums, as it is likely that they will require greater healthcare services as they age.

What can be done to help similar policyholders continue with their IPs? Should something be done?

I have kept my IP to lessen the

## Insurance • Serve clients well to build profitable IP business

I refer to the article on Integrated Shield Plan (IP) insurers' financial results (Most IP insurers posted mixed or poor results in last five years, July 18).

It was reported that Income Insurance and Prudential Singapore were the only two to have managed to post underwriting profits between 2019 and 2023 from their IP business.

Interestingly, in two independent surveys done by the Singapore Medical Association (SMA) on different IP providers, these same two insurers were among the top three with the highest scores in 2021 and 2022.

The SMA surveys asked private specialists about their experience with the various IP providers, in terms of inclusiveness and transparency of doctor selection for panels, ease and timeliness of pre-authorisation process, timeliness of payment, ease of seeing non-panel specialists, appropriateness of fees, and the likelihood of recommending the IP providers to others.

IP providers were then ranked according to the scores from the survey.

As a private specialist, I have seen the differences in the pre-approval and claims process of different IP providers.



Passengers queuing at check-in counters at Terminal 1 after a global tech outage on July 19. Changi Airport should evaluate the incident and study why some airlines were affected badly, while others were not, says the writer. ST PHOTO: LIM YAOHUI

## Tech outage • Ensure business recovery plans of airlines are tested regularly

The recent cyber outage which affected businesses worldwide is an eye-opener, especially in the area of business recovery plans.

Being a travel hub and among the best airports in the world, Changi Airport should evaluate the incident and study why some airlines were affected badly, while others were not.

Many business sectors insist on strict compliance with disaster recovery procedures, which are tested regularly. After this incident, the authorities should ensure all airlines have their processes in place and are tested regularly. Let's hope this incident serves as a wake-up call.

David Soh Poh Huat

## Voices of Youth

### Tech outage • Be prepared to recover quickly after disruptions

The worldwide technology outage triggered by CrowdStrike has driven home the message that mistakes can be made (Cyber-security firm

CrowdStrike's software update causes major outage affecting businesses globally, July 19). As a result of a defective software update that caused

Microsoft Windows to malfunction, flights were delayed or cancelled, banking services were disrupted, and many organisations were brought to a standstill.

This debacle highlights the interconnected nature of our world, particularly in cyberspace. We cannot do without technology, given its crucial role in today's society. Instead, we should be prepared for potential problems

and be able to recover quickly when anything adverse happens.

Another lesson from this incident is the importance of owning up to mistakes. CrowdStrike CEO George Kurtz took responsibility for the error and set a good example for others.

What defines us is how we react to mistakes when they happen.

Renee Tay, 15  
Secondary 4

## National Day • Make each place in S'pore feel special through songs

With National Day approaching and the new National Day song being released, I would like to address the topic of such songs. I've observed that recent songs, such as The Road Ahead and Not

Alone, are mostly centred on the themes of togetherness and nostalgia.

I know this is what Singapore's culture is about, but as we grow as a nation, we can find new ways to

celebrate our country. I also feel that we are still a young country, so we should save the nostalgia until we are at least a century old.

We can instead create songs about different parts of Singapore, such as Serangoon, Toa Payoh and Jurong. This allows for plenty of ideas and more space for creativity in the songs, as there are many different places in Singapore. The songs can touch on

the special parts of each place, such as the beaches of the East Coast. With this suggestion, every year, one place in Singapore can be singled out to be celebrated and in this way residents there can feel special.

My siblings agree with my suggestion. I hope others will, too, or at least find it entertaining.

Kho Shou Wu, 11  
Primary 6

### 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](mailto: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.

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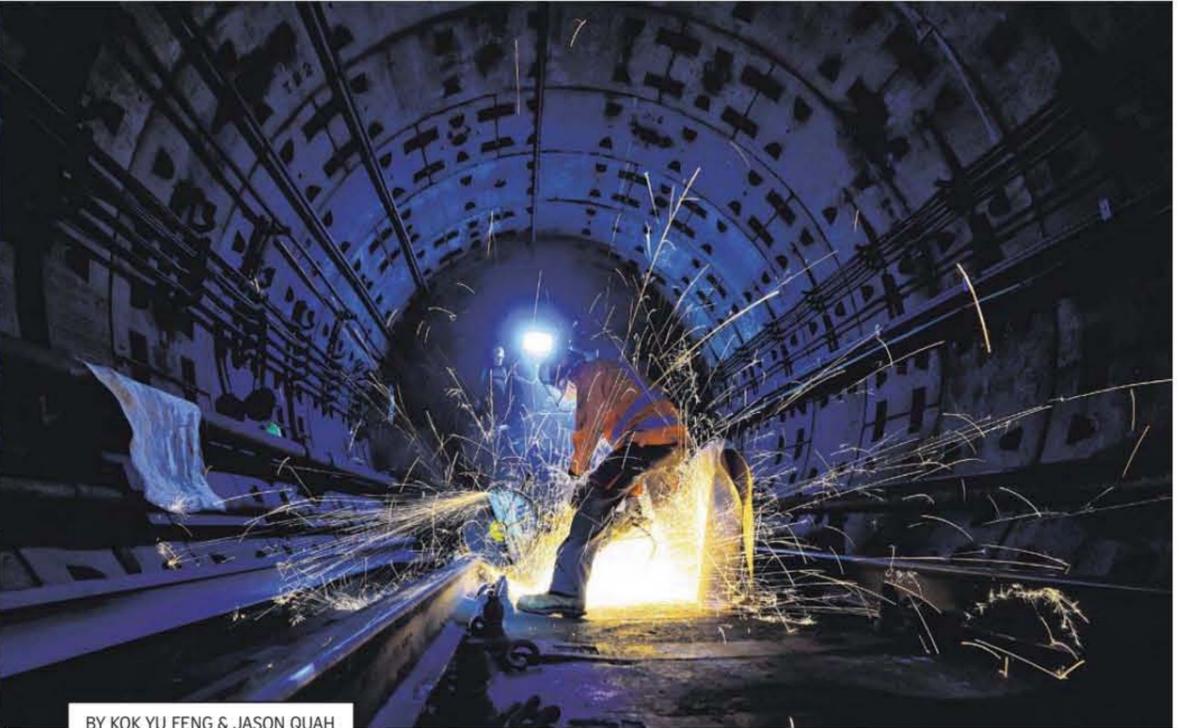


### The writing coach

Felix Cheong is the award-winning author of 21 books. In addition to publishing seven children's picture books, he has written two young adult novels. He holds a masters in creative writing and is currently an adjunct university lecturer.

# 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](https://str.sg/smart-sg)



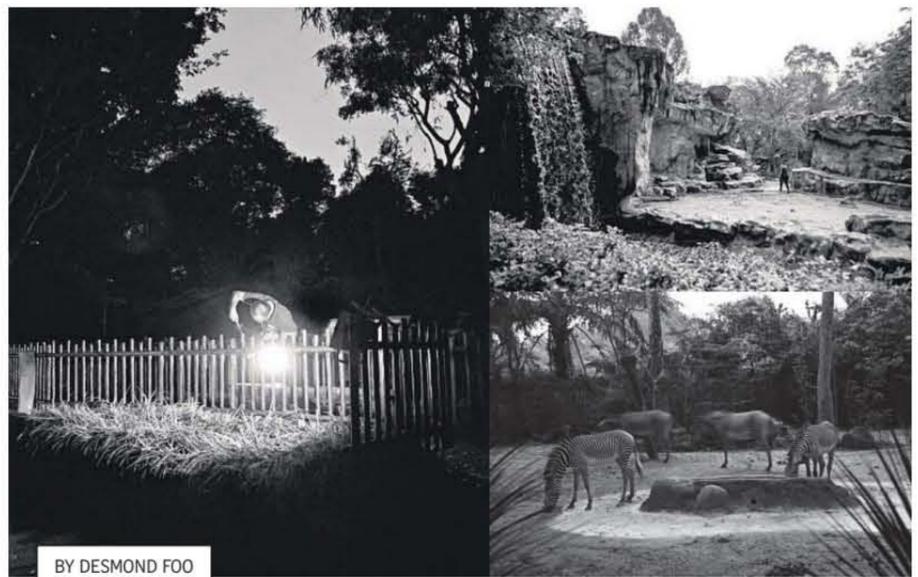
BY GIN TAY & NEO XIAOBIN

## 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](https://str.sg/camp-kids)



BY DESMOND FOO

## Twilight tails

What goes on after hours at the Singapore Zoo?



[str.sg/zoo-sg](https://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.



[str.sg/home-in-focus](https://str.sg/home-in-focus)



# OBITUARIES

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**TEO CHIN WATT**  
Age: 86  
passed away peacefully on 20 July 2024, leaving behind loved ones.  
Wife: Ong Choo Ling

**Son:** Teo Tze Wei  
**Daughter:** Teo Wan Ling  
**Grandsons:** Marcus Teo Yi Han, Isaac Teo Yi Jay, Ivan Teo Yi Yang, Chan Young Ye

**Daughter-in-law:** Lynn Chong Fui Lian  
**Son-in-law:** Chan Earn Meng  
**Granddaughter:** Chan Younger

*And all relatives*  
Wake is held at Blk 19A Jalan Membina S(164019)  
Cortege will leave on 23 July 2024 (Tue) at 3.30pm for Mandai Crematorium Hall 3 for cremation at 4.30pm.

*"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith." 2 Timothy 4:7*



**DANAKODY GABRIEL**  
Age: 83  
Born: 28-03-1941 – 21-07-2024  
Was called home on 21-07-2024  
Dearly missed by Relatives, Friends and Loved ones.

Wife: Leo Catherine  
**Children and Spouse:** Stanley Gabriel and Kathryn Harvey Ann Gabriel  
**Grandchildren and Spouse:** Maia and Joel  
Grandson: Jayden

Wake will be held from 9am on 22-07-2024 at Church of Blessed Sacrament, No.1 Commonwealth Drive, Singapore 149603.  
Cortege leaves on 24th July 2024 at 7.15am  
Funeral Mass: 7.30am  
Church of Blessed Sacrament and thence to Mandai Crematorium Hall 3 at 9.45am.  
Transport will be provided from BSC to Mandai Crematorium and back to BSC.



**SOONG KOK CHIOD, MICHAEL**  
Age: 83  
passed away peacefully on 20 July 2024.  
Dearly missed and fondly remembered by loved ones.  
Wife: Goh Huay Luan, Laura (deceased)

**Son:** Alvin Soong Chng Hau  
**Daughter:** Wendy Soong Min Ling  
**Grandsons:** Kuik Tze Rong, Kuik Tze Cheng, Kuik Tze Rui  
**Caregiver:** Sukarti

**Daughter-in-law:** Jacqueline Lim Ching Pei  
**Son-in-law:** Kuik Sin Pin  
**Granddaughters:** Soong Jia Ying, Soong Jia Xian, Kuik Tze Yuan

*And all relatives & friends.*

Wake is held at Blk 37 Sin Ming Drive, Sin Ming Funeral Parlour #01-579 (Daisy Hall) & #01-581 (Hazel Hall), Singapore 575711.  
Cortege will leave on 24 July 2024 (Wednesday) at 2.45pm for Mandai Crematorium Hall 2 for cremation at 3.45pm.



*We, the family of the late*



**LEE TIEW NGIN**  
Departed on 15 July 2024

*wish to express our heartfelt thanks and appreciation to relatives, friends, colleagues and business associates for their kind assistance, attendance, condolences, donations and wreaths during our recent bereavement.*



**DANIEL NK TAN**  
(July 26, 1936 - Jan 28, 2024)  
Potomac, Maryland, USA

*Beloved husband of Genevieve Foo Sujean  
Father, Grandfather, Great-grandfather*

Interment in columbarium at Church of St Ignatius, Singapore on July 26, 2024 at 3pm (Private ceremony)

*"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." Matthew 6:21*



**CARTER NICOLA MARGARET**  
Age: 58  
was called home to be with the Lord on 20 July 2024  
Dearly missed by loved ones  
Daughter, nephew, relatives and friends

Wake is held at St Joseph's Church (Victoria Street) from 22 July, 3pm onwards till 24 July.  
Nightly prayers will be held at 8.00pm.  
For funeral mass on Thursday 25 July 2024 at Church at 2pm and thereafter for Mandai Crematorium Hall 3 for cremation at 3.45pm.



*Obituaries*

For enquiries, call 6289-9988 (weekdays 8.30am to 6.00pm) 6319-5192

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# RACING

## LIM'S SALTORO WINS SINGAPORE DERBY

### Lim-Meagher-Lerner juggernaut continues with clean sweep in all three 4YO races

Michael Lee

Big-race celebrations at Kranji had been awash in blue and yellow stars in the last nine months, and the Singapore Derby was no different with Lim's Saltoro's triumph on July 21.

The holy trinity of champion owner Lim's Stable, trainer Daniel Meagher and jockey Marc Lerner had swept half of the last 12 Group races since Lim's Kosciuszko's Group 1 Singapore Gold Cup (2,000m) win on Nov 11.

That stranglehold was tightened further with Lim's Saltoro again coming back from the brink of defeat to snatch victory in the \$400,000 Group 1 Singapore Derby (1,800m).

Makin (Manoel Nunes) had already poked his head in front at the



The concluding stages of the Group 1 Singapore Derby (1,800m) on July 21, going the way of Lim's Saltoro (Marc Lerner), who fought back on the inside to regain the advantage on a gallant Makin (Manoel Nunes). ST PHOTO: SHAHRIYA YAHAYA

200m, but Lim's Saltoro loves a scrap, reeling him back in to prevail by the same margin – a head. The \$10 favourite ran the 1,800m on the long course in 1min 47.36sec.

Like at his first two 4YO wins in the Group 3 Silver Bowl (1,400m)

and Group 2 Stewards' Cup (1,600m), he just has a knack of knowing where the winning post is.

Getting it right for the third consecutive time earned him a clean sweep of the three legs of the 4YO

races, a feat not pulled off since Jolie's Shinju in 2009.

It must have felt like Groundhog Day to both the winning and losing sides, especially Makin's connections for the latter.

"Well done, Marc. Great ride,

even if you've beaten me again," said trainer Steven Burridge as he sportingly congratulated Lerner.

As the French jockey joined Meagher and owner Lim Siah Mong for another walk on the red carpet, their expressions still ran the gamut of emotions from joy and pride to sheer relief.

But while Lerner's countenance has been likened to that of an ice-man, no matter how momentous the occasion, a slight quiver could be detected in his voice this time – and it was not quite because he was at his second Singapore Derby success after Hard Too Think in 2021.

"This horse has a special place in my heart," he said.

"Lim's Kosciuszko is a champion, I love him too, but I've been with Lim's Saltoro from the beginning.

"The whole week Dan and I discussed about my first win on him in an Open Maiden 1,100m race on Polytrack back in September.

"It has been a great effort for him to get from there to go all the way to win a Derby.

"I ride him every morning. He's still a difficult horse to ride.

"He still has a mind of his own, and can still lose the plot, but today he felt no pressure.

"He knows what to do and he knows how to get it right."

In contrast, Meagher was as usual wearing his heart on his sleeve at the post-race interview, especially as it dawned on him that he will go down in history as the last Singapore Derby-winning trainer, with Kranji shutting down on Oct 5.

"It means a lot to win the last Derby. I'm quite emotional, this is a country that holds a special place in my heart," said Meagher, who

won his first Singapore Derby with Lim's Kosciuszko in 2022 but whose father John had never won it during his 11 years at Kranji.

"It's also very special to achieve this for Mr Lim.

"It's stressful having good horses. I wasn't well this morning.

"It was only when he found the rails that my heart felt more relieved.

"I've felt a lot of emotions, but mostly pure relief. There were a lot of expectations.

"He's super tough, he's a fighter who doesn't like to lose. It's done, I'm very proud of him.

"He's won a Group 1 now. He's a special horse to me."

From barrier No. 10, Lim's Saltoro was widely expected to come across to sit off the speed, but somehow landed in front, albeit not by design.

"The plan was to follow Aniki but after he jumped so good, and I saw Ruan (Maia) take hold, I went to Plan B. I let my horse hit the front," said Lerner.

"At the 800m, I saw Bernardo's (Pinheiro) horse (Hole In One) coming, but my horse put his ears back, and was still so relaxed.

"Then Manoel's (Nunes) horse (Makin) came very fast, but my horse always had an answer to the fight."

To cap off this memorable day, Meagher picked up three more winners, Sweet N Sour (\$39), Always Together (\$110) and Pacific Beauty (\$65) to seal his first career four-timer and vault to second place on the trainers' premiership on 35 winners, 20 behind runaway leader Jason Ong.

manyam@sph.com.sg

## JULY 21 SINGAPORE (LONG AND SHORT COURSES B) RESULTS

**Race 1**

- SWEET N SOUR 58 (39-11)
- LIM'S DREAMWALKER 58.5 (40-9)
- LUCKY GOAL 59 c57 (17-7)
- JULY 58.5 (12-510)
- LIM'S FUJI 57.5 (65-18)
- PACIFIC GENERAL 58 (97-23)
- THE SHADOW 56 (148-39)
- RED MANED 56 (186-40)
- AFTERMATH 57 (54-16)
- SUMMER WIND 57.5 (225-61)
- WAR WARRIOR 56.5 c52.5 (568-120)

Winning stable: Toast Trusts & CY Mak. Trainer: D Meagher. Time: 1min 10.73sec. (Good). Forecast: \$87. Tierce: \$566. Quartet: \$1612. P forecast: \$21 (5-3), \$12 (3-1), \$9 (5-1). Trio: \$90.

**C5 D1 (SC) 1200m**

B Pinheiro (7) 3 3 1 (479) -  
 M Lerner (11) 10 8 2 (460) Ns  
 PH Seow (3) 2 2 3 (559) 1.25  
 M Nunes (4) 4 4 4 (441) Shd  
 T Schiller (2) 7 5 5 (464) Ns  
 B Queiroz (9) 9 9 6 (491) 1.25  
 D Moor (6) 5 7 7 (532) Shd  
 WH Koh (1) 1 1 8 (463) 0.5  
 R Curatolo (8) 11 11 9 (465) 2.25  
 TH Koh (10) 6 6 10 (509) Nk  
 K Faiz (5) 8 10 11 (467) 1.75

Winning stable: Meaghersoon. Trainer: D Meagher. Time: 1min 21.66sec. (Good). Forecast: \$27. Tierce: \$512. Quartet: \$1048. Trio: \$46. Course scratching: 7. Grand Avante

**Race 3**

- ALWAYS TOGETHER 53.5 (110-39)
- KING OF SIXTY-ONE 58.5 (10-510)
- SO HI CLASS 58.5 (104-37)
- ENERGY BABY 56 (11-6)
- JANUARY 58 (45-22)
- KNIPPENBERG 55 (43-13)

Winning stable: Meaghersoon. Trainer: D Meagher. Time: 1min 21.66sec. (Good). Forecast: \$27. Tierce: \$512. Quartet: \$1048. Trio: \$46. Course scratching: 7. Grand Avante

2 LIM'S PUNCAK JAYA 56.5 (107-24)  
 7 JUNE 51 c52 (41-10)  
 9 THE WILD CHIEF 50 c51 (182-26)

Winning stable: Lucky. Trainer: J Ong. Time: 1min 47.80sec. (Good). Forecast: \$12. Tierce: \$257. Quartet: \$2216. P forecast: \$4 (3-6), \$28 (6-1), \$18 (3-1). Trio: \$59.

M Lerner (5) 2 5 7 (468) 1.25  
 WH Koh (1) 9 8 8 (461) 1.75  
 TH Koh (3) 8 9 9 (471) 1.75

9 SANTINO 50 c50.5 (68-16)  
 10 SOUTHERN SPEED 50 (161-28)  
 11 LIMS CRAFT 52.5 (292-54)  
 8 PACIFIC CHARM 50 c51 (399-75)

C Henrique (5) 5 6 6 (487) 0.5  
 PH Seow (8) 6 7 7 (524) 2.25  
 WH Koh (7) 9 8 8 (485) 0.75  
 TH Koh (4) 4 2 9 (511) 0.5

**Race 2**

- OUTFIT 56 (20-11)
- VGOR 58 (40-15)
- TALKING TALKING GURU 53.5 c51.5 (37-13)
- OPPA 54.5 (79-21)
- DELLAH 58.5 c54.5 (59-16)
- THUNDER STAR 56.5 (21-510)
- ROCK'S GAMBIT 55.5 (414-96)
- GOLDEN SENTIENCE 59 (26-11)
- MYSTIC EIGHTEEN 51 c49.5 (394-105)
- THE WILD PRINCE 52 c50 (217-57)
- BEMBO 57.5 (79-49)
- THE WILD FIRE 58.5 (47-10)

Winning stable: Happy Baby. Trainer: J Ong. Time: 1min 10.52sec. (Good). Forecast: \$32. Tierce: \$291. Quartet: \$2989. P forecast: \$11 (7-4), \$14 (4-10), \$12 (7-4). Trio: \$53. Course scratching: 13. Good Chilli

**C5 D2 (SC) 1200m**

B Queiroz (1) 5 4 1 (519) -  
 WH Koh (9) 10 9 2 (539) 2.75  
 N Zyrl (3) 3 2 3 (455) Ns  
 V Espindola (12) 8 7 4 (505) 0.5  
 K Faiz (5) 1 1 6 (472) 2.25  
 M Nunes (2) 4 3 7 (488) Shd  
 I Saifudin (4) 9 8 8 (469) Shd  
 D Moor (8) 2 5 9 (447) 1  
 SW Chong (11) 6 6 10 (522) Ns  
 PH Seow (7) 7 10 11 (512) Shd  
 M Lerner (10) 12 12 (504) 4.75  
 TH Koh (6) 11 11 15 (459) 2.5

Winning stable: Blazing Expectations. Trainer: Desmond Koh. Time: 1min 10.00sec. (Good). Forecast: \$22. Tierce: \$212. Quartet: \$543. P forecast: \$8 (6-9), \$10 (9-10), \$12 (6-10). Trio: \$56.

**C4 D2 (LC) 1200m**

T Krishna (4) 2 2 1 (434) -  
 C Henrique (3) 4 4 2 (448) 0.75  
 B Queiroz (6) 5 3 3 (493) Ns  
 T Schiller (1) 7 6 4 (469) 0.5  
 WH Koh (2) 8 7 5 (493) Hd  
 B Pinheiro (7) 1 1 6 (511) Ns  
 V Duric (8) 6 8 7 (468) 0.5  
 D Moor (9) 10 10 8 (465) 1.5  
 TH Koh (5) 9 9 9 (521) 0.5  
 PH Seow (10) 3 10 10 (504) 2

Winning stable: Pacific. Trainer: D Meagher. Time: 1min 49.06sec. (Good). Forecast: \$58. Tierce: \$466. Quartet: \$5693. P forecast: \$17 (7-4), \$3 (4-2), \$19 (7-2). Trio: \$46. Course scratching: 8. Khaq Manee 10. Happy Warrior

**Race 6**

- MR BLACK BACK 53 c53.5 (39-8)
- CAVALRY 55 (18-8)
- RAISING SIXTY-ONE 53 c54 (29-7)
- DREAM ALLIANCE 57 (8-510)
- SMART STAR 50 c52 (1-4)
- MAXIMA 50 c52 (73-15)
- SAINT TROPEZ 50 c52 (137-25)

Winning stable: Elite Performance. Trainer: S Burridge. Time: 1min 34.24sec. (Good). Forecast: \$37. Tierce: \$448. Quartet: \$658. P forecast: \$9 (3-2), \$6 (2-4), \$15 (3-4). Trio: \$60.

**C2 (LC) 1600m**

M Nunes (1) 6 4 1 (525) -  
 R Maia (2) 4 6 2 (520) 0.75  
 R Curatolo (4) 7 7 3 (517) Nk  
 H Bowman (6) 1 1 4 (551) 1.25  
 B Queiroz (5) 2 2 5 (534) 1.5  
 B Pinheiro (3) 3 3 6 (466) 2.5  
 WH Koh (7) 5 5 7 (475) 0.5

**Race 9**

- LIM'S SALTORO 57 (10-510)
- MAKIN 57 (26-8)
- HOLE IN ONE 57 (171-28)
- BESTSELLER 57 (22-6)
- LIGHTNING STRIKE 57 (26-11)
- ANIKI 57 (261-41)
- FLYING NEMO 57 (199-34)
- PACIFIC WARRIOR 57 (659-113)
- PACIFIC STAR 57 (978-152)
- COMBUSTION 57 (150-29)
- GALAXY BAR 57 (156-31)
- JUNGLE CRUISE 57 (241-40)

Winning stable: Lim's. Trainer: D Meagher. Time: 1min 47.36sec. (Good). Forecast: \$10. Tierce: \$264. Quartet: \$650. P forecast: \$4 (2-3), \$38 (3-9), \$23 (2-9). Trio: \$80. Course scratching: 7. Roda Robot

**Race 5**

- GREAT WARRIOR 55 (17-7)
- LIM'S SMYTHE 51.5 c53 (17-8)
- PACIFIC BAD BEI 57.5 (83-16)
- SCREEN SHOT 50 c47 (105-22)
- AMAZING BREEZE 54.5 (19-8)
- CITY GOLD FAREWELL 54.5 (44-10)

M Nunes (9) 6 3 1 (531) -  
 T Schiller (7) 5 4 2 (475) 1.5  
 D Moor (2) 3 2 4 (488) 1  
 B Pinheiro (8) 3 6 4 (454) 1.5  
 B Queiroz (4) 1 7 5 (486) 0.5  
 B Queiroz (4) 1 7 5 (489) 0.75

**C4 (LC) 1800m**

M Nunes (9) 6 3 1 (531) -  
 T Schiller (7) 5 4 2 (475) 1.5  
 D Moor (2) 3 2 4 (488) 1  
 B Pinheiro (8) 3 6 4 (454) 1.5  
 B Queiroz (4) 1 7 5 (486) 0.5  
 B Queiroz (4) 1 7 5 (489) 0.75

**C4 D1 (LC) 1200m**

R Curatolo (2) 2 1 1 (499) -  
 D Moor (1) 3 3 2 (580) 0.5  
 N Zyrl (6) 1 4 3 (503) Nk  
 T Schiller (3) 7 5 4 (471) 0.5  
 B Pinheiro (8) 9 8 5 (468) 1.25

**Race 7**

- PACIFIC BEAUTY 53.5 c51.5 (65-16)
- NAVY SEALS 56.5 (18-8)
- FRENETIC 59 (11-510)
- PRODIGAL 52 c51 (51-19)
- TONY'S LOVE 56 (28-15)
- EMPOWERING 50 c51 (169-32)
- FEBRUARY 59 (55-15)
- KINABALU LIGHT 57.5 (99-30)
- PORT MUSTANG 55.5 c54.5 (223-63)
- SHENG WARRIOR 50 c51 (488-98)

Winning stable: Pacific. Trainer: D Meagher. Time: 1min 49.06sec. (Good). Forecast: \$58. Tierce: \$466. Quartet: \$5693. P forecast: \$17 (7-4), \$3 (4-2), \$19 (7-2). Trio: \$46. Course scratching: 8. Khaq Manee 10. Happy Warrior

**C5 (LC) 1800m**

PH Seow (2) 5 4 1 (418) -  
 R Maia (9) 3 1 2 (465) 1.25  
 R Curatolo (7) 4 5 3 (521) 0.75  
 D Danis (4) 6 6 4 (519) 1.25  
 B Pinheiro (6) 7 7 5 (460) Shd  
 I Saifudin (1) 8 8 6 (453) Shd  
 M Lerner (5) 9 9 7 (420) 1.25  
 D Moor (8) 2 3 8 (462) 0.5  
 T Krishna (10) 1 2 9 (512) 2.5  
 M Zaki (3) 10 10 10 (491) 5

**Race 10**

- PE AKAU BEN 59 (24-12)
- PACIFIC PADRINO 59 (23-6)
- SOUSUJ 54 (34-14)
- CREATIVE DREAMS 52 c51 (41-12)
- ARYA PAKUJAN 51 (157-37)
- RIBBON 57 (203-53)
- BAMG UNION 57 (15-510)
- SUPER BOWL 52 c53.5 (96-26)
- COD SIXTY-ONE 58 c57 (199-43)
- LOVE IS A ROSE 50 (59-117)
- BOOM 58 (57-14)
- AXELMBA 54 (568-125)

Winning stable: Te Akaui Racing. Trainer: D Logan. Time: 1min 22.35sec. (Good). Forecast: \$40. Tierce: \$187. Quartet: \$3410. P forecast: \$16 (2-1), \$16 (1-9), \$8 (2-9). Trio: \$43. Course scratching: 7. Eruption

## July 22 South Africa (Kenilworth) form analysis

# Champonelle is champing at the bit

### RACE 1 (1,200M)

(4) PLEASE BE TRUE and (9) ARCTIC WIZARD made encouraging debuts and should improve with that experience.

(12) LATE DECEMBER has done well in each start and should make his presence felt again.

Newcomer (6) MY ARCHANGEL is attractively bred. Follow the market.

### RACE 2 (1,600M)

(10) CUMBRE VIEJA and (9) SOUND OF THE SEA will be competitive with improvement over

this extended trip.

(8) LANDOFOTHERISINGSUN caught the eye with a fast-finishing third over 1,400m last time. Bigger threat over this distance.

(2) CHALICE FORT and (11) RED DAWN complete the shortlist.

### RACE 3 (1,200M)

(6) SAHARA CAT ran third in a 1,500m Listed race and this shorter trip will be more to her liking. (5) POLYNOMIAL caught the eye when winning on debut over course and distance. Will improve further.

(2) IN THE GREEN ZONE and (3) MARITZBURG MEMORY have the form and experience to make their presence felt too, while well-bred (7) ARTISTE should not be hastily condemned.

### RACE 4 (1,200M)

(9) PINK MOON, (13) UNITED WE STAND and (6) CHAMPAGNE KISSES have the ability to be competitive in this line-up. (14) PRETTY PRECIOUS has finished second in three of her last four starts. Would not be winning out of turn if ready to go after a 16-

week absence.

### RACE 5 (1,600M)

(1) CHAMPONELLE was only out-ran late when third over this trip two starts back. Big claims. (3) AMANCIO finished a career-best second when last seen over this trip. (8) GROOVEJET improved for the step-up to this distance last time. Can go one better. (14) GOLDEN GREY and (10) POINTDEXTER appeal most of the remainder.

### RACE 6 (1,600M)

(10) FUTURE PRINCE bounced back to form in a stronger contest last time. Go close.

(6) SOLAR POWER and (3) CHOLLIMA are back in form after returning from long breaks. (1) MAGIC VERSE and (5) FUTURE TURN can get into the picture too, along with unexposed (9) BLUE BAY, who is open to improvement after 14 weeks off.

### RACE 7 (2,200M)

(4) MISTER MONOCLE should confirm his superiority in this lot. (7) TWICE THE MASTER deserves a reward for his consistency but is unfavourably treated by these conditions. (1) HELIOTROPE is worth another chance, especially on these terms. (6) MOHANDAS ran a good third over track and trip last time, and will be a factor in the finish.

### RACE 8 (1,800M)

(1) SUGAR MOUNTAIN scored a fluent 1,600m win in June. Can defy a five-point penalty by following up off a career-high mark. Stablemate (4) PACAYA is closely matched with the selection and should pose a threat. (6) LOVE IS A ROSE and (8) FLOWER OF SAIGON are weighted to make their presence felt.

### RACE 9 (1,800M)

(5) AMONG THE CLOUDS stayed on well to finish second over track and trip last time ahead of re-opposing rivals (8) COULDITBE and (6) LICKETY SPLIT. A bigger threat, could come from last-start winner (2) KAMAKAZI, who kept finding from the front over 1,600m last time. (1) PLUM PUDDING fluffed her lines on that occasion but can bounce back.

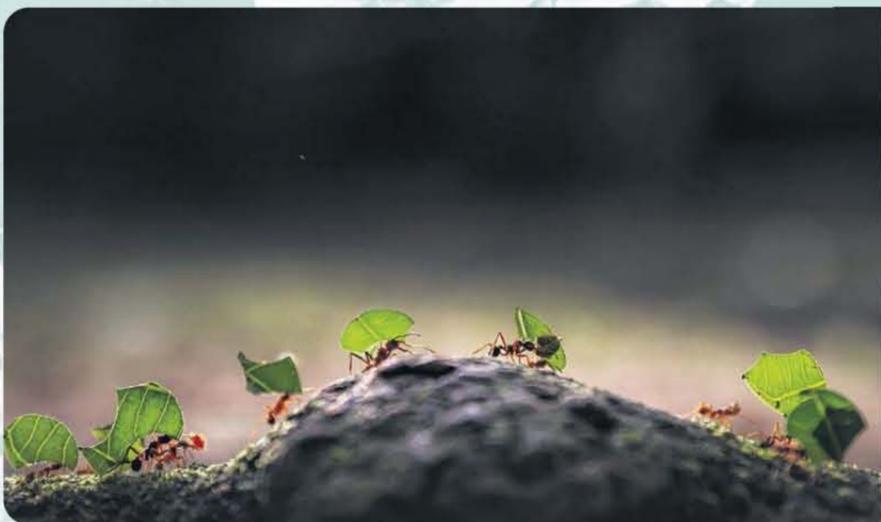
## 22-7-24 MONDAY - SOUTH AFRICA (KENILWORTH) RACE CARD

| Race | Time  | Distance | Weight | Class | Runners | Winning         | 2nd                   | 3rd   | 4th                      | 5th | 6th                     | 7th      | 8th                | 9th   | 10th |                     |  |  |
|------|-------|----------|--------|-------|---------|-----------------|-----------------------|-------|--------------------------|-----|-------------------------|----------|--------------------|-------|------|---------------------|--|--|
| 1    | 9:00  | 1200m    | 55     | 1     | 10      | L Mxothwa       | 9.7% B Crawford       | 11.6% | 80 Night In Japan        | 55  | 11                      | M Mjoka  | 3.3% V H Marshall  | 11.7% | 2    | 8 Courty            |  |  |
| 2    | 9:05  | 1200m    | 55     | 2     | 10      | N Nastili (4.0) | 5.8% B Crawford       | 11.6% | 323531 In The Green Zone | 55  | 12                      | S Veale  | 11.1% J S Snaith   | 11.2% | 4    | 87 Dreamalldream    |  |  |
| 3    | 9:10  | 1200m    | 55     | 3     | 10      | A Andrews       | 8.7% C Bass-Robinson  | 12.0% | 541 Maritzburg Memory    | 58  | 13                      | O Noach  | 1.7% V H Marshall  | 11.7% | 5    | 896770 Lord Quinn   |  |  |
| 4    | 9:15  | 1200m    | 55     | 4     | 10      | S Veale         | 21.1% J S Snaith      | 11.2% | 000 Gift About Town      | 55  | 14                      | D Ashby  | 3.5% P Botha       | 7.8%  | 6    | 864674 Heroic Power |  |  |
| 5    | 9:20  | 1200m    | 55     | 5     | 10      | R Khathi        | 7.2% G S Kotzen       | 8.7%  | 1 Polynomial             | 58  | 15                      | C Orffer | 12.9% G W Ernicion | 9.2%  | 7    | 069 Oregon          |  |  |
| 6    | 9:25  | 1200m    | 55     | 6     | 10      | R Fourie        | 23.1% L V Woodruff    | 11.8% | 2113 Sahara Cat          | 60  | 16                      | R Fourie | 23.1% V H Marshall | 11.7% | 8    | 63442 Groovejet     |  |  |
| 7    | 9:30  | 1200m    | 55     | 7     | 10      | G Wright        | 7.3% B Crawford       | 11.6% | 7 216 Artiste            | 58  | 17                      | G Wright | 7.3% B Crawford    | 11.6% | 9    | 000089 Ichyru       |  |  |
| 8    | 9:35  | 1200m    | 55     | 8     | 10      | A Dorneyer      | 20.1% C Bass-Robinson | 12.0% | 99 Am Still Winning      | 55  | 18                      | K Steyn  | 2.9% P Botha       | 7.8%  | 10   | 806636 Pointdexter  |  |  |
| 9    | 9:40  | 1200m    | 55     | 9     | 10      | C Orffer        | 12.9% G W Ernicion    | 9.2%  |                          | 11  | 077450 Jovial           |          |                    |       |      |                     |  |  |
| 10   | 9:45  | 1200m    | 55     | 10    | 10      | M Winnar        | 4.5% A E Sandis       | 11.6% |                          | 12  | 457608 King Of The Seas |          |                    |       |      |                     |  |  |
| 11   | 9:50  | 1200m    | 55     | 11    | 10      | O Noach         | 1.7% V H Marshall     | 11.7% |                          | 13  | 1053947 Cosmic Rhythm   |          |                    |       |      |                     |  |  |
| 12   | 9:55  | 1200m    | 55     | 12    | 10      | G Van Niekerk   | 17.2% G W Ernicion    | 9.2%  |                          | 14  | 1076634 Golden Grey     |          |                    |       |      |                     |  |  |
| 1    | 10:00 | 1600m    | 55     | 1     | 10      | O Noach         | 1.7% P D Wrensch      | 0.0%  |                          |     |                         |          |                    |       |      |                     |  |  |

# Journey to fill a garden

Horticulturalists from Gardens by the Bay travelled to Latin America to source for plants for the upcoming Bay East Garden. They visited nurseries, gardens and nature reserves in Ecuador, Costa Rica, Brazil and Argentina.

Through photos and videos, The Straits Times shows how the garden is being pieced together, plant by plant, in time for its debut in 2027.



## BEAUTIFYING A GARDEN

The plant selection process began in 2021, and Gardens by the Bay expects to bring in up to 700,000 plants for Bay East Garden.



## MAKING MUSIC

"Just as each note comes together to form a melody, each plant's traits have to be considered in the context of the landscape it will be a part of"

Ms Clarice Xue, senior specialist of arboriculture



## SHIPMENT PREPARATIONS

In the days leading up to their shipment, the leaves of the trees were trimmed to reduce transpiration during transit and prevent dehydration.

To explore how Bay East Garden is taking shape



[str.sg/bay-east](https://str.sg/bay-east)

# SPORT

## ELATED PIASTRI TAMES THE 'BEAST'

### Aussie claims first win on team orders in one-two finish by dominant McLaren

BUDAPEST - Oscar Piastri used the word "beast" to describe his McLaren car, and few would argue against that as the Australian clinched his maiden Formula One win at the Hungarian Grand Prix on July 21.

It was a perfect day for the British team as Lando Norris completed a one-two finish, albeit reluctantly handing back the lead to Piastri on team orders three laps from the end.

Lewis Hamilton finished third for Mercedes with Red Bull's championship leader Max Verstappen fifth after colliding with the seven-time world champion in a race full of heated radio exchanges.

Ferrari's Charles Leclerc was fourth, while Verstappen had to face a post-race investigation for causing the accident. The outcome was unavailable at press time, but the three-time world champion could find himself down to sixth.

All that aside, Piastri stole the show as he also became the seventh different race winner in 13 grands prix this season.

"Very, very special. This is the day I dreamt of as a kid, standing on the top step of an F1 podium," the 23-year-old said.

"Thank you to the team for an amazing effort and an amazing car. It's a lot of fun racing with McLaren. It's (the car) a beast at the moment. It's fast in every condition. I think today we had it under control completely... to just be able to manage the race like that with both cars and secure a one-two.

"I'm incredibly happy for the whole team and it's nice to get my first win on the board. Hopefully there's more to come."

Norris was on track for his second



Lewis Hamilton spraying the bubbly at Oscar Piastri, the seventh different winner in 13 races this season, after the Hungarian Grand Prix on July 21. PHOTO: REUTERS

win of the season following Miami, but he accepted team orders in the end and went over to Piastri's car to congratulate his teammate after the race.

"An amazing day for us as a team. It's been a long journey and to get to achieving this on merit is exactly what we did today. We were a long way clear of the rest, and we did it in style as well," said the 24-year-old Briton.

"Oscar had a good start... he controlled the race well. He deserved it today. Two good drivers and an amazing team. Today was our day."

Piastri had led nearly the entirety of the race before the second

round of pit stops, in which Norris took the lead and extended it to around six seconds. But McLaren ordered that Norris returned first place to Piastri.

Behind the top five, Carlos Sainz of Ferrari finished sixth, while Red Bull's Sergio Perez, George Russell of Mercedes, RB's Yuki Tsunoda and Aston Martin's Lance Stroll completed the top 10.

Hamilton failed to make it three wins in three for Mercedes - he won the previous round at his home British Grand Prix and Russell was victorious in Austria.

"A huge congratulations to McLaren on the one-two. Congrat-

ulations to Oscar. He's been doing a fantastic job, he's been so consistent and it was only a matter of time before he got a win. He had amazing pace from the get-go," the 39-year-old said.

Verstappen, despite his underwhelming day, still leads the standings on 265 points. Norris is second on 189, ahead of Leclerc at 162.

In other news, Formula One will test an active cooling system in the cockpits of cars starting from the Dutch Grand Prix in August as a response to extreme heat experienced by drivers in Qatar last term.

Some of those racing in Doha last October were on the verge of col-

lapse by the end of the race, severely dehydrated and vomiting.

A spokesman for the FIA said the governing body and all 10 teams had begun research to improve venting to cool the drivers. The technical regulations have since been updated to allow a passive scoop on top of the cockpit for better ventilation with teams "strongly encouraged" to use it.

"Initial tests are planned to take place in Zandvoort and upcoming races. If these tests prove successful, the FIA will mandate the installation of such an active cooling system in the future," the spokesman said. REUTERS, AFP

### HUNGARIAN GRAND PRIX

#### LEADING RESULTS

1 Oscar Piastri (Aus) McLaren 1hr 38min 1.989sec

2 Lando Norris (Gbr) McLaren +2.141sec

3 Lewis Hamilton (Gbr) Mercedes +14.880sec

4 Charles Leclerc (Mon) Ferrari +19.686sec

5 Max Verstappen (Ned) Red Bull +21.349sec

6 Carlos Sainz (Esp) Ferrari +23.073sec

7 Sergio Perez (Mex) Red Bull +39.792sec

8 George Russell (Gbr) Mercedes +42.368sec \*Fastest Lap

9 Yuki Tsunoda (Jpn) RB +77.259sec

10 Lance Stroll (Can) Aston Martin +77.976sec

#### DRIVERS' STANDINGS

1 Verstappen 265 points

2 Norris 189

3 Leclerc 162

4 Sainz 154

5 Piastri 149

#### CONSTRUCTORS' STANDINGS

1 Red Bull 389 points

2 McLaren 338

3 Ferrari 322

4 Mercedes 241

5 Aston Martin 69

## Emotional Borges defeats Nadal for maiden ATP title

BASTAD - Portugal's Nuno Borges was seeking his first ATP career title, but little did he know that it would come against the great Rafael Nadal, and on the Spaniard's favourite clay court.

Victory could not come any sweeter for the world No. 51, as he claimed a remarkable 6-3, 6-2 win over the 38-year-old veteran in the ATP 250 Swedish Open final on July 21.

"I don't know what to say. I think that I was wishing for this moment for a while already," said the 27-year-old, who dropped to his knees in celebration as he clinched the championship point.

"I know we all wanted Rafa to win. A part of me wishes that too. But something bigger inside me pushed through. It wasn't about playing my best today, it was about coming up in the big mo-

ments. I couldn't have played better.

"I'm just really happy overall. I really don't know what to say, I'm very emotional."

Borges thoroughly deserved his victory, as he broke his much-heralded opponent's serve five times in the 88-minute clash.

Unlike Nadal's battling three-set wins against Mariano Navone of Argentina and Croatia's Duje Ajdukovic earlier last week en route to the final, he could not find an extra gear to raise his level this time.

The Spaniard admitted that the better man won and was also gracious in defeat.

"First of all, congratulations to Nuno. You played great all week. You deserve it more than anyone else. Enjoy your moment. It's a special moment, winning a title. I

wish you all the very best for the rest of the season," he said.

"I really had fun on court. I played some long and good matches. Today wasn't my best day. But all credit to Nuno. He played very, very well and it was difficult for me, so well done."

It was Nadal's first final since his triumph at the 2022 French Open, where he won Roland Garros for a record-extending 14th time.

In recent years, the 22-time Grand Slam champion struggled with injuries and fitness issues and only last week returned to action for the first time since losing in the first round of the French Open in late May.

His successful comeback in Bastad, despite not winning the title, is a boost for this week's Paris Olympics, where tennis will be played on clay at Roland Garros.

Nadal won singles gold in Beijing in 2008 and doubles gold with Marc Lopez at Rio 2016. He will be partnering reigning French Open and Wimbledon champion Carlos Alcaraz in the French capital.

Elsewhere, French fifth seed Arthur Fils defeated German top seed Alexander Zverev 6-3, 3-6, 7-6 (7-1) to lift the Hamburg title.

Zverev was looking to add to his sole triumph in 2024 ahead of his Olympic title defence in Paris. AFP

### Pogacar seals third Tour title



Slovenian yellow-jersey holder Tadej Pogacar taking off on Stage 21, the final segment of the Tour de France, on July 21 in Monaco. The leader then sealed his third Tour title, having outwitted the Danish two-time defending champion Jonas Vingegaard to win the penultimate stage on July 20. He clocked 45min 24sec in the 33.7km time-trial final stage which finished in Nice. PHOTO: AFP

### 22-7-24 MONDAY - MELBOURNE RACE CARD

| MELBOURNE FEED: SEYMOUR (MARK CODE 8) |                                |                         |                             |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>12:30PM Race 1</b> (A\$27,000)     | <b>SEY-1000m 3</b>             | 1861 Kamchatka          | J Keating [9] 61.5          |
| 1 1003 Avid General                   | Christopher Pang (40) [7] 63.5 | 2345 Silver Waves       | Sarah Field (30) [6] 61.5   |
| 2 1604 Groewazi                       | L Cartwright (20) [6] 63.5     | 5419 Son Of Zorro       | - [14] 61.5                 |
| 3 6663 Juice Box                      | J Weatherley (20) [12] 62.5    | 8510 Precast            | K Jennings [2] 61           |
| 4 14 Zueloro                          | M Chadwick (20) [2] 62.5       | 1456 Gala Diamond       | R Hurdle [7] 60             |
| 5 6251 Rah Rah Rasputin               | B Rawiller [10] 61.5           | 4339 Deep Secret        | F W Kersley [10] 59.5       |
| 6 6486 Triumphantly                   | J Keating [11] 61              | 5199 Angelic Rewards    | P Moloney [1] 59            |
| 7 4313 Heroic Chief                   | J Maskiell [13] 60             | 6034 Little Miss Grace  | - [12] 58                   |
| 8 7854 Suzido                         | Jack Hill [8] 59.5             | 4583 Strangeless        | Liam Riordan [11] 58        |
| 9 1942 Alaequina                      | D Stackhouse [9] 58.5          | 5046 Denira             | B Rawiller [8] 57.5         |
| 10 2306 Mallepo                       | R T Tremasal [4] 58            | 9179 Sun Samurai        | S Clarke [4] 57.5           |
| 11 1800 Mihimah                       | J Mott [3] 57                  | 0300 Wellie Belle       | C Newitt [3] 56.5           |
| 12 6308 Steel My Thunder              | Logan Bates (20) [1] 57        |                         |                             |
| 13 0896 Maxatation                    | Ms J Da Rose [5] 54            |                         |                             |
| <b>1:00PM Race 2</b> (A\$27,000)      | <b>SEY-1000m 2</b>             | 9000 He's The Real Deal | M Chadwick (20) [16] 63.5   |
| 1 1901 Torloach                       | B Kinnimont (40) [5] 63.5      | 1341 Varane             | W Egan [14] 61.5            |
| 2 1457 Hissy Fit                      | Logan Bates (20) [13] 61.5     | 8740 Wild Irish Rover   | L Cartwright (20) [19] 61.2 |
|                                       |                                | 4157 Rolling Moss       | Ms J Beriman [5] 60.3       |

|                                  |                             |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 5 5294 Bold Response             |                             |
| 6 9801 Gundaroo                  |                             |
| 7 7577 Lika Swift                |                             |
| 8 138 Primal Spirit              |                             |
| 9 5157 Tapo                      |                             |
| 10 1248 Excel And Fly            |                             |
| 11 3200 Little Miss Gutsaa       |                             |
| 12 4485 Tycoon Jenny             |                             |
| 13 5107 Kaniva                   |                             |
| 14 2713 Savee                    |                             |
| 15 5913 Extreme Ally             |                             |
| 16 210 Houso                     |                             |
| 17 0503 Matao Ma                 |                             |
| 18 6213 Battaglia                |                             |
| 19 3135 Mawhera                  |                             |
| 20 4124 Thinking Rain            |                             |
| <b>2:00PM Race 4</b> (A\$27,000) | <b>SEY-1600m 2</b>          |
| 1 0176 Crown Crusher             | L Cartwright (20) [16] 62.5 |
| 2 5314 Queen Of Deels            | J Mott [5] 62               |
| 3 3501 Late Night Artist         | J Maskiell [10] 61.5        |

|                |           |                                  |                                 |
|----------------|-----------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| - R McLeod     | [8] 60    | 0035 Play On Words               | Christopher Pang (40) [12] 61.5 |
| J Fry          | [10] 60   | 7530 Friday At Five              | [9] 61                          |
| T Stockdale    | [1] 60    | 0177 City Limits                 | 7 8853 Sacred Kiwi              |
| R Hammond (20) | [4] 59.5  | 8865 Warchime                    | 8 4310 Celnado                  |
| J Mott         | [3] 59.5  | 0269 Corlain                     | 9 1235 Crazy Atom               |
| L King         | [7] 59    | 3565 Paris Affair                | 10 5515 Vegas On Fire           |
| P Moloney      | [18] 58   | 4302 Bossa Nova Lad              | 11 6981 Limerick Lady           |
| Liam Riordan   | [9] 58    | 2461 Reactivate                  | 12 2574 Zaku                    |
| J Bowditch     | [2] 57.5  | 3771 Arachidi                    | 13 9784 Written By You          |
| -              | [20] 57   | 8616 Flying Witness              | 14 0839 Moscow Red              |
|                | [12] 57   | 5664 Queen Of Tayrona            | 15 5199 My Heart                |
|                | [13] 59   | 6380 Dante's Peak                | 16 3630 The Talking Toff        |
|                | [11] 59   | 8039 Hot Seat                    | 17 7512 Stay A While            |
|                | [15] 59   | 6350 Vampire Miss                | Ms C Puls [17] 58.5             |
|                | [6] 58.5  |                                  | [4] 55.5                        |
|                | [17] 56.5 |                                  |                                 |
|                |           | <b>2:30PM Race 5</b> (A\$27,000) | <b>SEY-1600m</b>                |
|                |           | 9617 I Could Do Better           | L Cartwright (20) [10] 63.5     |
|                |           | 1354 Heavenly Eagle              | S V Brown [7] 62.5              |
|                |           | 0169 Cryptic Clue                | C Rawiller [17] 61.5            |
|                |           | 4617 Luckyheleff                 | J Maskiell [11] 61.5            |
|                |           | 3531 Dazzling Sky                | J Noonan [8] 61                 |

|                          |                          |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 6 1067 Eddy Street       | W Egan [9] 61            |
| 7 8853 Sacred Kiwi       | R Hammond (20) [12] 60.5 |
| 8 4310 Celnado           | R Hurdle [13] 60         |
| 9 1235 Crazy Atom        | D Bates [3] 60           |
| 10 5515 Vegas On Fire    | Ms J Beriman [5] 60      |
| 11 6981 Limerick Lady    | T Chapman (20) [4] 59.5  |
| 12 2574 Zaku             | B Rawiller [6] 59.5      |
| 13 9784 Written By You   | C Newitt [14] 59         |
| 14 0839 Moscow Red       | A Warren (20) [16] 58    |
| 15 5199 My Heart         | L King [2] 57            |
| 16 3630 The Talking Toff | R Hurdle [15] 58         |
| 17 7512 Stay A While     | C Hollowood (20) [1] 58  |

### By Singapore Pools

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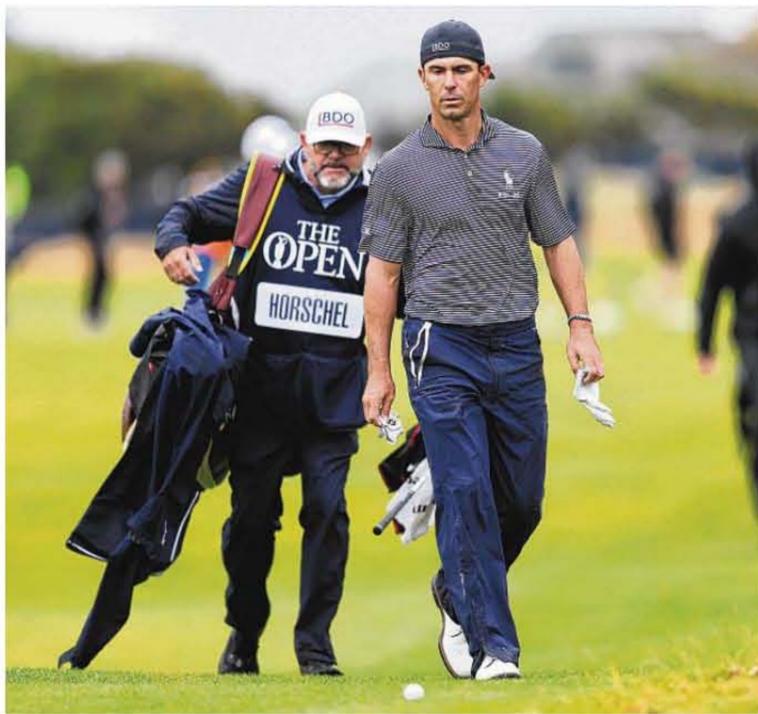
British Open 2024

# 'EXCITED' HORSCHTEL HOPES IT'S HIS TIME

Gunning for first Major win, American leads six golfers by a shot in horrid conditions

TROON – Billy Horschel's record at golf's British Open is not a flattering one, and that was why he has been waiting for this opportunity all his life to move into prime position to change that following a stellar display in the third round. The 37-year-old American led a congested leaderboard at Royal Troon in Scotland by one shot at four-under 209 after a two-under round of 69 on July 20. A combination of strong winds and torrential rain made for conditions that world No.1 Scottie Scheffler described as the toughest he has ever faced on the back nine.

But Florida native Horschel instead thrived in the wet to edge towards a first-ever Major title. "I've worked my entire life to be in this position," said the eight-time winner on the PGA Tour. "I've been in the lead many times going into a final round. Obviously this is a Major and it means a little bit more. We all know that. We know what this means to everyone. "I know what it means to my legacy in the game of golf and what I want to do and accomplish. I'm excited to be here. I've wanted to be here my entire life. I'm finally here. I'm embracing it."



American Billy Horschel with his caddie Micah Fugitt on the 18th hole during the third round of the British Open at Royal Troon Golf Club. Despite his second bogey of the day, he shot a stellar 69 to lead on four-under 209. PHOTO: EPA-EFE

Five shots off the pace overnight, it was an impressive performance in rainswept conditions by the world No. 62 who has missed six cuts in nine British Opens – including the 2016 tournament at Royal Troon where he opened with a 67 before slumping to an 85 in howling rain and wind.

His best finish was a tie for 21st at St Andrews in 2022. As heavy rain swept in from the Irish Sea, he reeled off four birdies to reach the turn in four-under 32 – in a tie at the top with Ireland's Shane Lowry. Horschel then bogeyed the par-four 11th but, as the winds strengthened, parred the next six holes before dropping another shot at the last. "When we got to 13, the wind re-

ally picked up," said the American, who wore his cap turned around to prevent water from running off the brim into his eyes. "It was a tough one out there today. I just knew going into the back side that it was going to be a grind no matter what. "This round in the Open is by far the best I've played in a Major. I knew it wasn't going to be pretty, and I was prepared for what the last nine holes would entail.

"I've learnt a lot about the game of golf playing 15 years professionally. I'm never afraid to fail. If it's my time tomorrow, I'm going to be ecstatic. If it's not, then we'll work hard to get back in that position again." South Africa's Thruston Lawrence and American Sam Burns took advantage of benign conditions early in the day with six-under 65s, finishing at 210 alongside England's Daniel Brown and Justin Rose (both 73), and Americans Xander Schauffele (69) and Russell Henley (66). Scheffler was lurking ominously on 211 after an even-par 71. For 2019 Open champion Lowry, his round unravelled as the conditions worsened. The Irishman had a double-bogey on the eighth and then bogeyed five of his last eight holes for a 77 to end on 212. South Korea's Kim Si-woo provided the day's standout moment when he hit a hole-in-one with a three-iron on the 238-yard par-three 17th. Before his shot, the longest ace at the Open was by Frank Lickliter II, who achieved the feat at the 212-yard fifth hole at Royal Lytham and St Annes in 2001. Kim shot a 71 and was on five-under 218 entering the final round. All eyes would be on Horschel but he revealed that he will switch off ahead of a momentous round by watching darts thanks to his love of British sports. "I'll probably watch some darts on TV. I'm very English when it comes to sporting events," said the West Ham United fan, who sported the crest of the London club on his golf bag this week. "I love watching cricket (as well)." AFP, REUTERS

Portugal fullback Jose Paiva dos Santos being tackled by Quan Horn of South Africa during their rugby match in Bloemfontein on July 20. The Springboks scored 10 tries against three to win the one-off Test 64-21. PHOTO: AFP



## Springboks' Erasmus sees two sides to discipline woes

BLOEMFONTEIN – South Africa coach Rassie Erasmus said improving discipline would be a pivotal part of their Rugby Cham-

pionship focus after a 64-21 triumph over Portugal in a one-off Test on July 20. The four-time world champions

were down to 14 men as early as the second minute in Bloemfontein and twice had only 13 players on the pitch.

Andre Esterhuizen was given an early yellow card for head-on-head contact after a crunching tackle forced fellow centre Jose Lima to retire concussed. The yellow card was later upgraded to a red by an off-field official. South Africa also had wing Kurt-Lee Arendse yellow-carded in the 35th minute for a dangerous clear-out at a ruck. With six minutes remaining, debutant replacement fullback Quan Horn was also sent to the sin-

bin after playing an opponent in the air. "Discipline is something we will need to look at after getting a red card so early. We had nearly 20 minutes with 13 men and the rest with 14," Erasmus said. "Obviously, we won't win World Cups like that. So that is some-

ing we will focus on. But the incidents were all accidents – they were not things the players did on purpose. "We had to adapt to having 14 or 13 men, so that was a good thing. You get to learn the character of players in matches like this. On the field, the players can get rattled or stay calm, so there were big learnings from that tonight." Conceding 10 tries but scoring three was no disgrace for Portugal in their first meeting with South Africa, and coach Simon Mannix said he could not have been prouder of his team. "The lessons were enormous tonight and we were monstered in a lot of areas," said the New Zealand-born coach. "The physicality of the Springboks was something else and the players felt it was two or three levels higher than what they experienced in the 2023 World Cup. There is a huge gulf between being ranked first and 15th in the world." South Africa begin their Rugby Championship campaign against Australia in Brisbane on Aug 10. On July 21, Italy beat Japan 42-14 in Sapporo in a game that saw fly-half Paolo Garbisi stretchered off in the second half after a heavy collision. The Italian fly-half was apparently knocked unconscious after taking a blow to the head in an accidental clash with Japan centre Dylan Riley – similar to the incident in the South Africa game. Defeat left Japan coach Eddie Jones still looking for his first win since returning to the job at the start of the year, having also lost at home to England and Georgia. Japan's next games will be in the new-look Pacific Nations Cup, which starts on Aug 23. "Credit to the Italy team, they came out and put us under some real pressure early. We've got to look forward, review this, and then come back stronger," said Riley. AFP

## Top-calibre rookies help create WNBA records

CHICAGO – Soaring viewership, surging media attention and an electrifying rookie class featuring standouts Caitlin Clark and Angel Reese marked the strongest first half of the Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA) season since the league's inception in 1997. Talks to finalise a "historic" WNBA media deal that reports suggest would be around US\$200 million (S\$269 million) a year, up from US\$60 million currently, reinforces the rising popularity of the league and women's professional sports in general, commissioner Cathy Engelbert said. With the WNBA All-Star Game on July 20 followed by a month-long Olympic break, players, league executives and media partners are

hoping for the momentum to carry through to the second half of the season. "This weekend is the culmination of a historic first half of the season. We have seen our highest attendance in 26 years, repeatedly set viewership records. "A lot of our teams are up triple digits in attendance," Engelbert said. The television audience has topped records, with 16 games averaging more than one million viewers, breaking the full-season record just halfway through the current one, she added. Fan voting for All-Star game players jumped over 600 per cent from 2023, while merchandise sales have also hit historic highs.

Much of the interest has to be credited to the most stellar WNBA rookie class in recent memory, led by sharpshooting and passing wizard Clark, and scoring and rebound phenomenon Reese. The two 22-year-olds were teammates for the first time for the All-Star side, taking on a Team USA squad featuring WNBA Most Valuable Player front runner A'ja Wilson, Breanna Stewart and others. Team WNBA won 117-109 at Footprint Centre in Phoenix, with Indiana Fever guard Clark setting an All-Star Game rookie record with 10 assists and contributed four points as well. Chicago Sky forward Reese finished with 12 points and 11 rebounds – the first rookie in WNBA history

to score a double-double in an All-Star game – as Arike Ogunbowale of the Dallas Wings scored an All-Star Game record of 34 points to lead Team WNBA. With the influx of young talent to challenge experienced veterans, hyper-competitive games have helped to attract new fans. "The play on the floor has been exactly what we had hoped for with great match-ups," former WNBA star and current broadcast analyst Rebecca Lobo said. "We've seen the ratings play out in a big way... The anticipation of this current season was similar to back when the league started and that has translated into ticket sales and people tuning into television." REUTERS

INTERACTIVE

### Max Maeder and the art of kitefoiling

SCAN TO VIEW

Singapore's two-time kitefoiling world champion heads into the Paris Olympics as one of the medal prospects. Ahead of the July 26-Aug 11 Games, Max gives The Straits Times a behind-the-scenes look at how he has become one of the world's best kitefoilers.

str.sg/viz-max-kitefoil

# NEAR SHOCK TIMELY REMINDER FOR U.S.

## James rescues them in narrow Olympic warmup win over 'amazing' South Sudan

LONDON - It was unthinkable that a team full of National Basketball Association (NBA) stars could lose to an unheralded African side, but coach Steve Kerr has warned that anything is possible if they do not play at their best.

South Sudan's basketball team nearly delivered a stunning upset on a United States line-up of big-name players on July 20, before narrowly losing 101-100 in a Paris Olympics warmup game.

LeBron James, 39 and the all-time NBA scoring leader, registered a game-high 25 points, which included the deciding

points on a driving lay-up with eight seconds remaining at the O2 Arena in London.

Their East African opponents, who led 58-44 at half-time, took a late lead after an 8-0 scoring run and were poised to pull off one of the greatest shocks in international basketball before the Los Angeles Lakers star saved the day.

"The ending was good for us - just to feel that, to feel what it's going to feel like in Paris," Kerr said.

"Good experience for us. Good reminder that when we play against teams like that, it's the biggest experience of their lives and

we have to expect everyone to play like that.

"If we don't play the right way and don't come with the right energy and focus, we can be beat, no matter who we play. But we have that gear and if we can find it, we can overwhelm teams. It was a great reminder of two things - that, and if we don't play our best, we can get beat."

J.T. Thor, who has played for the NBA's Charlotte Hornets in the past three seasons, sank a three-pointer with 20 seconds remaining to put South Sudan into a 100-99 lead.

After James made the winning shot, the Africans had one final possession but Carlík Jones missed a jumper with six seconds left and Wenyen Gabriel missed on

two put-back attempts before the final buzzer.

"South Sudan was amazing," Kerr added. "I did not do a great job of preparing my team. We did not focus enough on what they are capable of and that's on me."

"I think that really allowed South Sudan to gain confidence early. Once we turned it up in the second half, they had already knocked down a bunch of threes and were feeling really good about themselves."

Besides his winning basket, James also sparked a 23-5 US run from late in the third quarter to early in the fourth.

"We have to continue to take a step forward," said the two-time Olympic champion and four-time NBA champion.



US forward LeBron James on the attack in an earlier friendly game against Serbia on July 17 in Abu Dhabi. He scored a game-high 25 points in his side's 101-100 win over South Sudan on July 20 in London. PHOTO: AFP

"A lot of these teams that we're playing have been practising either one month or months in advance and we have maybe just two weeks together. So every game, every film session, we get an opportunity. We have to try to make the most of it, not taking any steps back."

Cameroun-born Joel Embiid, who became a US citizen in 2022, added 14 points and seven rebounds for the US, while Anthony Davis came off the bench to produce 15 points and 11 rebounds.

"We're not 100 per cent together,

as we saw tonight. But it's like I said, everything is controllable," Davis said.

For South Sudan, ranked 33rd in the world, Marial Shayok scored 24 points, Jones added 15 points, 11 rebounds and 11 assists and Thor had 14 points off the bench.

Shayok plays in China and briefly played alongside Embiid with the Philadelphia 76ers, while Jones plays for perennial Serbian power Partizan.

The Americans will face South Sudan again in the Olympics group stage on July 31 in Lille. AFP

American sprinter Noah Lyles romping home to victory in the 100m at the London Diamond League on July 20, clocking 9.81 seconds to finish ahead of Botswana's Letsile Tebogo (third) while Briton Louie Hinchliffe placed fourth. PHOTO: USA TODAY SPORTS



## Lyles backs Games glory boast with PB in London

LONDON - Noah Lyles proved once again he can back up his fighting talk with strong performances on the track, after he ran a personal best to secure 100m victory in the final Diamond League race in London before the Paris Olympics.

The American, who headlines the Netflix series Sprint focusing on the top Olympic medal contenders, is full of confidence as the

Games get under way this week.

"I'm going to win, it's what I always do, I'm getting faster every week," Lyles said on July 20 of his Olympic chances.

"I know exactly where I am ahead of Paris. I live for the biggest moments, the more eyes the better I perform. As soon as I get on the stage when the TV is on and people are watching, I perform."

He delighted the London crowd with a trademark come-from-behind win in a personal best of 9.81 seconds - an improvement by two-hundredths of a second.

That lifted him to third fastest in the world in 2024 behind Kenya's Ferdinand Omanyala (9.79sec) and Jamaican Kishane Thompson (9.77).

Lyles, who turned 27 on July 18, delivered a performance to celebrate, shooting past Botswana's Letsile Tebogo who led early but ultimately had to settle for third place, albeit matching his personal best and national record of 9.88sec.

"That was fun," added Lyles. "I could have had a better start. I wanted a faster time but I had the wind. After building my confidence, this has been what I prayed for and what I wanted."

Though he admitted he could have done better, the new personal

best showed his training is paying off, after he ran 9.83sec to win the US trials in Oregon just a month ago.

Lyles, who built his reputation over 200m, was the first man since Usain Bolt in 2015 to win three gold medals - 100m, 200m and 4x100m - at a single world championships, in Budapest, Hungary in August 2023.

The Netflix series cast him as "heir to the throne" of the Jamaican king of sprint, chasing Bolt's world record of 9.58sec - although that still looks out of reach, at least for this Olympics.

While he has eyes only on gold, South Africa's Akani Simbine, who came second with a season's best of 9.86sec, would be delighted with any medal in Paris.

The 30-year-old managed to finish only fourth or fifth in five Olympic or world finals, with the African championships and Com-

monwealth Games, both in 2018, the only times he had topped the podium in an individual event.

The London Diamond League was a perfect send-off to a raft of Paris-bound athletes in front of a crowd of 58,000 at the London Stadium, the venue for the 2012 Olympics and home to English Premier League club West Ham United.

Dutchwoman Femke Bol again shone in the hurdles. In her own fine-tuning, the world champion set a new meet record of 51.30sec as she cruised to victory in the 400m hurdles.

"I am excited for Paris and of course to put on my best race there," she said, with world record holder and Olympic champion Sydney McLaughlin-Levrone in her crosshairs.

"I am looking forward to racing Sydney - that will push us both. I will be ready for it." REUTERS, AFP

## No fun without 'fair fight' for Peaty after Chinese doping saga

PARIS - As the Paris Olympics draw near, Adam Peaty and other British swimmers said there needs to be a level-playing field after some of

their Chinese counterparts escaped punishment for testing positive for a banned drug.

The World Anti-Doping Agency

(Wada) confirmed reports in April that 23 Chinese swimmers tested positive for trimetazidine (TMZ) - a medication that increases blood flow to the heart - before the Tokyo Olympics in 2021.

It accepted the Chinese anti-doping agency's (Chinada) findings that the positive tests were due to accidental food substance contamination.

An independent investigation found no favouritism or mishandling by Wada in the case, and a World Aquatics audit also concluded there was no mismanagement or cover-up by the governing body.

But that led to unhappiness among many swimmers, concerned that the Chinese swimmers were let off too easily regardless of the circumstances.

Ahead of the Games this week, two-time Olympic 100m breaststroke champion Peaty reiterated that he wants a "fair fight", as reports emerged that the China swim



British two-time Olympic champion Adam Peaty says he is focused on performing to the best of his ability.

team in Paris will have 11 athletes who were part of the 23.

"If it's not fair then it takes the enjoyment out for me," he said on July 20.

Tom Dean, who won gold in the 200m freestyle at the Tokyo Olympics, said Britain's swimmers were held to the highest standards when it came to doping.

"I think if other countries aren't living up to that standard, then it's a real shame that brings a real dark cloud over what the Olympics is meant to stand for," he said.

Freya Colbert, the 400m medley world champion, added that it was upsetting to see reports of other

competitors not being tested rigorously.

"I think it ruins the reliability of the results," she said.

Besides doping, security concerns are also an issue in the lead-up to the Paris Games.

The French capital is on high alert amid wars in Gaza and Ukraine, particularly for the unprecedented opening ceremony which will take place on the Seine river.

Peaty, however, dismissed concerns when asked about the safety of British athletes in the city and expressed trust in France's security forces.

"In Rio (2016) we had Zika virus, Tokyo we had Covid. There's always got to be something," the 29-year-old added.

"All I've got to focus on is swimming the best I can, performing the best I can. And then those people in charge of what they need to be in charge of, I put full faith in them." REUTERS

### SportsWorld

#### Paes, Amritraj make tennis HOF history

NEW YORK - Former doubles world No. 1 Leander Paes and tennis broadcaster, actor and player Vijay Amritraj became the first Asian men inducted into the International Tennis Hall of Fame on July 20.

The first inductees from India were joined by British tennis journalist and author Richard Evans, 85, in enshrinement ceremonies at the Hall of Fame in Newport, Rhode Island.

Paes, 51, and Amritraj, 70, also made India the 28th nation represented in the Hall of Fame. AFP

#### Marquez selected as India football coach

NEW DELHI - Manolo Marquez has been appointed coach of the India men's football team, over a month after Igor Stimac's acrimonious exit.

Spaniard Marquez, 55, has been coaching league teams in India since 2020 and will take on the role for the national team "effective immediately", the All India Football Federation said in a statement on July 20. AFP

#### Chanettee leads at Dana by 3 strokes

WASHINGTON - Chanettee Wannasaen, chasing her second LPGA title, closed with a birdie to seize a three-stroke lead after the third round of the Dana Open on July 20.

The 20-year-old Thai fired a five-under 66 to stand on 16-under 197 at Highland Meadows in Sylvania, Ohio. South Korean Ryu Hae-ran was second on 200 after closing with back-to-back birdies at the 17th and 18th holes to shoot 65. AFP

#### Savea joins Moana to repay heritage

WELLINGTON - World Player of the Year Ardie Savea announced on July 21 he will play for Moana Pasifika next season in a major coup for the Super Rugby side.

Savea, who played club rugby in Japan in 2024, had said he was sad to end more than a decade's association at Wellington Hurricanes. The All Blacks back-row forward added that the time was right to honour his Samoan family and "give back to my heritage". AFP

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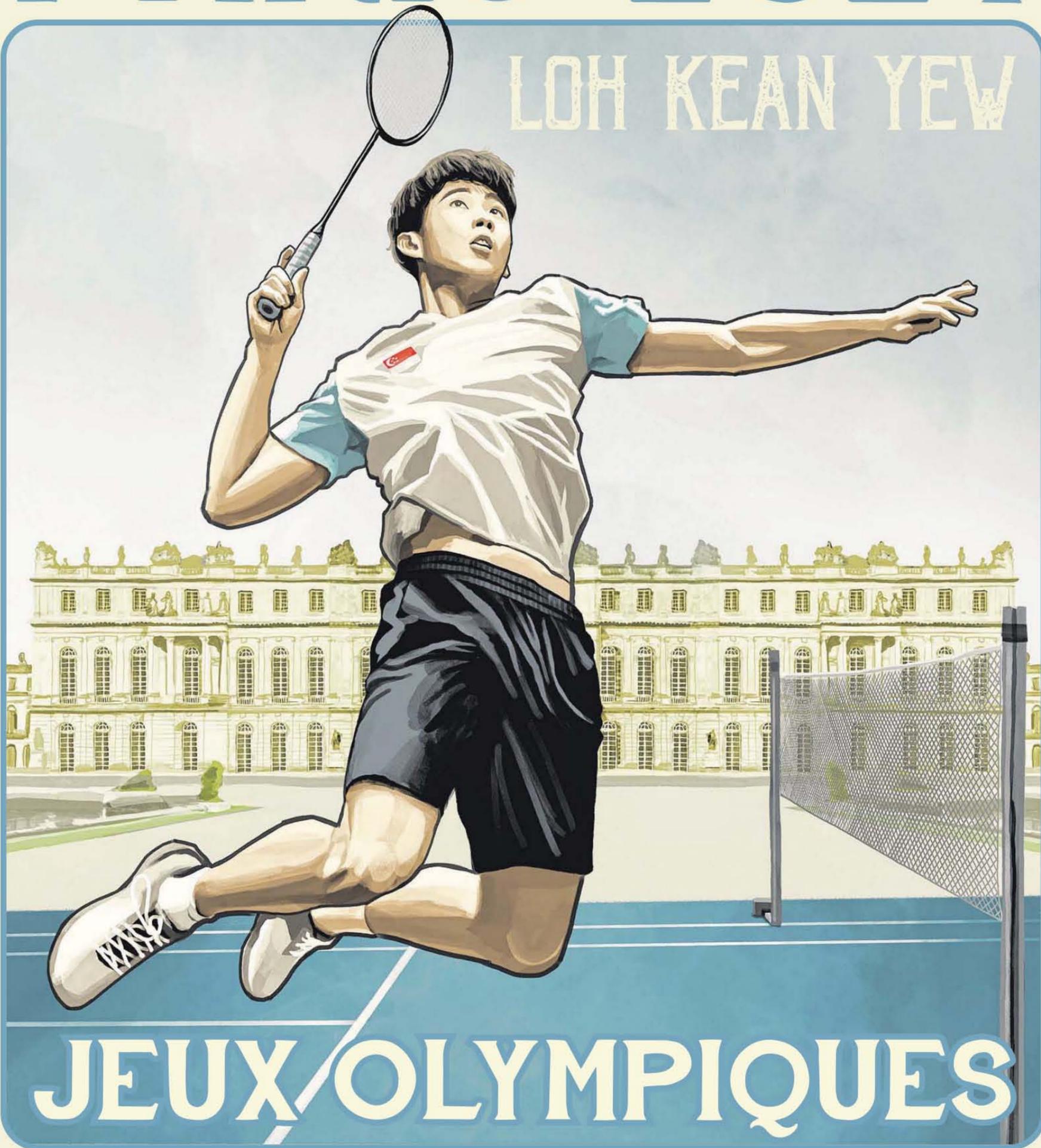
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# PARIS 2024

LOH KEAN YEOW



STRAITS TIMES GRAPHICS: CHNG CHOON HIONG

## THE ART OF... THE RALLY

A century after Paris 1924, the Olympic Games return to the French capital where Team Singapore are aiming to deliver a vintage performance and masterpiece in the city of art. In the second part of ST's Olympic series, badminton player Loh Kean Yew explains the appeal of the rally.

**Rohit Brijnath**  
Assistant Sports Editor

Every day Loh Kean Yew tests rubber. He leaps, darts, brakes, lunges, back-pedals. After three or four weeks, depending on how far he goes in the draw, his shoes get a little worn and he has to change them. If they don't grip properly, or help him brake perfectly, it's going to affect the most important part of his badminton life.

The rally is as unscripted as a conversation. It has no set time – Loh, an aggressive player, remembers a 59-shot one he played – and no prescribed design. As he readies to serve, the Singaporean has a “rough plan” but his rival has his own one. This is a two-way interrogation

conducted sometimes at a few hundred kilometres per hour.

“During the rally you adjust to whatever situation,” says Loh, who hopes to challenge for a medal at the Paris Olympics. “And sometimes it's just instinct, because you don't have time to properly think, think, think. And anyway it might also cause overthinking.”

If a rival reads his plan, he must be flexible. “There is a constant change of tactics, and it happens very fast, because the game is so fast.”

The rally is a deceitful dance. It is intelligent repartee. It is a lifetime of spin practised, videos watched, kilometres run, reflexes trained, all distilled to a handful of spectacular seconds. When it starts it feels like a blur as ideas are tossed across the net. But is he playing to his strengths or to his rival's weakness?

“Both,” says Loh in a best-case scenario. Often it just depends on the style of a rival. “My strength could be his strength. For example, he's good at defending and I'm good at attacking.”

So then?

Then, he laughs, “we stay patient and see who lasts”.

Every rally is connected to the previous one. Every one is a valuable strand in a tapestry which we call a game. So many things matter, especially confidence.

“So if you're a defender, when you defend, defend, defend, and you keep losing the point, obviously your confidence goes down. If you are the attacker, you keep going for the kill, but you can't kill and in the end you tire yourself out and you make mistakes.”

Some players deliberately walk slowly between rallies. They ask for a spot of sweat to be mopped and for a shuttle to be changed. Oxygen is inhaled, mind games are played, rhythm is broken, conspiracies are hatched. Once the rally begins, Loh, the world No. 10, is watching the shuttle, his rival's movement and his stroke. Where his opponent's racket aims is a clue.

Players will go where the rally takes them. Ten shots or 80. Sometimes legs get heavy, patience starts to slip away and fatigue can play a role. “They take bigger risks because they are tired. They want to take a gamble. Go big or go home.”

Very occasionally players may deliberately extend a rally. A rival may win the first game and then trail badly in the second. “Then,” explains Loh, “they just want to give up on that set (to reserve energy for the third game). And you don't want them to give up on that set yet.

Then you try to prolong it.”

For the spectator the rally is entertainment, for the player it is a nuanced, no-touching wrestle for control. Sometimes the skill is so subtle – the tiny additions of spin, the minor variations in pace – and the momentum shifting so rapidly that we cannot gauge the intensity of a duel.

“Being in control,” says Loh, “is constantly changing. He's in control. Then suddenly I'm in control. (Then) suddenly he's in control. So these are probably the small things that might not be seen.”

No one plays the same in a rally. There is touch, disguise, power, attack. But the “best, best, best player”, says Loh, can do what is required when it matters. “They can do the right thing at the right time using the right strength.”

But what are the best rallies? Loh thinks and repeats the question. “Which ones are best?”

Then he grins. “Whichever gains the point.”

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TOMORROW • SHANNON TAN: THE ART OF THE DRIVE

# SPORT

## 6 MEDALS, BUT NOT ENOUGH

As tchoukball rivals close gaps, Singapore look to technology and bigger talent pool

Melvyn Teoh

With a haul of one gold, three silver and two bronze medals at the July 19-21 Asia-Pacific Youth Tchoukball Championships in Malaysia, Singapore's age-group teams continued to garner creditable results abroad.

However, the sport's national body is looking to forge further ahead.

While Tchoukball Association of Singapore (TBAS) president Delane Lim believes the teams did well in the face of tougher competition at the Educity Sports Complex in Iskandar Puteri, Johor, he is seeking to raise the bar by employing technology and boosting the talent pipeline.

He said: "All the games this time round are very close. At the regional level, everyone's standards have gone up, which means we also have to raise our levels or be better in our coaching technology."

He added that TBAS is looking at acquiring ball-firing machines, similar to those used in football and tennis, to help the teams improve further. Such machines can launch balls at different speeds and trajectories to sharpen players' reaction and control.

"We are studying this to be part of our training to help our players defend better," said Lim.

He also emphasised the importance of the school pipeline to widen the talent pool, adding: "This is why we've been lobbying to include tchoukball in the National School Games and introducing it to primary schools."

While Singapore's Under-18 girls won the Asia-Pacific title for the third consecutive time on July 21, they certainly felt stiffer competition this time round.

They had to endure a nervy finish in the final before pipping Macau 28-27. At the 2023 World Youth Tchoukball Championships in Singapore, they had beaten the same opponents 43-16.

Coach Angie Ng said: "It was definitely very intense right to the



Jeona Kumar attempting to shoot in the Singapore Under-18 girls' team's 28-27 victory over Macau in the final of the Asia-Pacific Youth Tchoukball Championships on July 21. It was the only gold the Republic bagged in Johor, where they also claimed three silver and two bronze medals. PHOTO: TCHOUKBALL ASSOCIATION OF SINGAPORE

end, the skills for both teams were actually quite on par, Macau had four power shooters that we had a bit of a problem dealing with.

"I'm very thankful we won. At one point, I already thought we were gone, it was really a close fight. We only have six (players) that were from last year's team, so half the team is new. This is a relatively young squad."

Captain Claudia Tan admitted that it was "stressful", adding: "This year, they (Macau) definitely

made fewer mistakes, and their game play was quite good. They came out with different strategies also to make us run more, and made it slightly harder for us to defend."

Singapore's title came in the only category that was not contested by Chinese Taipei, who swept the other five age groups.

They defeated Malaysia 33-9 and 31-13 to win the Under-12 girls and boys' events respectively, with Singapore earning the bronze for

both. They also beat Singapore's U-18 boys 50-37 and the Republic's U-15 girls 37-35 for gold.

Singapore's U-15 boys, who had beaten Chinese Taipei to clinch the world youth title in 2023, came close to repeating their victory. They forced a 41-41 draw in regulation time, but succumbed 48-44 in overtime.

Captain Keane Yap said the team were undone in the added period. "The game was very stressful and I think during overtime we just

lost composure, we started to panic because they were scoring and defending very well," he said.

Despite the loss, U-15 boys' coach Ivan Ng felt that his team had "exceeded his expectations", saying: "I think that the boys did well, to give Chinese Taipei such a good fight, it's really commendable."

He said an injury to key player Javian Ng had contributed to their defeat. The 12-year-old was forced to retire after the third period as he felt worsening pain in his ankle.

Javian said: "I went back to training without it fully healing, because I didn't want one small injury to affect my whole team. As I continued in the competition, it became worse."

Next up is the seniors' turn to show their mettle. They will be taking part in the July 26-28 Asia-Pacific Tchoukball Championships in Hong Kong, where the women's team will be defending their title.

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## Organisers up the ante as Games opening nears

PARIS - Preparations for the Paris Olympics went up a gear on July 20, as security teams scoured the banks of the Seine river ahead of the opening ceremony on July 26 and top International Olympic Committee (IOC) officials met in the French capital.

Police with sniffer dogs were seen checking the 6km route along the Seine for the ceremony in which up to 7,000 athletes will sail

on nearly a hundred barges and river boats watched by 300,000 spectators.

The stakes are high for the waterborne parade - the first time the opening ceremony of a Summer Games will take place outside a stadium.

French police will be bolstered by their counterparts from several countries, including Spain, Britain and Qatar.

Early in the day on July 20, a rehearsal for the ceremony was held on the river but security barriers and police screened it from the eyes of residents and media to keep the programme secret.

IOC spokesman Mark Adams said that although he had not seen the full plan for the opening ceremony, the show will "blow your socks off".

"I have a good idea, but not a full

idea of what is in it. You can imagine it is going to be pretty amazing for the Olympic Games, first time outside the stadium," he said at a news conference.

The preparations for the ceremony have, however, caused extensive disruption to residents of central Paris, who must have a pass with a special QR code to cross the Seine.

"We've had far fewer customers than usual for the last two weeks. There aren't many tourists and lots of Parisians have left town. All our local clientele has gone," said Behi Samadian, 69, in a boutique in Saint-Germain-des-Pres.

But things should get better once the Games start.

Organisers say 8.8 million tickets have already been sold, beating the record from the 1996 Atlanta Olym-

pics and that figure will rise because tickets are still on sale for some of the 32 sports.

Meanwhile, the IOC's top brass, led by president Thomas Bach, met to prepare for a larger gathering of all the movement's members on July 23 and 24.

While proceedings are on track, not everything had been perfect in the years leading up to Paris.

Powerhouses Russia will be the big absentee from the 2024 Games, with just 15 Russians and 17 Belarusians accredited to compete as neutrals as most sports have turned their backs on them in response to Moscow's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

The IOC also said on July 20 it was resigned to the Paris Olympics being targeted by disinformation attacks following recent incidents

blamed on Russia.

Adams said he believed a campaign against the Games was already under way.

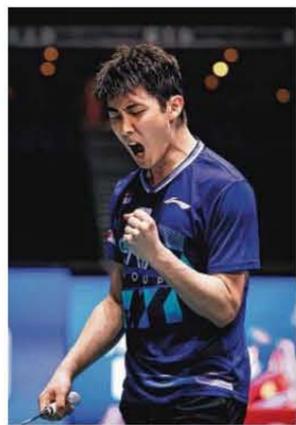
"Clearly there is a campaign of some sort going on," he said. "It's not the first or last time that the IOC will be targeted with misinformation. It's getting more and more sophisticated."

He was responding to a question concerning a feature-length fake documentary that emerged in 2023 titled Olympics Has Fallen which used AI-generated audio to impersonate Hollywood star Tom Cruise.

The film, falsely purporting to be a Netflix documentary, was apparently designed by disinformation agents tied to the Russian government to erode global support for the Olympics. AFP

| FOUR-DIGIT DRAW |      |      |
|-----------------|------|------|
| Jul 21 2024     |      |      |
| FIRST           | ◆    | 7623 |
| SECOND          | ◆    | 2908 |
| THIRD           | ◆    | 9327 |
| STARTERS        |      |      |
| 0008            | 0913 | 2451 |
| 5346            | 6233 | 7149 |
| 7274            | 7510 | 7655 |
|                 | 8765 |      |
| CONSOLATIONS    |      |      |
| 0127            | 0690 | 1101 |
| 1164            | 1535 | 5178 |
| 5704            | 7051 | 7453 |
|                 | 9553 |      |

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Short or long rally - control is key for Loh | B13



**Formula One •**  
Piastrri grabs maiden win in McLaren 1-2 | B10

**Tennis •** Nadal admits Borges outplayed him on clay for first career title | B10



**MISS SAIGON'S SINGAPORE CONNECTION**

Actress Louisa Vilinne plays alternate Kim in musical | **C4**



# life

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Auditioning to be a K-pop star | **C5**



**How to handle physical bullying**

# Should your kid fight back against a bully?



Mr Imran Johri, 50, and his son, Iden Lee Imran, nine, demonstrating their martial arts and self-defence skills. ST PHOTO: GAVIN FOO

**Teach kids how to protect themselves and how to resolve minor disputes, says a counsellor**



**Stephanie Yeo**  
Senior Correspondent

Iden Lee Imran was in Primary 2 when he told his parents that his face hurt.

When they queried him, he revealed that a younger boy had come up to him during recess and punched him in the face before running off.

As the incident happened about a week earlier in term two in 2023, his shocked parents felt it was pointless raising the issue with

Iden's teacher. Their son, now nine, could not recall his attacker's face either.

"I was really proud when he said he did not retaliate against the boy. For him to have been hit in the face by a smaller kid, unprovoked, and for him to step back and say, 'It's okay, it's a small kid' shows a lot of maturity on his part," says his father, Mr Imran Johri, 50, marketing director at an investment platform.

He and his wife, stay-at-home mum Ivy Lee, 40, also have two daughters aged 10 and five.

While cyber bullying has been on the rise, physical bullying has never gone away, says Mr Chong Ee Jay, a family life specialist and cyber wellness expert at charity Focus on the Family Singapore.

He defines bullying as an act of intentional and repeated harm on another person using force or aggression. This may take many forms, from the physical to the mental.

People bully for many reasons, he says, including making fun of someone or taking revenge over a perceived hurt. Some bullies lack

empathy and self-awareness.

But more often than not, bullies want to "exert a sense of perceived power" over a vulnerable victim.

The Ministry of Education (MOE) tells The Straits Times that it takes any form of bullying seriously and that all schools send a clear message to students that bullying is not acceptable.

It adds that since 2013, the number of incidents reported each year to schools has remained at about two incidents for every 1,000 primary students and five incidents for every 1,000 secondary students.

Schools teach students about establishing and respecting personal boundaries; speaking up against bullying and hurtful behaviour; and how to walk away from bullies and seek help from a trusted adult rather than engage with a bully, MOE says.

These are among its measures to educate, prevent and, where necessary, intervene in bullying matters.

In Iden's case, the punching incident sparked a long conversation between Iden and his parents

**I was really proud when he said he did not retaliate against the boy. For him to have been hit in the face by a smaller kid, unprovoked, and for him to step back and say, 'It's okay, it's a small kid' shows a lot of maturity on his part.**



**MR IMRAN JOHRI**, on his son Iden Lee Imran, nine, being punched in the face by a younger boy during recess in school. He and his wife have told Iden that he can count on their support should he need to defend himself in the future against a bully

where they gave him their support should he need to defend himself in the future against a bully.

He should not use his martial arts skills to attack, they reiterated. Iden, who has been practising taekwondo for four years, is slated to obtain his junior black belt in 2024.

Ms Lee, a trained lawyer who volunteers as a mediator at two mediation centres, admits that not all parents will agree with their approach.

Mr Imran reasons that while it is wise to tell kids to report bullying to their teacher, "because of my own experience, I know that sometimes there's no magical teacher who will appear when you're being bullied and stop it".

At age seven, he was picked on by a gang of teenagers and almost stripped of his clothes.

"I fought for my life, and they backed away because they got scared," he says of the incident, which sparked a lifelong passion for self-defence and martial arts skills.

CONTINUED on C2

How to handle physical bullying

Support your child by reinforcing social and emotional skills to manage situation

FROM C1

His words were put to the test in August 2023 when Iden came to the defence of his friend who was being bullied.

Iden himself had put up with a classmate who, in Mr Imran's words, "liked to do a running tackle on him" or bump into him as a form of rough play on many occasions.

Iden did not retaliate, but when that classmate slapped away a water bottle that Iden's friend was holding, Iden hit him in the sternum, which left the boy breathless. It was a move his father had taught him to make an attacker back off immediately.

"This boy had been doing this to him a lot, but he just put up with it. I think he drew the line when the boy did it to his best friend," Mr Imran says.

Ms Lee, who conducts conflict management training as a volunteer, adds that "conflict doesn't just happen in the moment. It's usually a build-up".

The school contacted both boys' parents and Ms Lee messaged the other boy's mother to check on him.

Iden's parents, who believe that children should settle their own disputes, say that they were told by his teacher that the boys subsequently apologised to each other.

Surprisingly, Ms Lee says, the boys became closer friends after the incident and the other boy stopped his rough behaviour towards Iden.

She and her husband spoke to their son several times after the incident to ascertain his motives and to make sure his action was not motivated by malice.

"One of the most important things that I wanted to address in that incident was how Iden felt immediately after. He was understandably distraught, as the inci-

dent left a bad taste in his mouth. "He found no pleasure in putting a stop to the bullying – and it was not a good feeling overall, to resort to doing what he did," Mr Imran says.

"We talked about why he felt he had to do it and it was clear that it was in defence of his best friend. Regardless, I reinforced that idea that we would always have his back, especially if it was the right thing to do."

TEACH KIDS TO PROTECT THEMSELVES

Mr Chong, 44, says his own son's experience being bullied in school forced him to reconsider his initial approach.

His only child was eight in 2023 when he was constantly teased and taunted by schoolmates, and Mr Chong advised the boy to resolve it in three ways.

First, tell the bully that his behaviour made him uncomfortable and that he did not like it. Second, report the incident to a teacher if the bullying continued. Finally, he taught his son to cease all communication with the bully until he changed for the better.

In 2024, however, a classmate kept kicking his son constantly, despite his attempts to ignore it and telling the offender to stop.

Mr Chong says his child's teachers never caught the instances of misbehaviour either.

"In the end, I told my child that he needed to learn to protect himself – not by kicking the bully back, but by learning to block or have some form of self-defence so that he doesn't get injured by the bully's kicking," he says.

"As parents, we do not condone violence. And for that reason, I do not tell my son to retaliate with kicks or physical acts of aggression deliberately towards the bully.

"However, when it is not possible



to walk away, or the bullying is persistent and no immediate help is available, I must teach my son to protect himself. To me, this is akin to equipping my son with survival skills 101."

MOE says: "If a child encounters bullying, parents can play a crucial role in supporting their child by remaining calm, offering emotional support, and reinforcing social and emotional skills to manage the situation."

They should also inform the school so it can investigate the incident.

"Counselling support will be provided to guide the perpetrator and support the victim. Schools will also engage parents to reinforce the same values and expectations regarding their children's behaviour," the ministry adds.

KIDS SHOULD LEARN TO RESOLVE DISPUTES

It is natural for anxious parents to jump in when they learn about bullying incidents.

However, unless it is an extreme or life-threatening situation – such as the case of a teenage girl who was assaulted by three of her peers in a carpark in 2022, which went viral on social media – children can benefit from learning to resolve minor bullying disputes on their own, such as how Mr Chong's son learnt to manage being teased.

"Take time to hear about the bullying situation from our children.

Listen to their feelings, understand the facts, and ask questions to clarify not just the bully's actions but also our child's response in the dispute that happened.

"Also, ask our child how he or she plans to resolve the dispute. Then discuss the possible options as well as consequences that could happen," Mr Chong says.

He suggests using the "Sodas" framework to guide such conversations:

- S – Situation (What happened?)
- O – Options (What are the possible solutions?)
- D – Disadvantages of each possible solution
- A – Advantages of each possible solution
- S – Solution (Best option forward)

As disputes around bullying behaviour can be emotionally charged for children, parents should act as coaches to comfort and guide them.

Where necessary, they should follow up with the teacher, who may not be aware of the incidents or who may be able to provide a different perspective of the situation.

Mr Chong adds: "Throughout the dispute resolution, parents are encouraged to check in with their child regularly for their physical safety and emotional well-being – a sure way to stay aware and mindful should the bullying persist."

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Parents can teach their children how to handle a physical bullying situation, such as to take active measures to protect themselves from harm and not just stand there and accept the abuse. PHOTO: ISTOCKPHOTO

DOS AND DON'TS WHEN YOUR KID IS BEING BULLIED

Mr Chong Ee Jay, a family life specialist and cyber wellness expert at charity Focus on the Family Singapore, says parents can teach their children how to handle a physical bullying situation.

- DO NOT just stand there and take it. Compromising makes bullies feel empowered, he says.
- DO teach kids to take active measures to protect themselves from harm. For instance, your child should move or run away, shout to alert someone or use self-defence measures like blocks and pushes.
- DO NOT encourage them to become a bully too. With younger children who lack maturity, self-defence may seem like fighting, Mr Chong says. So, it is important that parents explain that they should be taking measures to protect themselves rather than cause harm.
- DO rally witnesses. Teach your child to encourage his or her friends who were present during the incident to speak up for him or her.

Summer camps for girls want to keep focus on inner beauty, not skincare rituals

UNITED STATES – This year will be Ms Zoe Oosting's seventh summer at the Rockbrook Summer Camp for Girls in western North Carolina, where campers aged six to 16 ride horses through the mountains, spin slabs of clay and weave friendship bracelets.

This summer, Ms Oosting's second as a counsellor, she has observed a new bonding activity: multi-step skincare routines.

The girls in her cabin, aged 11 to 13, packed their suitcases with Glow Recipe serums, Drunk Elephant jelly cleansers and bottles of Sol de Janeiro body spray.

Teenagers have forged friendships over face masks for generations, but with the explosion of a skincare-obsessed beauty industry, even young campers have taken to the fad of pampering their faces with a variety of products, often expensive and touted by

Sephora-loyal influencers.

In reels on TikTok, summer camp editions of "get ready with me" videos feature female campers showing off sleek pink bottles of Monday shampoo and conditioner, rose quartz face rollers and Super-goop sunscreen, alongside staples like denim shorts and Converse sneakers.

"It's become such a huge thing," Ms Oosting said. "Girls are bringing it and keeping it in the cabin and then the restrooms."

Nighttime routines have also begun earlier in the evening.

"I remember being a camper, and counsellors had to beg us to shower," Ms Oosting said. "And now all the girls just beg every single day: 'I want to shower. I need to do my hair routine, my skincare.' Like, they beg and beg and beg."

In north-eastern Pennsylvania, Ms Jane Kagan, director of Lake

Bryn Mawr Camp, saw the trend this spring when she met families before camp started and felt she had to put a stop to it before the summer began.

She said there was one recurring question among the fourth, fifth and sixth graders: Can I bring my Sephora skincare products to camp?

"I couldn't believe it was a thing, but it is a thing," Ms Kagan said. "It's never before come up in that age group."

She sent a letter to parents in April stating that "exclusive products" create unnecessary competition, can cause harm to those with allergies and attract bugs, as originally reported by Business Insider. She hoped to encourage a more wholesome environment, one free of technology and body image fixation.

One of the camp's values is that "beauty is in more than skin, beauty comes from deep within", the letter read. Ms Kagan said parents were overwhelmingly appreciative.

Somerset Camp for Girls in Smithfield, Maine, also took a stance ahead of summer. In April, in a post on its website titled Busting The Trend, the camp asked that parents "please refrain from sending any Sephora (and similar) accessories to camp".

"We would prefer that nightly routines not affect precious cabin time, and we want to avoid unnecessary competition over who has what," the statement said.

And at Camp IHC, in Equinunk, Pennsylvania, the craze was addressed in an official camp skincare policy sent to parents by email, asking that "only necessary



skincare items be sent to IHC".

Ms Gigi Levin, 23, a counsellor at a camp in central Maryland, said she first noticed the shift at the start of the summer, when she saw girls "bringing little skincare bottles to activities".

"I asked them about it, and they acted like I was living under a rock," she said. "I asked one girl, 'You're 10. Why would you need anti-ageing cream?'"

Ms Levin said the camper had told her she had 10-year-old skin but wanted baby skin. "It was disturbing," she added.

But at other camps, the trend is less noticeable.

Ms Jessica Petkov, director of Camp Saginaw in Oxford, Pennsylvania, said that Sephora was a common topic of conversation but that she had not seen it become an issue.

"It's a thing, but we have not seen a crazy amount of it," she said. "It's pretty mild at this point, luckily."

And not everyone sees the uptick in skincare rituals among young girls as cause for concern. Many routines encourage sun safety and

include daytime products with SPF, which can come as a relief to sunburn-cautious parents and camp staff members.

Mr Barry Perlman, a father and a reproductive endocrinologist with a practice in Shrewsbury, New Jersey, said that as long as the products are safe, he does not take issue with his nine-year-old's interest in skincare, which began when she was eight. He sees the ritual as a positive one.

"It's like a bonding thing," said Mr Perlman, whose daughter attends Camp Chen-A-Wanda in Thompson, Pennsylvania. "It's almost like they use it to break the ice. It's an opportunity for two kids who might be different to be able to relate to each other."

In June, ahead of Lake Bryn Mawr Camp's opening day, Ms Kagan sent a second letter to parents discouraging elaborate skincare products. Just as a reminder, just in time for packing. One parent called her, she said, and said her daughter was giving her a hard time.

"Blame it on me," Ms Kagan said. NYTIMES

A Sephora beauty store in Union Square in New York.

Campers in the US aged under 16 have taken to packing their camp bags with toiletries and pampering their faces with a variety of products, often expensive and touted by Sephora-loyal influencers. PHOTO: NYTIMES

How to help your child succeed in school and life



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Minor Issues

# A mother learns from her kids how to play

The writer carves out time to be more present and engaged with her daughter, even saying yes to activities she would normally balk at



Jane Ng  
Correspondent

“Mama, you’re not very good at playing,” said my eight-year-old daughter recently. “What do you mean, we do crafts together, we bake together,” I answered somewhat defensively. “But that’s different,” she replied. Even though I was indignant at her accusation, I knew what she was getting at. Playing, to her, is not just engaging in an activity for recreation. She wants to spend quality time with me, and for that, I need to be as engaged in play as her. Psychiatrist Stuart Brown, founder of the National Institute of Play in the United States, describes play as a state of mind that one has when “absorbed in an activity that provides enjoyment and a suspension of

sense of time... and you want to do it again and again”. But as a full-time working mum with no helper, I don’t always have the time or energy to play with her. And even when I do sit down to play with her, I’m guilty of not being fully present as my mind is always on my to-do list or focused on containing the mess she is making. Furthermore, what is fun to her may not be fun to me. She loves to play with water, sand and slime. While I’m happy to set up the area for her, sensory play is not really my thing. As a result, she has become very good at independent play. She crafts for hours – making things like a mini cardboard ukulele and clay figurines, and sewing felt stuffed toys – without needing my involvement, apart from showing me her progress from time to time. That, in turn, leaves me with time to work or do my own things. Sometimes, when she asks me to play with her, I encourage her to read or play by herself instead. On weekends, I try to catch up on mundane tasks such as

cleaning, packing and cooking. So it is her papa who ends up being her playmate and they have come up with some games that they enjoy. For example, a catapult made of rubber bands to launch at each other “rocks” of balled-up paper. “Papa is good at playing,” she proclaimed once after a game filled with lots of laughter and gleeful shrieks, and I fully agree with her. The benefits of play for kids is a well-researched topic. There are studies that show the importance of play to the physical, cognitive, social and emotional development of a child. But there are even more benefits to be had when parents play with their child. Playing together fosters strong bonds, which become the foundation of a good relationship

and can help reinforce family values. When parents make an effort to be playful, or to play with their child, connection and laughter can deepen the parent-child relationship. It also helps parents to understand their child better and, in the long run, nurtures a confident, secure teen. Playing together benefits the parent as well – oxytocin, or the happy hormone, is released when parents engage in affectionate play with their child. So, after my daughter’s “feedback”, I’m trying to be a more fun mum, carving out time to be more present and engaged, and not just do mundane mothering tasks. I have discovered some things that are fun for both of us. It required a mindset change from

me, to say yes to activities I would normally balk at. We recently made pasta from scratch, without any specialised equipment. We have watched videos of pasta dough-making and my daughter had said she wanted to try it out. But when I imagined the mess from the flour that I would have to clean up, I shuddered. Furthermore, we did not have the required equipment, I reasoned. One Sunday, when we were home-bound because she was recovering from a bug, I suggested we bake with a recipe we had never tried before. “What about making pasta,” she asked hopefully. “Okay,” I said, deciding to go for it. “Really?” she asked, as her eyes lit up in disbelief. I prepared the ingredients and

she did most of the mixing, rolling and cutting as I sat with her and talked to her through the three-hour process. We discussed and experimented with different ways to mix the ingredients. The new experience, one she had been wanting to try, was exciting for her. Making something we had never tried before was fun for me, too. We laughed when the eggs “erupted” from the flour mountain and flowed all over. I was glad I suggested she make the dough on a baking tray instead of on the counter like what we saw in the videos. She said she loved how pliable the dough became after resting, and had fun kneading then cutting the rolled dough into strips. It was a fruitful afternoon and we had her slightly chewy homemade fettuccine with chicken stew for dinner. Another game we have been playing is Connect 4, where players take turns dropping tokens into a vertical grid to form a line of four tokens. This is a game I am fully invested in and thoroughly enjoy. We played countless rounds and Dr Brown’s description of being “absorbed in an activity that provides enjoyment and a suspension of sense of time... and you want to do it again and again” came to mind when I reflected on it. If there was any downside to the game, it was that I played to win and left her pouting when she lost. But during the times when she bested me, she knew it was a genuine win and not because I gave in to her. Playing comes naturally for some mums, but for others like myself, it may take some learning. Who better to teach us than the masters of play themselves – our kids. Play will look different for every child, so part of it is also figuring out what makes the child tick and what are the moments that bring the most satisfaction to parent and child. To mums who may not naturally know how to play with kids, it may sound like a tall order. We not only have to nurture them, discipline them and cook for them, but should also know how to play with them. But from the pasta-making experience, I realised that a simple activity, where I gave her my full attention, was satisfying for both of us. Hopefully, the desire to play with us will remain even as my kids grow older. During a recent short trip away, my teenagers, aged 15 and 18, asked to play their childhood game of Monopoly Deal every night. That, thankfully, is something that I still remember how to play quite well, though maybe my teens will beg to differ.

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## Fun With Kids Make family time all the more special with these ideas and activities



Elisa Chia  
Correspondent

### A MEGA DESPICABLE SUMMER AT UNIVERSAL STUDIOS SINGAPORE

You and your kids might have met Minions Kevin and Stuart on your previous outings to Universal Studios Singapore. They have since swapped their signature denim overalls for spiffy suits. And they are taking over the theme park’s New York Street with more of

their kind. Dance along with a flash mob of these fun-loving yellow creatures. You can also catch them in a stage show Mission: Mega, where they try their best to stop thieves from stealing secret Anti-Villain League tech. The new programmes are part of A Mega Despicable Summer event which runs until Aug 11, in line with Illumination’s Despicable Me 4 animated comedy. Now showing in cinemas, the box-office hit introduces laser-blasting Mega Mel, super strong Mega Dave, flying Mega Gus and indestructible Mega Jerry.

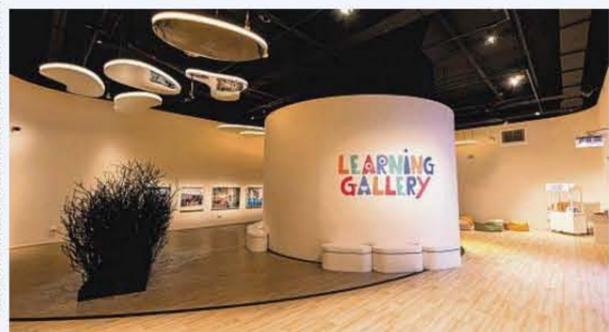
The new superheroes make their presence felt at the theme park in the form of inflatables towering over New York Street. Meanwhile, at the Lagoon Stage, look out for photo opportunities with the Minions’ boss Gru and his family. A Mega Despicable Summer is included with regular park admission. Tickets, which come with retail and meal vouchers, are priced from \$74 an adult and \$59 a child aged four to 12. Find out more at [www.rwsentosa.com/megasummer](http://www.rwsentosa.com/megasummer) and refer to the Universal Studios Singapore app for daily showtimes.

Dance along with a flash mob of Minions at Universal Studios Singapore. PHOTO: RESORTS WORLD SENTOSA

### SINGAPORE ART MUSEUM'S NEW LEARNING GALLERY

There is a new art space to bond over with your kids – and bring out your inner child too. Singapore Art Museum’s Learning Gallery at Tanjong Pagar Distripark, which opened on July 20, wants visitors of all ages to approach contemporary art with a childlike perspective. The Learning Gallery features five local and regional artists’ artworks, including one that cannot be seen but has to be heard. You can get up close with Cultural Medallion recipient Han Sai Por’s Black Forest, an installation featuring a destroyed “forest” of charcoal logs which reflects the impact of human activities on the natural world.

Another artwork is the award-winning 28-minute short film Like Shadows Through Leaves by Migrant Ecologies Project, a collective which studies culture and nature in South-east Asia. It tells the story of one of Singapore’s oldest housing estates Tanglin Halt, which runs alongside a former railway track, now repurposed as a green corridor. Each artwork has accompanying text written separately for children and adults. Your family can also read a variety of books related to the artworks and the emotions they evoke at a library located within the compact space. The Learning Gallery opens daily from 10am to 7pm and is free for all visitors. Go to [bit.ly/SAM-LearningGallery](http://bit.ly/SAM-LearningGallery) for details.



Singapore Art Museum’s Learning Gallery at Tanjong Pagar Distripark opened on July 20. PHOTO: SINGAPORE ART MUSEUM

Mike Dizon

MANILA – Lea Salonga from the Philippines was the first to bring to life tragic heroine Kim in Miss Saigon, the long-running hit musical which premiered in London's West End in 1989.

Since then, many Asian actresses have played the orphaned 17-year-old Vietnamese bar girl, who embarks on a romance with Chris, an American Marine sergeant, against the backdrop of the Vietnam War.

Their love affair is doomed when they are separated by the fall of Saigon in 1975, and Kim's subsequent struggles forge her fierce determination to seek a better life.

The show was first staged in Singapore in 2001 at the Kallang Theatre. And on Aug 15 – after 23 years – Miss Saigon will return to its shores at Sands Theatre at Marina Bay Sands.

The production stars Filipino-Australian actress Abigail Adriano as Kim and Australian-American actor Nigel Huckle as Chris.

And this time, it has a Singapore connection. Playing alternate Kim is Singaporean Louisa Vilinne, 27, who will relieve Adriano at least twice a week or on occasions when the latter is unavailable.

Vilinne made her professional musical debut on Miss Saigon's international tour in 2023 and is also part of the Miss Saigon ensemble.

"Kim is one of the hardest roles in musical theatre because she is onstage from beginning till the end," she tells The Straits Times in a backstage interview at The Theatre At Solaire in May, when Miss Saigon was staged in Manila, the Philippines.

Vilinne's family tree has been a story of uprooting and a steely pursuit of a better life, much like the journey Kim had to undergo.

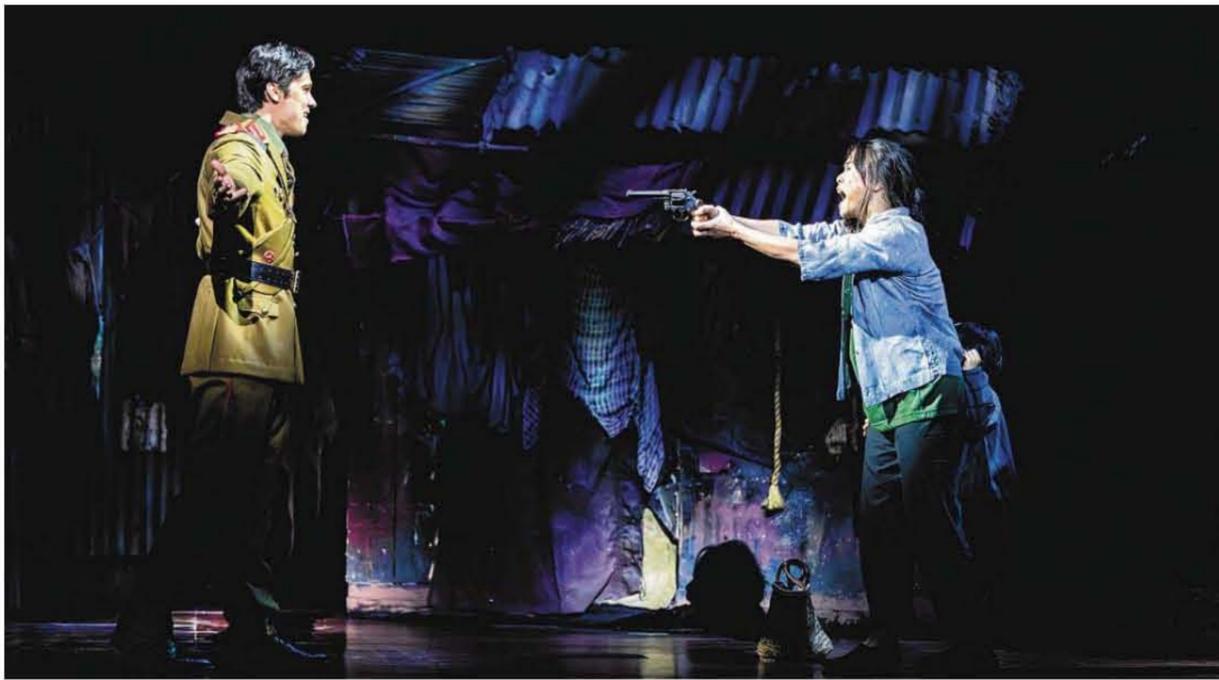
The actress' family is originally from China. In the 1930s, when the country was struggling with economic turbulence, her great-grandparents migrated to Jakarta, Indonesia.

But they feared for their safety during the late 1990s, at the height of political tensions there. She remembers nothing of the stories of their struggles, as she was still a toddler, except for what her engineer father would tell her.

Like the time they stood on the rooftop and saw houses burning, or how they sat frozen stiff in their car because they had closed the door a smidgen too late and someone had forced their way in to rob them.

"That's not a way to live," she recalls him saying. By 1999, they left the Indonesian capital to start a new life in Singapore.

The similarities between her family's trajectory and Kim's are not lost on Vilinne.



## MISS SAIGON

**WHERE** Sands Theatre, Marina Bay Sands, 10 Bayfront Avenue  
**WHEN** Aug 15 to Sept 22, various timings  
**ADMISSION** Tickets at \$60 to \$250  
**INFO** The show has an Advisory 16 rating. Go to str.sg/wrpn2

Singaporean actress Louisa Vilinne (below) will take on the role of tragic heroine Kim (left, with actor Laurence Mossman) in Miss Saigon at least twice a week when the musical is staged in Singapore. PHOTOS: MIKE DIZON, MISS SAIGON INTERNATIONAL TOUR

# Singapore girl of Miss Saigon

Actress Louisa Vilinne will play alternate Kim in the hit musical when it is staged at Marina Bay Sands in August

"One of the scenes in Miss Saigon that really resonates with me is when Kim makes the decision to uproot her life in Vietnam," she says.

"She touches the ground and looks up. She thinks that's the last time she's going to be home. Then she gets up and turns back one more time with hope and determination in her eyes – that hits home."

Vilinne cherishes her time growing up in Singapore. She remembers going to a PAP pre-school when she was four. She attended Jing Shan Primary School, CHIJ St Nicholas Girls' School (Secondary) and Ngee Ann Polytechnic, where she pursued a diploma in arts business management.

Once in a while, she would return to Indonesia to visit her extended family.

But as a child, she found it confusing. Her cousins there would refer to her as the "Singaporean cousin", and in Singapore, she was called the "Indonesian girl".

She did one semester of musical theatre at Lasalle College of the Arts and was also part of Singapore Repertory Theatre's The Young Company. One highlight was being cast in the 2017 ensemble for Forbidden City: Portrait Of An Empress, starring local singer-actress Kit Chan.

In 2019, Vilinne decided to pursue her passion in Australia, where she studied musical theatre at the Elder Conservatorium of Music, University of Adelaide.

That meant leaving behind everything she knew and everyone she loved. But the most difficult part was convincing her mother – who works at a human resources

agency for domestic helpers – that this was the future she wanted.

In a Stem-centric country – Stem stands for science, technology, engineering and mathematics – like Singapore, a career in the arts seemed out of place.

Vilinne says: "My family's supportive, but it took a while to get there because, like any Asian Tiger mum, she wanted me to have a comfortable life where I didn't have to worry about my next pay cheque."

"Unfortunately, that is exactly what being an actor is like – not knowing when your next pay cheque will be if you don't have a long contract."

It was important to gain her mother's approval, but Vilinne found it hard to broach the topic.

"My parents had to work hard to give me a good life in Singapore,



that I didn't feel comfortable asking," she said.

Instead, the young woman diligently saved up. When she was offered a partial scholarship to study at the University of Adelaide, her mother saw how important it was to her and agreed to let her go.

Getting to do homecoming performances in Singapore – she was last back in 2022 after graduating –

is a dream come true for Vilinne. "I get emotional thinking about it."

And she is hungry for local food too, which she misses.

So what would be her first meal back home? It is a toss-up between butter crab, Hokkien mee and salted egg chicken rice. "If I have those, I'm all good."

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## The Rite Of Spring highlight of ballet festival

Jocelyn Chng

**DANCE**  
**SINGAPORE BALLET FESTIVAL**  
 Singapore Ballet  
 Esplanade Theatre  
 July 19

Previously titled Masterpiece In Motion, Singapore Ballet's international repertory season has been renamed Singapore Ballet Festival from 2024.

The programme consisted of milestone works in the company's repertoire: Opus 25, choreographed by Taiwan-born American Edwarda Liang for the company's 25th anniversary; Australian Timothy Harbour's Linea Adora, the 30th anniversary piece; and 2024's new work, The Rite Of Spring by Swiss-Canadian choreographer Kinsun Chan.

Opening the evening was Linea Adora, a relentlessly fast-paced work choreographed to Philip Glass' Four Movements For Two Pianos. Dancers burst onto the stage almost immediately as the curtain rose, with seemingly non-stop leaps and mid-air directional changes. The slower second movement introduced a visually interesting asymmetrical squatting motif. In this movement, eight pairs of women in dark green leotards lined the stage in a captivating tableau, with demi-soloist Esen Thang shining in a sprightly solo role.

By the third movement, the com-



Singapore Ballet performing The Rite Of Spring by Swiss-Canadian choreographer Kinsun Chan. PHOTO: BERNIE NG

plex rhythms of Glass' piano music returned. It was hard not to pant simply watching the dancers on stage. In this unforgiving work set on a bare stage, apart from some lighting elements, the movements themselves do almost all the communication. Unfortunately, the exacting synchronicity implied by Glass' precise rhythms was not entirely captured by the dancers, especially towards the beginning and end of the performance.

Nevertheless, as with its opening, Linea Adora closed with a bang, leaving a striking image of all 32 dancers before the curtain fell.

The highlight of the programme was Chan's The Rite Of Spring, set to composer Stravinsky's work of the same title. With contemporary takes on a seminal work like this, comparisons with the original choreography by legendary Russian dancer Vaslav Nijinsky were inevitable. Chan's version worked with a looser narrative storyline, although some movements were reminiscent of Nijinsky's grotesque, hunched-over and repetitive jumping motifs.

The work still contemplated the idea of sacrifice, but more as a group or society rather than as an individual. Dancers often moved around in a tight formation, supporting one another and collabo-

rating as a group to pick up an individual who falls.

Although towards the end a group-versus-individual dynamic did appear, the piece culminated in the singled-out person seemingly triumphing rather than succumbing to the group's oppression. Demi-soloist Tamana Watanabe's performance in this role was captivating, embodying the explosive movements with simultaneous intensity and grace.

The last work presented was Liang's dramatic Opus 25, danced to the pulsating piece Ash by American composer Michael Torke. A highlight of this work was a short but beautiful duet performed by principal dancers Kwok Min Yi and Satoru Agetsuma near the beginning. They executed a lift similar to a fish dive in classical ballet, where Kwok spun upwards in one impressively swift motion.

What makes Opus 25 unforgettable was a motif that bookended the work. A huge red cloth pulled from downstage to upstage enveloped all the dancers like a wave that seemed to swallow them. Together with the all-white costumes, the work's visual red-and-white theme evoked a sense of patriotism. A sure crowd-pleaser, this provided an uplifting close to the evening's programme.

## SCO's season opener nothing short of spectacular

Chang Tou Liang

**CONCERT**  
**SEAMLESS**  
 Singapore Chinese Orchestra  
 Singapore Conference Hall  
 July 20

The opening concert of Singapore Chinese Orchestra's (SCO) 2024-25 season, led by principal conductor Quok Ling Kiong, was nothing short of spectacular.

True to its credo of being the "people's orchestra", SCO's exploration of transcultural genres bore fruit with its collaboration with 2023 Cultural Medallion recipient Osman Abdul Hamid.

The Malay dance master's Era Dance Theatre (EDT) took centre stage in a choreographed performance of SCO composer-in-residence Wang Chenwei's The Sisters' Islands (2006), his award-winning symphonic poem based on a well-known Malay legend. The music's deft use of lilting asli, zapin dances and the pelog scale made it eminently suitable for choreography.

Seventeen dancers filled the aisles and stage, re-enacting the graceful sashaying of the eponymous sisters and villagers, before their abduction by pirates. The playful and later angst-filled movements echoed the dramatic programme music, adding another dimension to an already vividly detailed score.

The sisters' immortalisation as the island pair in the Straits of Singapore was represented by both dancers held aloft high above the orchestra as the music reached its climax. After this impressive showing, it is now almost impossible for this reviewer to hear the music without imagining the



Singapore Chinese Orchestra's performance of composer Wang Chenwei's The Sisters' Islands, featuring choreography by Cultural Medallion recipient Osman Abdul Hamid's Era Dance Theatre. PHOTO: JAMES NG

dance movements.

Also involving EDT was a solo veiled dancer in Chung Yiu-kwong's Girl From Kroran, a single-movement yangqin concerto with SCO principal Qu Jianqing as soloist. Kroran was an ancient kingdom along the Silk Road which suddenly disappeared during the 4th century, and the music was distinctly Central Asian with its Arabic influences.

The dancer, soon unveiled, performed several dervish-like pirouettes before hightailing offstage, just as the pace escalated alarmingly into terminal velocity. Then the super-virtuoso in Qu took over, stealing the stage by romping through the high-risk high-stakes score completely from memory. Any misplaced note would have spelt disaster, but the adrenaline-fuelled soloist and turbocharged ensemble gloriously prevailed.

The balance of this well-structured programme had much to recommend it. Beginning the evening was Jiang Ying's Impressions Of Chinese Music: Daqu, the movement's title translating into Big

Composition. This sumptuous score, opening with a lovely guan solo, resembled film music, and its well-sustained waves of sound approximated that of a Western symphony orchestra.

Following this was Peng Xiuwen's Flowing Water, essentially a river portrait tracing the origins of the mighty Yangtze from trickling droplets (guzheng) to limpid streams (lyrical huqin) to soaring waves before concluding in harmonious peace.

The concert closed with the two movements of Liu Changyuan's Symphony Of Sizhu. Jiangnan Sizhu is the beloved tradition of "silk and bamboo", delighting in the finery of lush string (silk) and wind (bamboo) playing. Its beauty was captured in an intimate moment when Yu Jia's pipa, Huang Guifang's sanxian and Zhao Jianhua's erhu were given free rein to express themselves.

The animated conclusion was so well received, it was given an encore, with the audience encouraged to hum along and ending the evening in high spirits.

My aspiration to become a K-pop idol goes beyond performing. I aim to showcase my diverse talents, such as creating album concepts, producing and songwriting.

JONATHAN LIM, 16, a Malaysian



Becoming a K-pop star is my dream and my parents are very supportive of it.



KEAGAN YE, 14, who has been listening to K-pop since 2021

# Teens chase K-pop dream at BigHit Music global audition

The South Korean label behind BTS held closed-door sessions in Singapore for male hopefuls aged 17 and younger

Joanne Soh

Becoming a K-pop star may be tough, but the dream burns bright, even for local teens.

They were among the hopefuls who attended the Singapore leg of the closed-door BigHit Music global audition, held at Metropolitan YMCA on July 20. The number of people who auditioned was not revealed.

The South Korean music label, home to K-pop titans BTS, is scouting for male trainees born after 2006. The auditions, which began in May and will end in August, will be held across 17 cities such as Los Angeles, Vancouver, Sydney, Tokyo, Seoul, Auckland, Jakarta and Bangkok.

Applicants can also sign up for an online audition via the BigHit Music Audition website.

Keagan Ye, 14, is no stranger to K-pop auditions, having attended the YG Entertainment audition held at Orchard Central in November 2023. The South Korean agency is

behind the successful K-pop girl group Blackpink.

Keagan also submitted a video to Ador's ongoing online global audition. Ador manages the mega-popular girl group NewJeans.

Keagan told The Straits Times: "Becoming a K-pop star is my dream and my parents are very supportive of it."

The student from Kuo Chuan Presbyterian Secondary School added that getting feedback on the spot would help him improve his dance skills. He has been listening to K-pop since 2021, in particular NewJeans, and boy bands Zerobaseone and Enhypen.

Mohamad Hilman, 14, who took to K-pop when he was introduced to Blackpink at eight years old, said it was his first time auditioning and he had a fun experience.

"My dream is to be an idol. If I get to debut, I will be able to show my talent to the world," said the Hougang Secondary School student.

For the audition, he danced to Aespa's Armageddon. According to BigHit Music, applicants can demonstrate any talent they want.

The harsh reality of trying to make it in a cut-throat industry is not lost on student Jonathan Lim. The 16-year-old Malaysian, who crossed the Causeway with his mother to audition here, said he is prepared for the years of rigorous

My dream is to be an idol. If I get to debut, I will be able to show my talent to the world.



MOHAMAD HILMAN, 14, who danced to K-pop girl group Aespa's Armageddon for his audition



Teenagers who attended the Singapore leg of the closed-door BigHit Music global audition on July 20 included (from top, far left) Jonathan Lim, Keagan Ye and Mohamad Hilman. PHOTOS: COURTESY OF JONATHAN LIM, KEAGAN YE AND MOHAMAD HILMAN

training each trainee will have to undertake.

A fan of BTS since he was 12, Jonathan travelled to Osaka in 2022 for a BigHit audition. Though he did not make it past the first round, he said that preparing for the audition was "a journey of self-improvement".

"My aspiration to become a K-pop idol goes beyond performing. I aim to showcase my diverse talents, such as creating album concepts, producing and songwriting," he added.

A South Korean national who wanted to be known only as Keith has harboured dreams of K-pop stardom since he was young, but has not had the opportunity to audition until now.

However, the audition might be his "first and last", as the 17-year-old student, who has lived in Singapore for more than 10 years, felt he is ageing out.

For the Singaporean teen who wanted to be known only as Josh,

national service enlistment poses an issue - if he does get through the audition.

The 17-year-old, whose favourite groups are IVE, BTS, Zerobaseone, Aespa and NewJeans, hopes to pursue a career in music or acting, and is learning to speak Korean. "I may enlist first, and then continue to try out."

For Mohamad and Keagan, the dream situation would be to make the cut, undergo three to five years

of training, debut and then return home to serve the nation.

Becoming an idol may look like a far-fetched dream, but the teen hopefuls will not stop trying.

Said Jonathan: "I understand that becoming a K-pop idol is incredibly challenging, but I tell myself I have only one life, I have to live it to the fullest."

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# K-pop group Aespa's gig filled with sizzling dance moves

Benson Ang  
Lifestyle Correspondent

**CONCERT**  
2024 AESPA LIVE TOUR SYNK: PARALLEL LINE IN SINGAPORE WITH LOTTE DUTY FREE  
Singapore Indoor Stadium  
July 20

With their energetic dance moves and sprightly choreography, South Korean girl group Aespa have been winning hearts and charming audiences.

Some 8,500 fans saw the dancing queens in the flesh at their first full concert in Singapore on July 20, which sold out in a day.

The fans grooved along with the group's four members, aged 21 to 24, during the 2½-hour show.

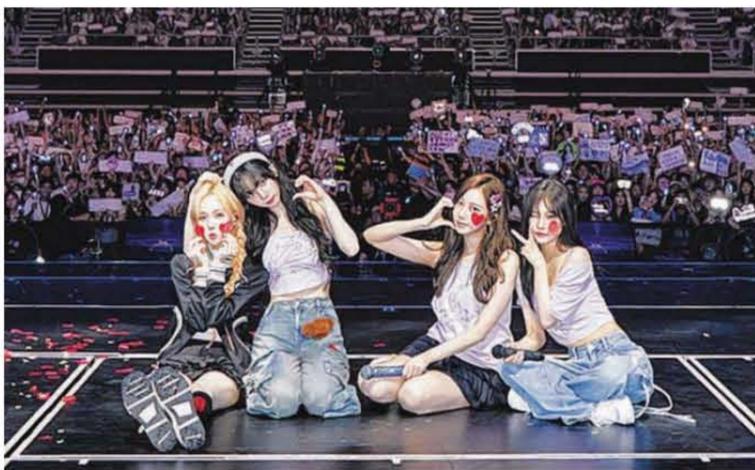
There is leader Karina, the oldest member, who has a black belt in taekwondo; Winter, who has a dimple on her left cheek; China-born Ningning, the youngest member, with a husky voice; and bubbly Giselle.

The show was part of the group's Synk: Parallel Line concert tour, which kicked off in Seoul in June and has travelled to Fukuoka, Nagoya and Saitama in Japan. After Singapore, it will continue on to places such as Hong Kong and Taipei.

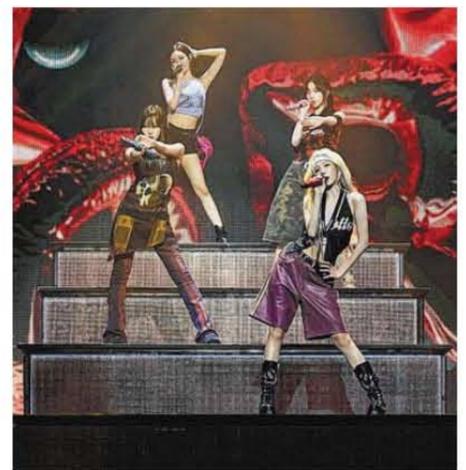
The tour is in support of Aespa's first studio album, Armageddon, which was released in May.

The synth-heavy Supernova and hip-hop title track were performed at the Singapore show, together with many of the dance numbers the group have put out since their 2020 debut.

Here are three hits which the group swayed and bopped along to.



(Left) Some 8,500 fans jived with Aespa's four dancing queens at their first full concert in Singapore, at the Indoor Stadium. PHOTOS: AESPA/FACEBOOK



(Right) Aespa performing Licorice at a concert in Seoul in June.

## 1. BLACK MAMBA (2020)

The group's debut single is an electropop dance track with an addictive hook. Donning sleeveless black get-ups, the girls gave off sultry and sexy vibes.

Their smooth leg extensions hinted at a snake's slithering movements, while the S-shape of their arms suggested a serpent's raised head, ready to strike.

A well-coordinated hair toss later in the song, accentuated by a blast of pyrotechnics, elicited loud cheers from the crowd.

## 2. NEXT LEVEL (2021)

Fans of the Fast & Furious movie franchise would likely have heard the song Next Level (2019), by enigmatic singer A\$ton Wyld. However, others might be more familiar with the rock version of the song by Aespa.

With English lyrics such as "too hot, too hot" and "I'm on the next level", the K-pop version is an anthem of self-confidence known for its hand choreography.

Complete with fist pumps, hair flicks and finger waving, the group's fiery performance of the number was a reminder to trust in one's abilities.

## 3. LICORICE (2024)

One does not have to go all out on every dance. Sometimes, as was the case for Licorice, the right pose at the right point is enough to do the trick.

And all four members delivered with memorable gestures, from a "stop hand" by Winter to a well-timed head turn by Karina.

A synchronised series of light kicks, arm waves and cute poses during the chorus tied together this performance about puppy love. It showed Aespa could pull off not only high-energy performances, but also sweet jives.

# Ayden Sng dons dragon costume for Chinese fantasy series

Jan Lee  
Correspondent

Singaporean actor Ayden Sng has a new look for the upcoming Chinese fantasy series *Lin Jiang Xian*, also known as *There Is A Fox In Hengmen* in English.

On July 19, Chinese screenwriter and producer Yu Zheng, who is helming *Lin Jiang Xian*, posted a series of character stills from the xianxia epic. Xianxia is a genre of Chinese fantasy influenced by Chi-

nese mythology, folk religion and martial arts with celestial beings, demons and more.

One of the stills is that of Sng, 30, who plays a supporting character named Long Yuan. While Sng is known for his contemporary style and boyish good looks, he looks quite different here.

Sporting long hair and a gold headpiece, Sng is seen in a fantasy period costume of dark blue, light blue and cream, with details like a belt and sleeves made to look like dragon "scales". And perhaps most

prominently, he sports a gold-and-silver dragon on his shoulders, befitting his character's surname "Long", which means dragon in Chinese.

Sng is signed to Mediacorp and has taken on leading roles in local series such as *All That Glitters* (2023). He posted on his social media accounts like Weibo and Instagram in April that he had begun filming *Lin Jiang Xian* in Hengdian, China. The fantasy romance stars Chinese actress Bai Lu and Chinese actor Zeng Shunxi.



Singaporean actor Ayden Sng in his fantasy period get-up in the upcoming Chinese fantasy series *Lin Jiang Xian*. PHOTO: YU ZHENG/WEIBO

Sng plays a disciple of Zeng's character, who harbours animosity for Bai's character.

Sng wrote on Weibo then: "I never thought that I would be able to take part in a xianxia drama, a genre that I watched growing up. I'm looking forward to the next few

months and the new and refreshing experiences.

"Being an actor is a long journey, but all of the 'first times' I've enjoyed have moved me forward, and I hope that the more I move forward, the longer and more interesting my actor's path becomes."

This is his second project in China, following period drama series *Perfect Match*, which wrapped filming in April but has yet to air.

His entry into the Chinese market is part of a partnership announced in September 2023 between Mediacorp's artiste management arm The Celebrity Agency and Chinese production company Huanyu Entertainment – founded by Yu – to foster global opportunities for their respective talent.

Under the partnership, Huanyu represents Sng and Singaporean actresses Chantalle Ng and Hong Ling in their search for opportunities in China.

The Celebrity Agency helps to represent Chinese stars Wu Jinyan and Xu Kai for opportunities in Singapore and Malaysia.

Both *Perfect Match* and *Lin Jiang Xian* are produced by Huanyu Entertainment.

Yu and Huanyu's most successful work to date is the 2018 hit period drama *Story Of Yanxi Palace*, which starred both Wu and Xu.

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# K-pop acts Zerobaseone, Taemin to hold concerts here



More K-pop acts are coming to Singapore for concerts.

Rookie boy band Zerobaseone, also known as ZB1, will hold the first international stop of their concert tour *Timeless World* at the Singapore Indoor Stadium on Sept 28. This will be their first concert in Singapore.

*Timeless World* is also the group's first concert tour and will kick off with three nights at Seoul's KSPO Dome from Sept 20 to 22. The tour will take in cities such as Bangkok, Manila, Jakarta and Macau.

Tickets range from \$188 to \$348 and general sales begin on Aug 8 at noon.

There are several rounds of pre-sales, beginning with a fan club pre-sale on Aug 6, from noon to midnight. The fan club pre-sale is open only to Zerobaseone's official global fan club members, who have to register for it ahead of time. Registration for the fan club pre-sale opens on July 24 at noon and ends on July 27 at noon.

There is also a pre-sale for UOB cardmembers that begins at noon on Aug 7 and ends at midnight.

The nine members of Zerobaseone are Kim Ji-woong, Zhang Hao, Sung Han-bin, Seok Matthew, Kim Tae-rae, Ricky, Kim Gyu-vin, Park Gun-wook and Han Yu-jin. The

## 2024 ZERBASEONE THE FIRST TOUR TIMELESS WORLD IN SINGAPORE

WHERE Singapore Indoor Stadium, 2 Stadium Walk

WHEN Sept 28, 4pm

ADMISSION \$188 to \$348 via Ticketmaster (ticketmaster.sg or call 3158-8588). General sales begin at noon on Aug 8

INFO Zerobaseone official global fan club pre-sale opens on Aug 6 at noon and ends at midnight. Registration for fan club pre-sale runs from July 24, noon to July 27, noon. UOB cardmembers pre-sale begins on Aug 7 at noon and ends at midnight

group were formed through the competition reality programme *Boys Planet* (2023). They are known for songs such as *Crush* (2023) and *Feel The Pop* (2024).

Their official debut came with the release of their mini album *Youth In The Shade* in July 2023, just three months after the conclusion of *Boys Planet*. The album made K-pop history, selling more



Boy band Zerobaseone (left) will hold a concert on Sept 28 while Shinee's Taemin (above) will stage a solo show on Nov 9. PHOTOS: BIGPLANETMADE ENTERTAINMENT, CK STAR ENTERTAINMENT

than 1.24 million copies on its first day – making it the first debut album to cross the one-million mark in a day.

Subsequently, the album was certified double million by the Korea Music Content Association, the first K-pop debut album to sell more than two million copies.

Another K-pop act that is coming to town is boy band Shinee's Taemin, who will be holding his first solo concert in Singapore on Nov 9.

The news was announced via X on July 19 with a promotional image for the upcoming tour. *Ephemeral Gaze* will kick off with two shows in Incheon, South Korea, on Aug 31 and Sept 1, before travelling to Asian cities such as Kuala Lumpur, Taipei, Tokyo, Bangkok and Singapore.

Neither the venue nor ticketing details for the concert have been announced.

Shinee, which debuted in 2008, last held a concert here at the Singapore Indoor Stadium on March 2. Taemin's band mate Onew held his first solo fan meeting at Resorts World Sentosa on July 21.

Outside of Shinee, Taemin is a prolific solo artist, known for his dance numbers such as the hit song *Move* (2017), as well as *Criminal* (2020), *Advice* (2021) and *Guilty* (2023). **Jan Lee**

## On social media

**FOND MEMORIES OF WORKING WITH CHENG PEI-PEI:** Following news of veteran Hong Kong-American actress Cheng Pei-pei's death, Singaporean stars have been paying tribute to her. She had starred in several local series, such as *Heroes In Black* (2001), *Springs Of Life* (2002) and *Women Of Times* (2006).

Cheng died at the age of 78 on July 17 in the United States, where she was living. She reportedly suffered from corticobasal degeneration, a rare condition that causes movement, memory and speech problems similar to Parkinson's disease.

She is known for Ang Lee's Oscar-nominated *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (2000) and King Hu's seminal wuxia feature *Come Drink With Me* (1966).

Actress Sharon Au, 48, played Cheng's daughter in the period comedy *Springs Of Life*. Au posted a photo of herself with Cheng, as well as Wong Li-lin and the late Singaporean actor Huang Wenying, on July 21.

In the series, Au and Wong played sisters, and Cheng and Huang were their parents. Huang died in 2013 at the age of 60 due to lymphoma.

The chosen music for the post was the ending theme of the drama, *Dawn*, which was sung by Au.

Au wrote that working with Cheng was "nothing short of a masterclass" due to Cheng's professionalism and big heart.

Au recalled: "Whenever we had a morning shoot together, I would pick her up from her hotel, even before the break of dawn. And when filming ended, which was often way past midnight, we would drive back together in my convertible with the top down. She enjoyed the night breeze and the quietude of the city. I treasure those private moments of yesteryears we shared dearly in my heart."

Home-grown actress Fann Wong acted opposite Cheng in the period series *Heroes In Black* and the family drama *Women Of Times*.

Fann, 53, who played Cheng's daughter-in-law in *Women Of Times*, wrote on July 19: "Found these two posters of projects we worked on together. Remembering the good times you brought us. Your passion and talent will forever remain in my memory. Rest in peace."



Sharon Au (back row) posted a picture with her *Springs Of Life* co-stars (from far left) Wong Li-lin, Cheng Pei-pei and the late Huang Wenying.



Aileen Tan (seated, second from left) shared a photo of the cast of *Women Of Times*, which included Cheng Pei-pei (seated, centre).



Fann Wong (left) shared a poster of the series *Women Of Times*, in which she starred alongside Cheng Pei-pei (back row, centre).

Veteran local actress Aileen Tan, who played Cheng's daughter in the series, posted on July 20 a group photo of the cast, which included Edmund Chen, Terence Cao, Julian Hee, Jesseca Liu, Huang Yiliang and Lin Meijiao.

The 57-year-old wrote: "The swordswoman of my heart, Cheng Pei-pei. I'm so honoured we got to play mother and daughter in *Women Of Times*. Us juniors in the industry should learn from your friendly smile and professional attitude."

PHOTOS: AILEENTAN80/INSTAGRAM, FANNAIWONG/INSTAGRAM, SHARONAU13/INSTAGRAM

## Obituary

# Comedian-actor Bob Newhart was the star of two hit sitcoms

LOS ANGELES – Bob Newhart, who burst onto the comedy scene in 1960 working a stammering everyman character not unlike himself, then rode essentially that same character through a long, busy career that included two of television's most memorable sitcoms, died on July 18 at his home in Los Angeles. He was 94.

His publicist, Jerry Digney, confirmed the death.

Newhart was not merely unknown a few months before his emergence as a full-fledged star; he was barely in the business, though he had aspirations.

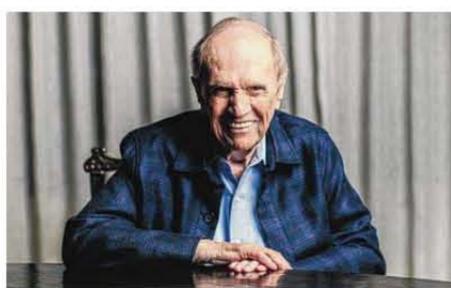
In 1959, some comic tapes he had made to amuse himself while working as an accountant in Chicago caught the ear of an executive at Warner Bros Records, which in 1960 released the comedy album *The Button-Down Mind Of Bob Newhart*.

The record shot to No. 1 on the charts and at the 1961 Grammy Awards, it improbably captured the top prize – album of the year.

He won two other Grammys that year, for best new artist and best spoken-word comedy performance, an honour that was given not to his first album but to his second, a hastily made follow-up titled *The Button-Down Mind Strikes Back!* (1960). For a while, his first two albums occupied the top two spots on the Billboard album chart.

"Playboy magazine hailed me 'the best new comedian of the decade,'" Newhart wrote in his autobiography, *I Shouldn't Even Be Doing This: And Other Things That Strike Me As Funny* (2006), describing this period. "Of course, there were still nine more years left in the decade."

He transitioned quickly and easily into television, landing a short-lived variety show, numerous guest appearances on the shows of Dean Martin and Ed Sullivan, regular work guest-hosting for Johnny Carson on *The Tonight Show* and, ultimately, *The Bob Newhart Show*, a celebrated sitcom



Comedian Bob Newhart in 1919. He was a source of comic brilliance until his final years. PHOTO: NYTIMES

in which he played a somewhat befuddled psychologist.

That series ran from 1972 to 1978, and he followed it up with *Newhart* (1982 to 1990), another successful sitcom, in which he played a Vermont innkeeper. Newhart ran for eight seasons and ended with what is still viewed as one of the greatest finales in television history.

He remained busy in television and films into his 80s. He won an Emmy in 2013 for a guest appear-

ance as the beloved former host of a TV science show on *The Big Bang Theory* (2007 to 2019).

That Emmy was, surprisingly, his first.

He had been nominated, but did not win, at the Emmys of 1962, for writing; 1985, 1986 and 1987, as lead actor in a comedy (*Newhart*); 2004, as guest actor in a drama series, for his role in three episodes of *ER* (1994 to 2009) as an architect losing his sight; and 2009, for his supporting role in the TV movie

*The Librarian: The Curse Of The Judas Chalice* (2008).

George Robert Newhart was born on Sept 5, 1929, in Oak Park, Illinois. His father, who worked for a plumbing and heating contractor, was also named George, which is how the comedian came to be known as Bob.

The success of the *Button-Down Mind* albums brought all sorts of demands for Newhart's dry humour. In December 1961, the first *Bob Newhart Show* had its premiere on NBC.

By the time CBS gave him a sitcom in 1972, also called *The Bob Newhart Show*, he was a household name. The cast was perfectly chosen to contrast with Newhart's well-established persona. Marcia Wallace was Hartley's sassy receptionist and Suzanne Pleshette was Emily, his blunt, sarcastic wife.

Newhart returned to the sitcom format in 1982 with *Newhart*, this time playing Dick Loudon, who with his wife, Joanna (Mary Frann), abandons urban life to try

inn-keeping in Vermont. The show ran for eight seasons on CBS, ending on May 21, 1990, with a finale whose sly surprise became the stuff of television legend.

As chaos envelops the inn, Dick is struck by a golf ball and knocked unconscious. To try to preserve secrecy, a fake ending was conceived in which Dick wakes up in heaven and meets God.

But the actual ending was not set in heaven at all – it was set in the familiar bedroom of the Hartleys from Newhart's earlier show. He wakes up next to not Frann but Pleshette. The entire second series had been a dream.

The idea for that ending, Newhart said, came from his real wife, Virginia (known as Ginnie). Fellow comedian Buddy Hackett introduced them and they married in 1963. She died in 2023.

Newhart is survived by their four children, Robert Jr, Timothy, Courtney Albertini and Jennifer Bongiovi; a sister, Ginny Brittain; and 10 grandchildren. NYTIMES

FREE TO AIR

CHANNEL 5

**AM**  
 6.00 Pokemon Master Journeys: The Series (C)/6.30 The Penguins Of Madagascar (PG) (C)  
 7.00 Dinoman (C)/7.20 Ok-to Try (C)  
 7.30 Pororo The Little Penguin (P)  
 8.00 Tish Tash (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: Super Pets Adventure (C)/11.00 Dinoman (C)  
 11.20 Ok-to Try (C)/11.30 Go Go Dino (C)  
**PM**  
 12.00 Pokemon Master Journeys: The Series (C)/12.30 The Penguins Of Madagascar (PG) (C)  
 1.00 Yu-Gi-Oh! Duel Monsters (C)  
 1.30 Power Rangers Dino Fury (PG) (C)  
 2.00 Denver The Last Dinosaur (C)  
 2.30 Sky Shakers Series (C)  
 3.00 On The Red Dot - I'm Singaporean (CA)/3.30 Talking Point (CA)  
 4.00 Crimewatch (PG) (IE)  
 4.30 India Unplated (Cul)/5.00 Adam And Poh's Malaysia In Australia (IE)  
 5.30 American Idol 21 (PG) (V)  
 6.30 Deal Or No Deal Australia 12 (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 Inside Crime Scene 2 (PG) (CC) (IE)  
 10.30 The Fear Index (PG13) (CC) (D)  
 11.30 Spirit Of Sport 9 (Sports)  
**AM**  
 12.00 Sunny Side Up (PG) (CC) (D)  
 12.30 Hawai'i Five-O 10 (PG13) (CC) (D)  
 1.30 American Idol 21 (PG) (V)  
 2.30 Lingo USA (PG) (V)  
 3.30 Euromaxx (PG) (Cul)  
 4.00 Wheel Of Fortune 40 (V)  
 4.30 Deal Or No Deal Australia 12 (PG) (V)/5.00 India Unplated (Cul)  
 5.30 Adam And Poh's Malaysia In Australia (IE)

CHANNEL 8

**AM**  
 6.00 Special Delivery (CC) (IE)  
 6.30 Frontline (CA)  
 7.00 News Tonight (News)  
 7.45 Hello Singapore Highlights (CA)  
 8.00 Forever Yours (PG) (CC) (D)  
 9.00 Morning Express (News)  
 9.30 Speakers Of Law (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 Speakers Of Law (PG) (CC) (D)  
 8.00 James Going Places V (PG) (CC) (IE)  
 9.00 Forever Yours (PG) (CC) (D)  
 10.00 News Tonight (News)  
 10.30 Detective L (PG13) (CC) (D)  
 11.00 The Ingenious One (PG) (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 (CC) (IE)  
 4.00 RenovAid 8 (CC) (IE)  
 4.30 City Spotlight (PG) (CC) (IE)  
 5.00 A Place In The Sun (PG) (CC) (D)  
 6.00 Revenge From The Past (PG) (CC) (D)/7.00 Miss Monte Cristo (PG) (CC) (D)  
 8.00 Stylish Man - The Chef 3 (PG) (V)  
 10.00 Welcome 2 Life (PG) (CC) (D)  
 11.00 News Tonight (News)

11.30 Stylish Man - The Chef 3 (PG) (V)  
**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 Belly Of A Nation 3  
 11.00 Asia Now  
**PM**  
 1.00 Belly Of A Nation 3  
 2.00 Asia Now  
 4.00 Japan's Indo-Pacific Plan (PG) (D)  
 5.02 Insight  
 6.00 East Asia Tonight  
 7.00 Money Mind  
 7.30 On The Red Dot  
 8.00 Asia Tonight  
 9.00 Belly Of A Nation 3  
 10.00 Singapore Tonight  
 11.00 Belly Of A Nation 3  
**AM**  
 12.03 East Asia Tonight  
 1.00 Sense And Sustainability  
 2.00 Singapore Tonight  
 3.00 Insight  
 4.00 Asia Tonight  
 5.00 Belly Of A Nation 3

VASANTHAM

**AM**  
 9.00 Thinna Thinna Asai (CC) (IE)  
 9.30 Siri... Siri Siri 2 (PG) (CC) (V)  
 10.00 Indian Beat 15 (CC) (IE)  
 10.30 Siri... Siri Siri 2 (PG) (CC) (V)  
 11.00 Anjaraipetti 9 (CC) (IE)  
**PM**  
 12.00 Raja Desinghu (PG) (M)  
 3.00 Nee Paathi Naan Paathi (CC) (IE)  
 4.00 Thillu Mullu (PG) (CC) (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 (PG13) (CC) (D)  
 10.30 Vanjam (PG) (CC) (D)  
 11.00 Ungalukkaga Paadalgal (PG) (V)  
 11.30 Tamil Seithi (News)  
**AM**  
 12.00 Close

SURIA

**AM**  
 9.00 Beyblade Burst Evolution (C)  
 9.30 Lesung (CC) (IE)  
 10.00 Cut Amirah (PG) (D)  
 11.00 Bisik-Bisik Gelora (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 Bisik-Bisik Gelora (PG) (CC) (D)  
 5.00 Tiada Maaf Buatmu (PG) (CC) (D)  
 6.00 Beyblade Burst Evolution (C)  
 6.30 Janji Sedap (IE)  
 7.00 Aku Yang Kau Sakiti (PG) (CC) (D)  
 8.00 Berita (News)  
 8.30 Perang Malam Ini (PG) (CC) (V)  
 9.30 Bukan Syurga Pilihan (PG) (CC) (D)  
 10.30 Andai Itu Takdirnya (PG13) (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](http://www.starhub.com/tv) or [www.singtel.com.sg](http://www.singtel.com.sg). For streaming updates, go to [flixpatrol.com/top10/netflix/singapore](http://flixpatrol.com/top10/netflix/singapore) or [www.viu.com/ott/sg](http://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

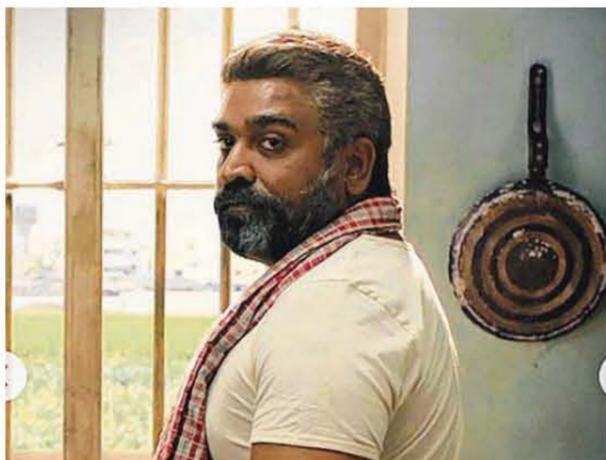
**AM**  
 6.00 Breakfast With Ryan Huang, Emaad Akhtar & Audrey Siek  
 9.00 Your Money With Michelle Martin  
**PM**  
 12.00 On The Show With Jill Lim  
 1.00 The Afternoon Update With Lynlee Foo  
 4.00 The Evening Runway With Hongbin Jeong, Roshan Gidwani & Chua Tian Tian

UFM100.3

**AM**  
 6.00 The Play Show With Limei, Andrew & Chengyao  
 10.00 My Music, Your Coffee With Xinying  
**PM**  
 1.00 Pal-Tea Time With Kemn  
 4.00 La La La 4-8 With Wenhong & Jiayi  
 8.00 Thank You For Every Goodnight With Yuling

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



Maharaja, starring Vijay Sethupathi, is showing on Netflix. PHOTO: NETFLIX\_IN/INSTAGRAM

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 Fight Back To School  
 11.30 James' Going Places 8  
**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 27  
 8.00 Divas Hit The Road: Good Friends  
 10.00 Thank You Doctor  
 11.00 Hot Door Night 27

BBC EARTH (CHANNEL 407)

**AM**  
 6.00 Food Factory 5  
 6.30 Whale With Steve Backshall  
 7.25 Engineering Repurposed  
 8.20 Food Factory 3  
 9.15 Mammals - Making Of  
 10.10 Whale With Steve Backshall  
 11.05 Expedition With Steve Backshall 2  
**PM**  
 12.05 Great Asian Railway Journeys  
 1.05 Food Factory 3  
 2.05 Mammals - Making Of  
 3.05 Whale With Steve Backshall  
 4.05 Food Factory 3  
 5.05 Expedition With Steve Backshall 2  
 6.05 Mammals - Making Of  
 7.05 Food Factory 3  
 8.05 Patrick Arzee's Wild World  
 9.00 Griff's Canadian Adventure  
 9.55 World's Most Dangerous Roads 4  
 10.50 Extreme Fishing With Robson Green 4  
 11.40 Patrick Arzee's Wild World

BBC LIFESTYLE (CHANNEL 432)

**AM**  
 6.00 Junior Bake Off 5  
 6.55 World's Most Luxurious  
 7.45 Rick Stein's Cornwall 3  
 8.15 Donal's Family Kitchen  
 8.45 Amanda And Alan's Italian Job 2  
 9.45 Extraordinary Places To Eat 2  
 10.45 Junior Bake Off 5  
 11.35 World's Most Luxurious

**PM**  
 12.25 Amanda And Alan's Italian Job 2  
 1.25 Junior Bake Off 5  
 2.20 Extraordinary Places To Eat 2  
 3.20 World's Most Luxurious  
 4.10 Amanda And Alan's Italian Job 2  
 5.10 Extraordinary Places To Eat 2  
 6.10 World's Most Luxurious  
 7.00 Rachel Khoo's Kitchen Notebook: Melbourne  
 7.30 Guillaume's Paris  
 8.30 Amazing Hotels: Life Beyond The Lobby 3  
 9.30 Your Home, Made Perfect 4  
 10.30 Gordon Ramsay's Future Food Stars  
 11.30 Guillaume's Paris

HUB SPORTS 1 (CHANNEL 201)

**AM**  
 6.00 Magazine Show: Track & Field Weekly 2024  
 6.30 Other Sports: Wanda Diamond League 2024 Highlights: Oslo (Norway)  
 7.30 Golf: The Golf Fix 2024  
 8.00 Golf: LPGA Tour 2024: Dana Open Round 4  
 11.00 Tennis: Hologic WTA Tour 2024: 35<sup>th</sup> Palermo Ladies Open (250) Semi-finals 1 & 2  
**PM**  
 2.00 Tennis: Hologic WTA All Access 2024  
 2.30 Magazine Show: Arena Esports 2024  
 3.00 Other Sports: Wanda Diamond League 2024: London (UK)  
 5.00 Other Sports: World Matchplay Darts 2024: World Matchplay  
 9.00 Other Sports: Wanda Diamond League 2024 Highlights: Paris (France)  
 10.00 Other Sports: World Matchplay Darts 2024: Evening Finals  
**AM**  
 12.30 Other Sports: Supertri E World Triathlon Championship Powered By Zwift 2024: London  
 3.00 Other Sports: Wanda Diamond League 2024: Stockholm (Sweden)  
 5.00 Magazine Show: Mass Participation 2024: Desafio China By La Vuetta

SINGTEL TV CARTOON NETWORK (HD) (CHANNEL 226)

**AM**  
 6.00 Grizzy 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 Grizzy And The Lemmings  
 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 NCIS: Hawai'i 2  
 6.55 Hudson & Rex 6  
 7.50 Rookie Blue  
 8.45 S.W.A.T.  
 9.40 Elysium  
 11.35 The Rookie 5  
**PM**  
 12.30 Hudson & Rex 6  
 1.25 S.W.A.T.  
 2.20 Rookie Blue  
 3.20 The Rookie 5  
 4.15 Hudson & Rex 6  
 5.10 S.W.A.T.  
 6.05 NCIS: Los Angeles 14  
 7.00 NCIS: Hawai'i 2  
 7.55 The Rookie 5  
 8.50 Hudson & Rex 6  
 9.45 FBI: Most Wanted 5  
 10.40 Unforgettable 4  
 11.35 FBI: Most Wanted 5

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 Are You Safe?  
**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 Are You Safe?  
 8.00 Burning Flames  
 8.50 The Secret House  
 10.10 Love Me, Love My Voice  
 11.00 Be Reborn

STREAMING

NETFLIX

**TOP 10 MOVIES**  
 1. Anyone But You  
 2. Beast  
 3. Maharaja  
 4. Rampage  
 5. The Train Of Death  
 6. Vanished Into The Night  
 7. Mummies  
 8. Minions: The Rise Of Gru  
 9. S.W.A.T.: Firefight  
 10. Journey 2: The Mysterious Island  
**TOP 10 TV SHOWS**  
 1. The Double  
 2. Miss Night And Day  
 3. The Boyfriend  
 4. Homicide  
 5. Vikings: Valhalla  
 6. Mashle: Magic And Muscles  
 7. Wistoria: Wand And Sword  
 8. Demon Slayer: Kimetsu No Yaiba  
 9. Alya Sometimes Hides Her Feelings In Russian  
 10. The Secret Of Us

VIU

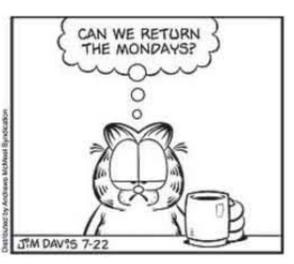
1. The Tale Of Rose  
 2. The Princess Royal  
 3. Lovely Runner  
 4. The Player 2: Master Of Swindlers  
 5. My Sweet Mobster  
 6. Lost You Forever 2  
 7. The Legend Of Heroes - Hot Blooded  
 8. Suji & Uri  
 9. Snow White's Revenge  
 10. Beauty And Mr Romantic

COMICS

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## Club Memberships 66

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ACTIVE GOLF 96369950 SICC \$330K TMCC \$215K Sentosa \$500K Laguna \$150K Seletar \$69K OCC, Warren Keppel SRC American

SINGOLF.COM TEL:97377650 SICC \$320K, TMCC \$215K, - SENTOSA \$500K, LAGUNA - \$145K, SELETAR, WARREN, TMCC CORPORATE \$230K

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SEEPAGE PROFESSIONAL REPAIR leaks from ceiling, wall, toilet. No hacking. 9328 5959

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## Home Furnishings/Fittings 114

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## Plumbing 118

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## Business Accounting/Secretarial Services 203

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## Business Opportunities - General 209

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## Volkswagen For Sale 346

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## Vehicles For Hire 361

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## Vehicles Wanted 363

WANTED! ALL MODELS Private and commercial vehicles. High priced! 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

## Scrap Vehicles 381

HIGHEST CASH OFFER for all scrap/ export/ used & commercial vehicle. 9661 8888

## 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



BRAND NEW SWETTENHAM Rd 15398/ 18000 sf. Panoramic view, quiet, quality finish. Only \$49M. 94567348 Newsman



JURONG SHORT/LONG TERM storage, forklift service, inventory, delivery service. Call /WA 6254 4994/ 9475 1494

## D28 SELETAR HOUSES FOR SALE 410



BRAND NEW BUNGLW. Fully fitted. 6+1+ family+ ktv. Lift. Pool. 4352/9590sf. Last unit! Owner 98635635/97272996 www.wahkhiaw.com.sg

## FACTORY/INDUSTRIAL SPACE FOR RENT 531

OXLEY BIZHUB B1@D14 Office/ storage, AC, rectangle, ceiling 4.5m. WA owner 87806945

## FACTORY/INDUSTRIAL SPACE FOR SALE 532

PENJURU 2-STOREY TERRACE 12,411 sqft / 7m high ceiling B2 use 85221428/ 83382283

## 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 WINSLANDHOUSE

## SHOP SPACE FOR RENT 537

439, 443, 445, 447 MacPherson Main Rd \$5K. No GST. No F&B. Call 9816 6636 Mr Tan

## SHOP SPACE FOR SALE 538

\*\*QBAY CONDO 743sf with Toilet. Tenanted at \$5k up to 30-04-26. Owner 9786 8266

## WAREHOUSES/ STORAGE SPACE FOR RENT 543

JOO SENG 750SF largeloading bay, cargo lifts, indoor parking Owner 98635635/97272996 www.wahkhiaw.com.sg

JURONG SHORT/LONG TERM storage, forklift service, inventory, delivery service. Call /WA 6254 4994/ 9475 1494

# NOTICES

Tel 6289-8822 | Email notices@sph.com.sg | www.sphclass.com.sg

## INSOLVENCY, RESTRUCTURING AND DISSOLUTION ACT 2018 (ACT 40 OF 2018)

INSOLVENCY, RESTRUCTURING AND DISSOLUTION (PERSONAL INSOLVENCY) RULES 2020 IN THE GENERAL DIVISION OF THE HIGH COURT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE

HC/B 1956/2024

In the matter of Insolvency, Restructuring and Dissolution Act (Act 40 of 2018)

And In the Matter of CHEN BEE FONG (CHEN MEIFENG) (NRIC NO. S7632057H)

Between HONG LEONG FINANCE LIMITED (RC No: 196100003D) ... Claimants

And CHEN BEE FONG (CHEN MEIFENG) (NRIC NO. S7632057H) ... Defendant

## NOTICE OF ADVERTISEMENT IN THE MATTER OF AN ORIGINATING APPLICATION (CREDITOR'S BANKRUPTCY APPLICATION) (AMENDMENT NO. 1) FILED ON 18TH JUNE 2024

TO: CHEN BEE FONG (CHEN MEIFENG) late of Block 607 Ang Mo Kio Avenue 4 #10-1289 Singapore 560607

TAKE NOTICE that an Originating Application (Creditor's Bankruptcy Application) (Amendment No. 1) and Affidavit of Ng Siew Leng have been filed against you in this Court by HONG LEONG FINANCE LIMITED of No. 16 Raffles Quay #01-05 Hong Leong Building Singapore 048581 and the Court has ordered that the publication of this Notice in one issue of 'THE STRAITS TIMES' a local English language newspaper circulating in Singapore and by way of an e-mail to you attaching copies of the said Originating Application (Creditors' Bankruptcy Application) (Amendment No. 1), the Affidavit and the Order of Court, Singapore, shall be deemed good and sufficient service of the said Originating Application and Affidavit upon you, AND FURTHER TAKE NOTICE that the said application will be heard at the Court on Thursday 5th September 2024 at 3.30 p.m. on which day you are required to appear, and if you do not appear, the Court may make a Bankruptcy Order against you in your absence.

The said Originating Application and Affidavit can be inspected by you on application at this Court.

Dated this 22nd day of July 2024.

SOLICITORS FOR THE PLAINTIFFS MESSRS MICHAEL BB ONG & CO

10 ANSON ROAD #33-06 INTERNATIONAL PLAZA SINGAPORE 079903 [Ref: PSC.20033.22.17]

## BANKRUPTCY ACT (CHAPTER 20)/ INSOLVENCY, RESTRUCTURING AND DISSOLUTION ACT 2018

NOTICE TO CREDITORS OF INTENTION TO DECLARE DIVIDEND

BKCY NO NAME (IC/PP NO)

B190/2020 MUHAMMAD FARID BIN SHAHMAWI (S9007855J)

B771/2019 ZHANG DONGHUI (S7164668H)

B255/2021 TEO HUNG LING JAMES (S7005562G)

B1908/2016 SALAM BIN OLOED (S7110991G)

B1048/2019 LYNDON TEOH BOON LEE (S6977266H)

B2008/2019 ARJUN SELVADURAY (S9531736G)

B1865/2019 YUE GUAN KAI (YU GUANKAI) (S9044086A)

B1477/2018 RAFAEH BINTE ANWAH (S7101440A)

B847/2019 YAP CHIAN THIAH (S1558948E)

B2077/2019 SHAN HUAHUA (S8973955A)

B3007/2018 MAHAMAD ROHAZAD BIN ABDUL RASID (S8103146J)

B249/2020 SARINAH BINTE MOHAMAD YOUSOFF (S6834625H)

B2250/2018 PHUA KIA HUN (S6813102B)

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Official Assignee would like to declare a dividend in the above listed cases.

All creditors who have yet to prove their claims to the Official Assignee's satisfaction, must do so by 5th day of August 2024 failing which they will be excluded from the dividend, if any.

Dated this 22nd day of July 2024.

BEVERLY WEE YING LING SENIOR ASSISTANT OFFICIAL ASSIGNEE

## Marine Parade Town Council TENDER NOTICE

Tenders are invited from BCA and GSR Registered Contractors with WSHC's bizSAFE Level 3 & above for the following:

### PROJECT

1. PROPOSED UPGRADING OF COVERED LINKWAYS, DROP-OFF POINTS AND RESIDENTS' CORNER IN MACPHERSON AND MOUNTBATTEN DIVISIONS (PROJECT REF: PJ-2403 IMP (MC/MB))

2. PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION AND UPGRADING OF 1 NO. FITNESS CORNER, 3 NOS. PLAYGROUNDS AND 3 NOS. INTEGRATED FAMILY PLAYGROUNDS IN BRADDELL HEIGHTS AND GEYLANG SERAI DIVISIONS (PROJECT REF: PJ-2404 IMP (BH/GS))

3. TERM CONTRACT FOR EXTERMINATION OF RODENTS FOR THE PERIOD 1 JANUARY 2025 TO 31 DECEMBER 2027 (PROJECT REF: TERM-2404 RODENT)

4. REPAIRS, REDECORATION AND IMPROVEMENT WORKS TO 14 BLOCKS OF FLATS AT BLOCKS 401 TO 414 SERANGOON CENTRAL AVENUE 1 IN BRADDELL HEIGHTS DIVISION (PROJECT REF: CM-2404 RR-14 (BH))

### ELIGIBILITY & FINANCIAL GRADE

Project 1, CW01 General Building C3 and Above

Project 2, EPU/SPE/10 Sports, Recreational Equipment & Supplies S5 and Above

Project 3, FM04 Pest Control L2 and Above

Project 4, CW01 General Building C1 and Above or CR09 Repairs & Redecoration L3 and Above

### CLOSING DATE & TIME

12 August 2024 at or before 12 noon

### TENDER DOCUMENTS COLLECTION

On 23 July 2024 after 2.00pm

Tender documents can be obtained from Marine Parade Town Council at Block 50 Marine Terrace #01-265 Singapore 440050, from Monday to Friday 8.30am to 4.00pm (Tel: 62416044 Fax: 64440919)

The Town Council reserves the right not to accept the lowest or any tender without assigning any reason therefor.

No contract shall be awarded to a contractor if the contractor or any of its directors or employees has been debarred by the Town Councils and/or Statutory Boards and/or Government Bodies from participating in the same or all types of contracts.

### TENDER DOCUMENTS FEE BY INTERNET BANKING (INCLUSIVE OF GST) (NON-REFUNDABLE)

\$109.00 per set made payable to Marine Parade Town Council

## BUILDING MAINTENANCE AND STRATA MANAGEMENT ACT 2004 SECTION 43

### NOTICE OF INTENDED SALE BY THE MANAGEMENT CORPORATION - STRATA TITLE PLAN NO. 2650

WHEREAS an Instrument of Charge No. IF/620206P by The Management Corporation Strata Title Plan No. 2650 (having its registered office at 44 Canberra Drive #01-29 Yishun Sapphire Singapore 768435) has been lodged at the Singapore Land Authority in respect of Subsidiary Strata Certificate of Title Volume 827 Folio 156 (42 Canberra Drive #09-07 Singapore 768434) of which Visalakshi Vairavan is the subsidiary proprietor and United Overseas Bank Limited is the registered Mortgagee under Mortgage No. ID/997690J and Central Provident Fund Board is the registered Chargee under Charge No. IE/62257P and an amount of \$8,123,57 being arrears of contributions levied under Section 40 of the Act and interest as at 15 July 2024 which remains unpaid.

NOTICE is hereby given that the said Management Corporation, pursuant to Section 43 of the Act, by a special resolution passed on 20 April 2024 intends to exercise its power of sale as Chargee under the said Instrument of Charge to recover the said arrears of contributions and interest and other incidental charges as specified under Section 43 of the Act, unless payment of the said amount of \$8,123,57 including interest thereon and the cost of publication as well as other incidental charges is made to the said Management Corporation within six (6) weeks of the date of this Notice.

Dated this 22nd Day of July 2024

Lee & Lee

Solicitors for The Management Corporation - Strata Title Plan No. 2650

File Ref: TKS/KJY/2021.5015

## APPLICATION FOR SUBSIDIARY CERTIFICATE OF TITLE TO REPLACE DUPLICATE LEASE WHICH HAS BEEN LOST

### THE LAND TITLES ACT AND THE LAND TITLES (STRATA) ACT NOTICE

Pursuant to Section 43 of the Land Titles Act 1993, an Application has been made to the Registrar of Titles by JELITA PROPERTY PTE LTD of 239 ALEXANDRA ROAD, SINGAPORE 159930, for the issue of a Subsidiary Certificate of Title to replace the Lease I/HB/3271Y for Strata Lot U4977X of Mukim 17, comprising 181 LORONG 4 TOA PAYOH, #01-602, SINGAPORE 310181 as the duplicate Lease has been lost.

NOTICE is hereby given that a Subsidiary Certificate of Title will be issued by the Registrar of Titles to replace the said Lease after fourteen (14) days from the date hereof unless valid written objection is lodged at the Singapore Land Authority, 55 Newton Road, #12-01, Revenue House, Singapore 307987, before the expiration of the said period of fourteen (14) days.

Dated this 22nd day of July 2024

RAJAH & TANN SINGAPORE LLP

Solicitors for the Applicant

## APPLICATION FOR REPLACEMENT OF SUBSIDIARY STRATA CERTIFICATE OF TITLE

### THE LAND TITLES ACT 1993 AND THE LAND TITLES (STRATA) ACT 1967 NOTICE

Pursuant to Section 43 of the Land Titles Act 1993, an Application has been made to the Registrar of Titles by JELITA PROPERTY PTE LTD of 239 ALEXANDRA ROAD, SINGAPORE 159930, for the issue of new Subsidiary Strata Certificates of Title Volume 1625 Folios 116 to 118 and Subsidiary Strata Certificates of Title Volume 1625 Folios 124 to 128 which has been lost.

NOTICE is hereby given that the new Subsidiary Strata Certificates of Title will be issued by the Registrar of Titles after fourteen (14) days from the date hereof unless valid written objection is lodged at the Singapore Land Authority, 55 Newton Road, #12-01, Revenue House, Singapore 307987, before the expiration of the said period of fourteen (14) days.

Dated this 22nd day of July 2024

RAJAH & TANN SINGAPORE LLP

Solicitors for the Applicant

Your dream car beckons

**INVITE BIDS. DELIVER PROJECTS. CREATE DEMAND.**

Call 6289 8822 or email notices@sph.com.sg to place your Tenders & Auctions Notices

**NOTICES**

**Nursing/Health Care** 721

**UEMS**  
Hiring for  
**HEALTHCARE ATTENDANT**  
at SENGKANG

- Salary package up to \$2100 + \$900\* (New Joiner Incentive)
- Working days: 5 days/week (including weekends)
- Working hours: 6.45am to 4.15pm / 12.15pm to 9.45pm (Rotational shifts)

Contact: 9825 5019 / 9785 3688 / 8028 6650

**Food Stalls** 743

**PT Food Handler** x 5  
(Salary up to \$1400)

- Monday - Saturday 10am-2pm
- Working Location: Pioneer

**WALK-IN INTERVIEW**  
Mondays to Fridays, 10am to 5pm  
80 Joo Koon Circle Level 2 Singapore 629100  
☎: 6817 2604 / 8020 3602

**Lecturing/Teaching** 715

**CAREGIVER FOR AFTER** school care. Centre in East area. W/App 96887408 for details

**Sales** 730

**MAID AGENCY NEEDS** Admin / Customer Service/ Trainer, able to start immediate. Pls call 9627 1191 (03C4432)

**Call Centres/Telemarketing** 734

**LOOKING FOR PART-TIME** telemarketers! Call 63713963 Call the list of leads and fix up appointment, training and additional Incentive provided

**Hotel/Restaurant/Lounge** 742

**JAPANESE CUISINE KITCHEN** Morning Prep 7am to 11am, 6days/week (\$1.6k) Location: Bugis. Contact: 8949 2023

**KOPI SHOP IN CBD** seeks Experienced Coffee Brewer and Cashier. Team player. Mon-Fri. S'porean. 97601328

**General Production/Operators** 758

**OPERATOR/ PACKER** REQUIRED for laundry co. at Clementi. Start immed. Call 6777 7927

**Warehousing/Inventory/Logistics** 763

**STORE ASST NEEDED.** To handle all store related duties. Able to start work immediate Interested Pls call: 9127 9754

**Security** 766

**WSO/SO: OFFICE** Bldg @ Buona Vista/ Shenton Way/ Queenstown. WhatsApp 91393211

**Security** 766

**Perm Full Time Officers Needed Immediate URGENT**

**SO** Pay up to **\$3,000!\*** (Day & Night)  
**SSO** Pay up to **\$3,230!\*** (Day & Night)  
**SS** Pay up to **\$3,580!\*** (Day & Night)

Benefits:  
• Joining Bonus up to \$888  
• Union Membership  
• Medical Reimbursement  
• Performance Incentive  
• Birthday Token

1 Free notification HCTA or RTT Trained

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(73968)

**REACHFIELD**  
**SECURITY OFFICERS**

OFFICE > RAFFLES PLACE / BUONA VISTA / MARINA BAY  
SCHOOL > ONE-NORTH / SIMEI / DOVER  
MALL > ORCHARD / UPPER THOMSON FACTORY > YISHUN  
10 ANSON ROAD #26-09 INTERNATIONAL PLAZA

6324 0648  
9816 5000

**EXCELLENT SECURITY**  
#31-05 INT'L PLAZA  
9129 2955 6323 9335

**AMK IND PARK 2**  
0800 - 0800  
(Day / Night Shift)

SO ..... \$2750  
SSO ..... \$3050

**EXCELLENT SECURITY**  
#31-05 INT'L PLAZA  
9129 2955 6323 9335

**LAKESIDE GARDEN**  
8PM - 8AM  
10AM - 10PM  
SO \$2700

**JOIN OUR TEAM! WE ARE HIRING (12 HOUR SHIFT) In House Security Officer**

- Day / Night Position
- Grange Road (Nearest MRT: Orchard Boulevard)
- Full Time Position / Relief
- Medical Benefits / AWS
- Additional benefits available for full time staff (refreshment claim, etc)

**CALL US TODAY @ 6736 0110 or Email: mcst338@gmail.com**

**Security** 766

**SECURITY SUPERVISOR**  
♦ Sengkang East  
**SECURITY OFFICER**  
♦ Simei ♦ Pasir Ris  
♦ Havelock Rd ♦ Tuas  
\*\*\* \$2830-\$3350 \*\*\*  
Daily cash can be arranged  
Call 91894197  
96803477 / 67343179

**IMMEDIATE HIRING**  
**SECURITY OFFICER!**  
SCOTTS RD / SOMERSET / CLEMENTI AREA  
Please call / WhatsApp: 8037 9763 / 6686 4541

**SO/SSO \$3,000 & above.** Weekly/ Fortnightly/ Monthly Condominium @Still Road - Day/Night SSO, @West Coast Way - Day/Night, @Woodlands Ave 6 - Day, Commercial Bldg @Anson Road - Day. Call Albert Toh @ 9635 1231

**Cleaners** 769

**CLEANERS:**  
Somerset: \$650 Per Month (Mon to Fri: 10AM to 12PM)  
Hillview: \$480 Per Month Mon, Wed, Fri 6.30PM-8.30PM  
Redhill: \$350 Per Month (Mon, Wed, Fri: 7PM to 8PM)  
Call: 9698 1522 (Singaporeans Only)

**FLOAT CLEANER**  
• \$2000 - \$2270 / \$65 - \$70 per day weekly pay  
• 7.30am-4.30pm / 8am-5pm  
• Bukit Timah / Alexandra  
**CONDO BLOCK CLEANER**  
• \$1750 / \$60 per day weekly pay  
• 8am-5pm  
• Bedok / Siglap / Newton  
Call 63399747 / 63346559 (NO AGENT) Interview at: #05-44 Peninsula Plaza

**Cleaners** 769

**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 CLEANER SALARY** \$1800-\$1900/6 days. Bugis:3pm-11pm.Orchard: 8am-5pm Raffles Place:7am-3pm/3pm-11pm/11pm-7am Salary up to \$1300 /6days Orchard: 5 p m - 10 p m Singaporeans, Call 69581599

**HOTEL CLEANERS NEAR MRT** @Orchard Area/Marina Sq 7am-3pm/8am-4pm/3pm-11pm/11pm-7am. @Queen Street 7am - 3pm Salary \$1800 - \$1900 Contact 67490128

**CLEANING SUPERVISORS** @ Sengkang/Orchard/Punggol/Bedok. 6Days wk. Morning/Afternoon/ Night. Salary range from \$2450. Salary + Joining Incentive Up to \$600 Call: 98719066 / 98195081

**SCHOOL NEAR ONE** North MRT need Indoor Cleaners. 5.5 days with daily overtime. Good working environment and attractive remuneration. Call 8183 4723.

**NIGHT SHIFT KITCHEN** Cleaner Salary \$2200 up, 12 days annual leave, bonus, meals provided. S'poreans. 87685033 / 93390520 (No agents pls)

**CLEANER REQUIRED 6-DAYS** 8am-5pm/ 5pm-10pm at Marina Square. Salary: \$1740 - \$2300. Call Wilson 97515837

**CLEANER NEEDED AT** Como Hotel, Mon to Sat, 8am-5.30pm, salary + OT \$2100. Call 8201 1864 / 9683 8397

**CONDO CLEANER AT** Bedok, Holland Hill & Keppel Bay, 6 days, Singaporean. Pls Call 92333353 / 86545886

**DISHWASHER 5.5 DAYS,** at Thomson Plaza. 10am - 9:30 pm \$2.5k to \$3k. S'porean Only. Contact: 8949 2023

**FULL TIME OFFICE** Cleaner at Buona Vista/ Raffles Place. Evening Dishwasher at Bukit Timah area. 5 day. 86619443

**Cleaners** 769

**TOILET CLEANER, BUGIS.** 5days 7-5pm \$1900/ 6days 5pm-10.30pm \$1350/ 6 days 4pm-10pm \$1350. 88319097

**CLEANERS. SALARY \$1800-\$2200.** 12 days annual leave, bonus, meals provided. (No agts) 87685033/ 93390520

**CLEANER NEEDED @ORCHARD** Area/ 6 days week/ Shift work, call 92319713, 97125125

**FULL-TIME CLEANER @BISHAN** Area. 6 days week. Shift work. 8113 2460 or 97125125

**FULL TIME CLEANER** @ Jurong 5.5 days / Airport 6 days. \$1.9K+ Urgent Call 84333223

**FULL-TIME CLEANERS NEAR** Queenstown/Commonwealth MRT. Good salary 98320938

**FULL-TIME CLEANERS. NEAR** Haw Par Villa & Kent Ridge MRT. 5 days. Call 91156837

**FULL/ PART-TIME CLEANERS.** Near Braddell / Toa Payoh MRT. 5 days. Call 98320938

**PART-TIME CLEANERS. NEAR** Pioneer/ Boon Lay MRT. 5 days week. Call 91156837

**CLEANERS NEAR TANJONG** Katong MRT. 8am - 4pm. 5.5 days Call 93861828/ 8121241

**5DAY 7AM-3.30PM CLEANERS** at Woodlands Avenue 9. Spectrum 2. Call: 94893584

**TOILET CLEANER, CITY** Hall .. 6 days 7am - 4.30pm. Salary: \$2060. Contact: 88319097

**Drivers/Chauffeurs** 775

**KHIM SEAH ENTERPRISE PTE LTD**  
**BUS DRIVER**  
(13/23/49-Seater)  
• Salary negotiable (Full CPF, 13<sup>th</sup> Month, Annual Leave)  
Please contact:  
**MR. ROGER 90021110**

**PERSONAL CHAUFFEUR**  
• Experienced Driver with good driving records  
• With own motorcycle preferred  
• Attractive salary package with good benefits  
Call 62579998 X 28 for appointment/interview.

**Drivers/Chauffeurs** 775

**CLASS 4 BUS Driver** Needed. High Basic Salary with Commission, Allowances & Joining Bonus. Pls call 89439141

**Part-time/Temporary** 783

**PART-TIME CUSTOMER SERVICE.** Able to handle Chinese speaking clients. 9060-1196

**Other Positions** 789

**CLEANERS URGENTLY NEEDED** Pls Call: Andrew 98881423 / Joy 91183884 for interview

**Other Positions** 789

**LANDSCAPE WORKERS(UNDER SHADE).** Simple full-time job with training provided. Watering of plants, forking soil & clearing dry leaves. Call us: 9866 7587 EA Recruitment Pte Ltd (Lic No: 21C0492)

**EXPERIENCED WOODEN DOOR** Installer. Full-Time. Excellent welfare & benefits. Call us: 9866 7587 EA Recruitment Pte Ltd (Lic. No: 21C0492)

**HIRING GENERAL WORKER** @ Jurong. Salary \$2K - \$2.5K. Physically fit. Singaporeans only. Pls call : 6266 3282

**TAMPINES AND WOODLANDS** Gardeners needed. S'porean only. Call 62871937



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# life KASHMIR'S LAVENDER LIFELINE

Women harvesting lavender in a field in Pulwama, south of Srinagar, the summer capital of Indian Kashmir, in early July.

Lavender farming is picking up in Kashmir, with the climate of the valley being conducive for lavender cultivation as this plant can grow in cold temperatures and moderate summers.

Kashmir is moving towards a "purple revolution" as the farmers are slowly switching from traditional crops to lavender, which is more rewarding.

Farming of the purple blossomed aromatic shrub was launched as the "Aroma Mission" of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research and Indian Institute of Integrative Medicine, under the Ministry of Science and Technology.

After the success of the first phase, the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research started the second phase, which will include more than 45,000 skilled human resources and help over 75,000 families.

The lavender oil sells for more than 12,000 rupees (\$190) a litre. It is used in products such as medicines, incense sticks, soaps and air fresheners.

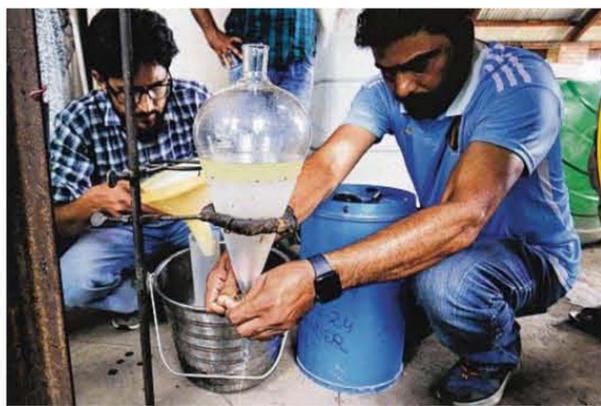
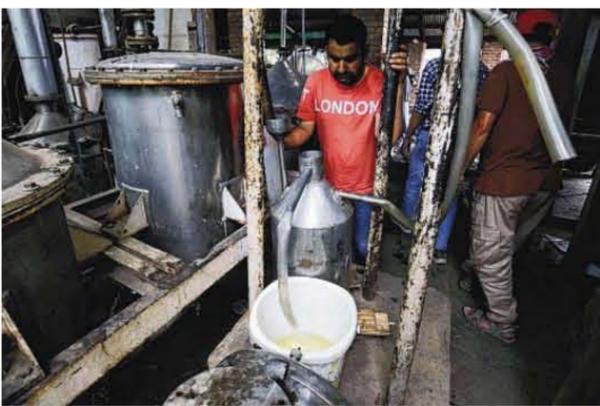
TEXT AND PHOTOS: EPA-EFE



Workers (right and far right) distilling the Lavandula spp. herb in the lavender oil-extracting machines in Pulwama.



Workers (right and far right) extracting lavender oil after the distilling process.



Extracted lavender oil being collected.

## In Life tomorrow

**TIME TO PARTY**  
Carnival season in the south of France



Stay at lodges changing with the climate in South Australia

# Adapting to a drier Down Under



**TRAVEL JOURNAL**  
A mother of two recharges on her first solo trip