



柏默辞职

追踪

王荟芬身份应公开吗?

林心惠 报道

身份公开,王荟芬反成了“受害者”? 尽管人协做法引争议,但更多人力挺人协,质疑“为什么要保护破坏别人家庭的小三?”

前国会议员柏默情妇王荟芬(33岁)的身份曝光后,网民迅速对她进行“人肉搜索”,挖出她的许多私人照片和信息,因此有人批评,人协公开身份反而“害”了王荟芬。

弹:这是她的私事 赞:坦承可免猜疑

官委委员陈庆文认为,人协应保护王荟芬。他表示:“这是她的私事,她没有犯罪,人协职员迟早也会发现那个人是谁,所以没有必要为了给职员一个交代而公告天下。”

人力资源公司仁立国际执行董事梁昌国则指出,在正常情况下,雇主确实应该保密。不过,人民行动党已召开记者会坦承事实,就连总理李显龙也发表了声

明,如果人协始终封口不谈,就会造成信息不对称的现象。其他管道都提供了消息,如果人协选择保密,公众就会开始怀疑,造成更大的不信任。从一开始就诚实坦白地把事实说出,可以缓和人民的疑心。反之,如果让网民或媒体先爆出情妇名字,公众对政府的信任度就会大打折扣。



王荟芬



林瑞生

林瑞生解释: 是要给人协和公众交代

林瑞生:为给人协2000职员和公众一个交代,决定公开王荟芬身份。

总理公署部长兼人民协会议主席林瑞生昨天出面解释人协公开点名王荟芬的决定。

他说,事件引起人们对女主角身份的揣测,人协职员也有许多疑问,为了给全体职员一个交代,人协管理层决定这么做。

事长杨雅铎考虑了许久,一方面担心公开身份会对女方造成伤害,一方面又要照顾人协职员感受的情况下,决定公布身份。

林瑞生也对王荟芬的工作表现赞赏有加。他说:“王荟芬是出色的职员,不仅有升职机会,也被委以重任。”

“当我们知道这件事后,为她身陷困境感到难过。希望大家能给他们一点空间重新振作。”

牵涉议员 应透明处理

多数受访公众也认为,人协有必要公开情妇身份。

王慧敏(30岁,经理)受访时说:“婚外情是私事,但这牵涉一名议员,政府应该透明处理这件事。”

另一公众洪先生(47岁,自雇人士)也说:“如果人协不公开,任由网民胡乱猜测,

会加深人民对政府的猜忌,如果把一些无辜的女生当成情妇,那就糟糕了。”

柏默在星期三宣布因搞婚外情而引咎辞职。人协随后迅速在当天傍晚发表文告,指白沙西选区办事处处理理事长王荟芬以“照顾家庭”为由,在星期一(10日)辞职,公开了柏默情妇的身份。

韩国4周票房冠军!

狼少年:不朽的爱
A WEREWOLF BOY 宋仲基
SONG JOONG-KI

现已献映

嘉华院线

嘉华城市广场

Couple's Cinema
 哈比人:不思议之旅
 哈比人:不思议之旅
 哈比人:不思议之旅

蝉联新加坡票房冠军

少年PI的奇幻漂流
LIFE OF PI

魔戒三部曲
THE LORD OF THE RINGS TRILOGY

哈比人:不思议之旅
THE HOBBIT

加冷娱乐广场(三佳)

加冷娱乐广场(五佳)

加冷娱乐广场(四佳)

加冷娱乐广场(二佳)

加冷娱乐广场(一佳)

前议长柏默

柏默和王荟芬交往的一年多里,是否在工作上利益冲突?

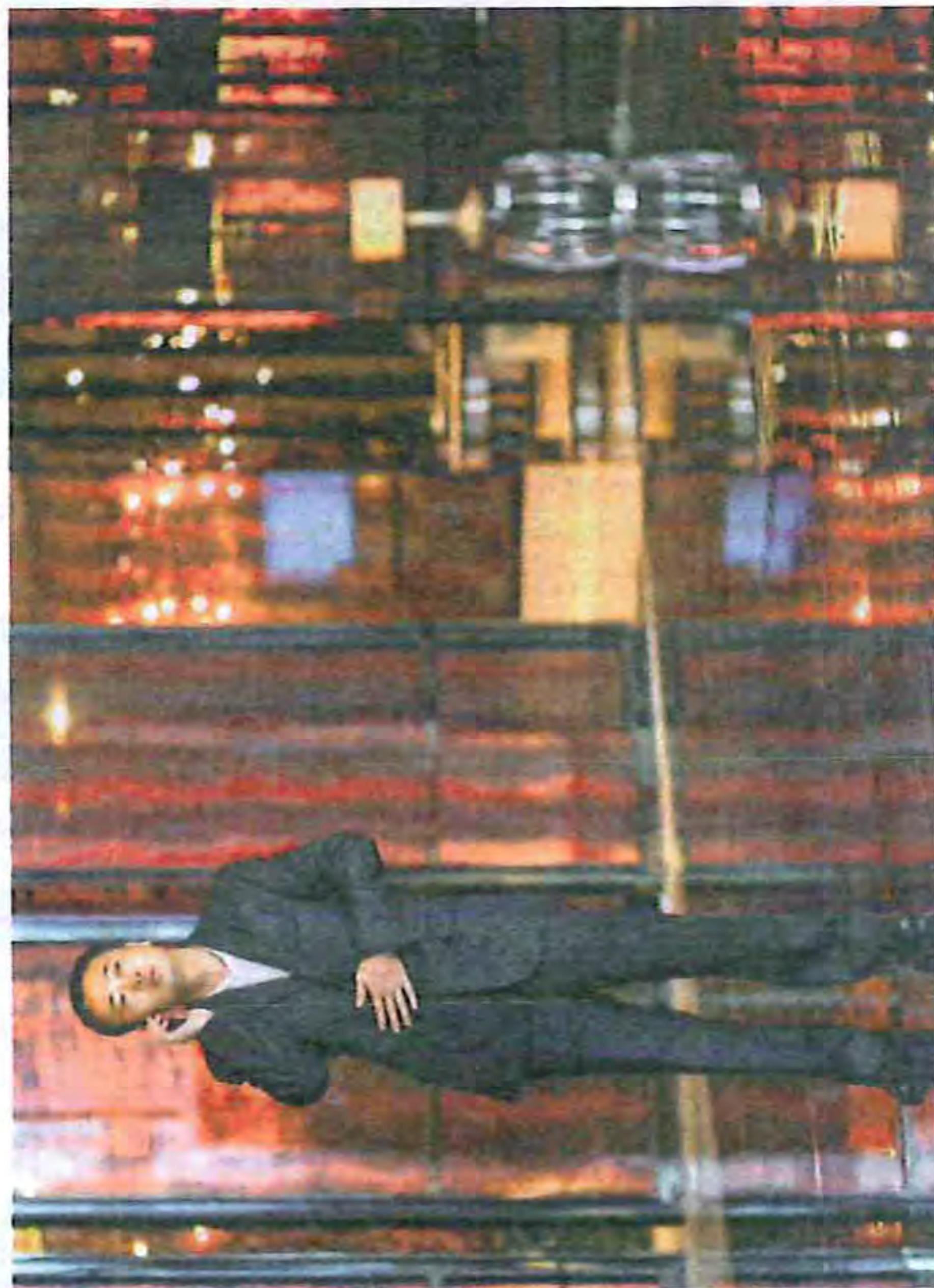
人协接受《海峡时报》询问时,不愿透露是否对两人展开调查,也不愿表示是否发现王荟芬在工作上是否有行为不当的问题。不过,一些议员指出,工作上利益冲突的可能性不大。

三巴旺选区议员李玉云告诉《海峡时报》,议员和其他选区的办事处处理理事长基本上没有往来,只有偶尔在社区活动上见面。

白沙一榜鹅集选区议员再纳也指出,议员和选区办事处处理理事长不是雇主和员工的工作关系,理事长的升迁和花红都由人协管理决定。

另一方面,国民团结党发表文告,宣布不参加榜鹅东补选。

Tough from the start
The requirements are strict: Applicants have to be between 25 and 42 years old, hold a Chinese Class A driving licence – which allows them to drive bigger vehicles – and have more than two years' experience driving large vehicles. If they are shortlisted, they will be sent a photocopy of the Basic Theory Test textbook to study. Only then does the actual recruitment drive start.



A dejected Mr Nan Jun informing his wife that he has failed the interview. This part of the selection process is notorious for being extremely stringent.

Worries over agent's fees add to hardship

Lee Jian Xuan

Ever since arriving in Singapore in July last year, Mr Li has been surviving on \$6 a day.

The bus driver – who did not want to give his full name or identify which company he works for – has to live frugally because he not only has to send money back to his wife and three children in China, but also has to pay off the hefty 25,000 yuan (\$5,000) employment fee that he had incurred to get his job.

It was what a Chinese recruitment agency had charged him to get the job, process documents and buy a one-way ticket to Singapore.

For the past 1½ years, the Henan native has not eaten anything more than a simple bowl of noodles or rice with mixed vegetables for lunch.

Drivers from China typically start with monthly salaries of around \$1,100, excluding overtime, and, like most foreign workers, try to spend as little as possible.

Mr Li says: "I paid so much money to get here, so I have to save every cent I can."

Even then, he adds, it took him more than a year to break even.

Some of his fellow countrymen take a lot longer – two years or more – because they spend on cigarettes, smartphones and even iPads, he said.

Yet many of the applicants at a recent recruitment drive for bus drivers in China say the thousands of dollars that they have paid their agents is a fair deal.

"I think it's about 26,000 to 28,000 yuan, I'm not sure," says Mr Zhang Yong, 33. "But it's worth the money."

But few of the men know why the agents charge them so much, and where it goes.

Singapore's public transport operators sub-contract the hiring of drivers from China to Singapore-based employment agents, which then work with their Chinese counterparts to run the recruitment.

A recruitment notice online says the 25,000 yuan that successful applicants pay these agents is used for visa application, service and management fees, and the air ticket to Singapore.

Agents say it also goes into the drivers' training and assessment, processing of documents and visas, and into booking function rooms in luxury hotels for the recruitment drives, as requested by the Singapore firms.

"It's impossible for us to pay for these places ourselves, so we need to factor it into the agent fee," says one agent, who did not want to be named.

Social worker Jolovan Wham of the Humanitarian Organisation for Migrant Economics, a Singapore group, believes the sum takes into account work permit application fees and the foreign worker levy that employers have to pay.

But he stresses that the numbers still do not quite add up.

The work permit application and insurance expenses should not cost more than a few hundred dollars, he notes. "There is no paper trail to show where the money goes."

In May, the Ministry of Manpower (MOM), when announcing amendments to the Employment of Foreign Manpower Act, said it had found employers declaring higher salaries than what they were paying their foreign workers, and asking the latter to pay their own levies and insurance premiums.

Activists also note that while laws insist that workers be refunded

half their agent's fees if they end their contracts early, enforcement is tricky as most transactions are carried out in China and receipts are not recognised in Singapore.

"Some receipts don't carry the name of the company," notes Mr Kenneth Soh, a social worker with activist group Transient Workers Count Too.

"Other companies put an amount that complies with MOM's regulations but charge the applicants an exorbitant sum."

Ms Jacqueline Tan, a communications executive at Healthserve, a medical non-government group that helps migrant workers, has seen applicants sent home with less than what they were entitled to after failing the bus driving test here.

"If you pay \$5,000 to come here and you don't even get a job, you would at least want a refund," she says.

Mr Wham feels that Singapore employers should bear the costs of hiring foreign labour instead of transferring them to the workers.

But Mr David Leong, the managing director of Singapore-based agent PeopleWorldwide Consulting, argues that this arises because of the high demand for Singapore jobs in China.

"For every job you have, 100 workers would want to get the job. So the worker will pay money to get the job," he points out.

What remains clear, however, is that the agent's fee can also affect workers' decisions to stay or go.

At the recent strike by SMRT bus drivers, one Chinese national revealed that many new arrivals had wanted to leave after seeing the work and living conditions here, but "they were persuaded by the older colleagues to stay on only because they need to pay back the agent's fee".



Advertisements for jobs as Singapore bus drivers attract hundreds of applicants in cities across China. In the first of a two-part series, **Wong Kang Wei, Malcolm Koh, Lee Jian Xuan and Natalie Teo** observe the keen competition for what many consider a dream job.

Driving THE S'porean Dream

Applicants face rigorous tests and interviews just to get a chance at the job

Wong Kang Wei
In Shandong (China)

Dressed in a smart suit, Mr Zhu Baoliang steps into the lobby of the five-star Le Meridien Hotel, and is quickly ushered up to the ballroom on the fourth floor.

Taking a seat alongside 145 others, the 33-year-old begins to tick off answers to a list of multiple-choice questions in a basic theory and psychological test.

Above them, a sprawling red banner reads: "We warmly welcome the arrival of Singapore's bus company for the recruitment drive."

At each question, Mr Zhu contemplates the options carefully. "Which best describes your personality?" He glances through "soft", "romantic" and "virtuous", before ticking "cheerful". How would he react in situations? He picks "courteously" over "daringly" or "adventurously".

The test is only the beginning for Mr Zhu, who is on his second attempt to work in Singapore. It is just the first of many steps that he and many men - there are no women in this batch - have to go through to get a job as a bus driver in Singapore.

For many like him, Singapore is a bustling metropolis with job opportunities aplenty.

"It's not just about the money," says the distribution manager for electrical goods, who drove inter-city buses as a part-time job four years ago.

"I want to experience what Singapore is like, and understand how the service industry manages to grow at such a fast pace."

The money, of course, is a draw. Singapore transport operators offer total monthly salaries of up to 10,000 Chinese yuan (\$\$1,970), plus bonuses, housing and free transport - four times or more what a public bus driver earns in China.

Every time a recruitment notice is posted on online forums and Qzone, a Chinese version of Facebook, there is a rush of applicants who send recruitment agents their resumes and photocopies of their education certificates and driving licences.

The requirements are strict: Applicants must be between 25 and 42 years old, hold a Chinese Class A driving licence - which allows them to drive bigger vehicles - and have more than two years' experience driving large vehicles.

If they are shortlisted, they will be sent a photocopy of the Basic Theory Test textbook to study.

And only then does the actual recruitment drive start.

STAGE 1 GETTING READY

Since late 2007, these recruitment drives have been held in cities across China, from Chengdu, Nanjing and Zhengzhou to Jinan, Qingdao and Changchun. Often, they attract crowds of 200 or more.

Singapore-based recruitment agencies such as PeopleWorldwide Consulting act as middlemen between the transport operators and Chinese agents. The process is similar for both SBS Transit and SMRT, according to one Chinese agent.

At a recent drive to recruit 50

drivers, the Chinese agent sent the Singapore employer a shortlist of 146 names. (He declined to be named and did not want to identify the Singapore operator he represents.)

Two days earlier, the men had undergone some training, which involved revising basic driving theory, simple English lessons and some practice on a driving test route.

The training was done in two batches, in the office preparing for the theory test, and on the road to practise their driving skills.

While waiting for their training bus, the men practised their English, saying "Good morning" and "I am a bus driver".

Taking a long puff on a cigarette, Mr Zhang Yong, a 33-year-old Shaanxi native earning 3,000 yuan a month as a public bus driver, said he wanted to go to Singapore to "learn new things".

Besides, he added, Singapore's mix of East and West makes it a good stepping stone for finding employment in other English-speaking countries like Canada.

When the training bus eventually pulled up, the men rushed on board, eager to take their turn at the wheel. A coach sat near the driver, rapping out reprimands for any fault.

The practice drive ended at nightfall, but the day was not over yet: The men still had to get ready for the next day's written tests and the all-important interview.

STAGE 2 GRILLING SESSION

It is one of the most feared stages in trying to become a bus driver in Singapore, notorious for knocking out the most applicants.

After introducing himself in English and Mandarin, the applicant is grilled on his personal background, driving experience and reactions to different scenarios. Examples: What would you do if a drunk man gets on the bus? What if a pregnant woman goes into labour?

Recruitment agents say this round is extremely stringent - two out of three were struck off in a recent drive because of poor performance or their looks.

Mr Qu Zongzhen, 37, never got to the scenario stage although he had stayed up until 1.30am to prepare a 15-page memo on them.

He was rejected less than five minutes into the interview.

He said he was told he looked too fierce. "Do I really look like a bully?" the 1.7m Shandong native asked repeatedly, tears welling up in his eyes.

He pointed to his cleft lip scar and said: "This is not fair. How can they disqualify me for looks? I may look fierce, but I am gentle deep down."

Mr Qu had quit his bus driver job of 18 years to try his luck here, but might now have to return to earning 2,000 yuan a month.

He asked the Chinese agent if the interviewers would reconsider, but got a crushing reply: "No, don't even think about it."

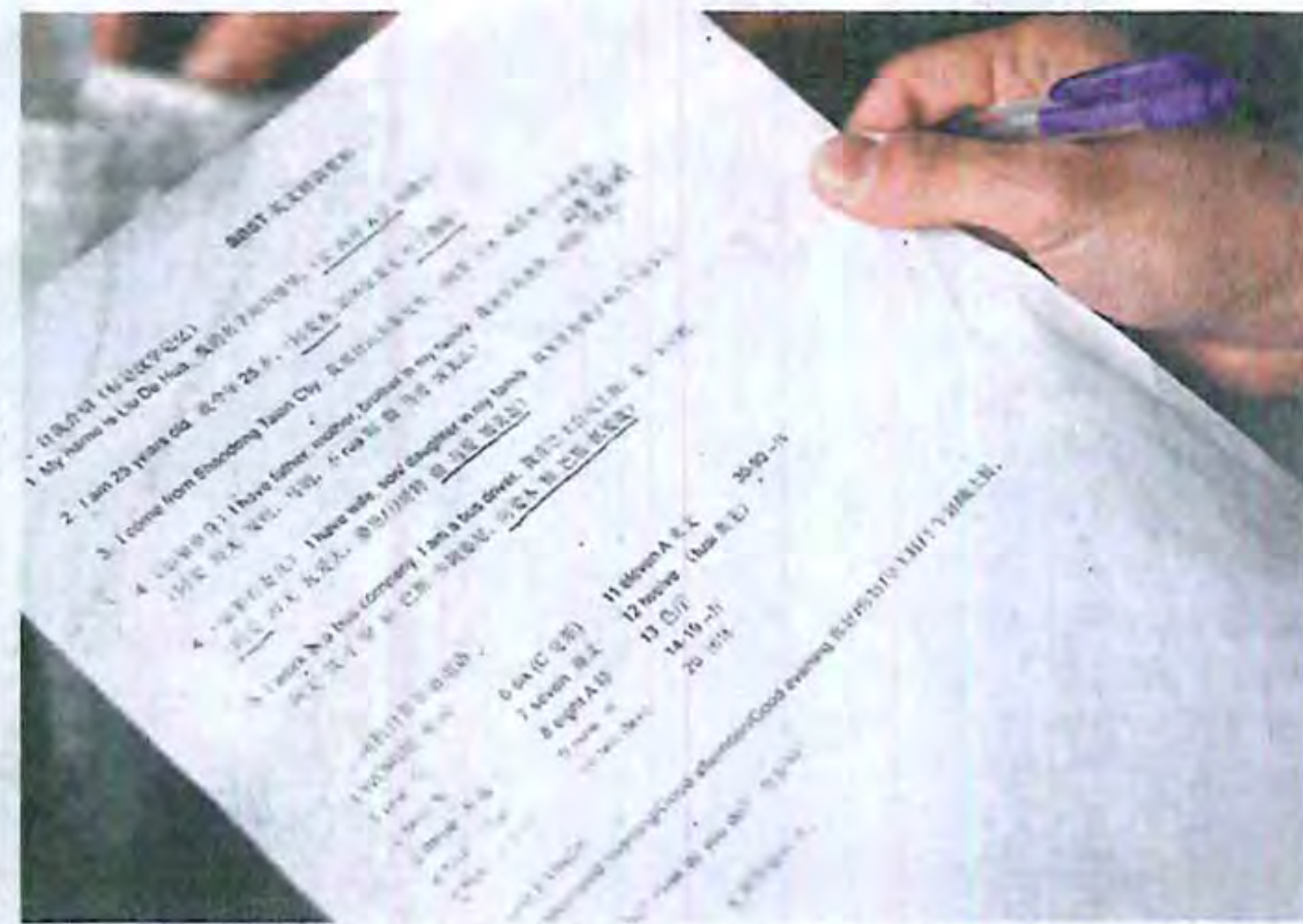
He slouched into his chair and stared into space for several minutes before calling his wife to break the news.

Mr David Leong, managing director of PeopleWorldwide Consulting, explained that the industry needs people with an "amicable personality".

"You can't pick drivers who look like bullies or look very rough. After all, this is a customer service business. Apart from driving, you need to be able to smile and inter-



Modern Singapore, with its mix of East and West, appeals to Mr Zhang Yong, a public bus driver from Xi'an who wants to go there to learn new things.



Mr Zhu Baoliang practising English phrases from a training sheet. Applicants have to give a simple self-introduction in English during the interview.



Applicants who passed the interview waiting for their turn at the road test, the final stage of the selection process. Each one of them will have to drive a specially hired public bus on the 6.8km route, with a tester from the Singapore public transport operator on board to assess their driving skills.

ST PHOTOS: MALCOLM KOH



Mr Zhu looking pleased after a practice run on the test route. The Shandong native is on his second attempt at the recruitment drive for bus drivers in Singapore. However, like in his first attempt, he was knocked out by the psychology test, despite clearing both the interview and the driving test.

act with the passengers."

Mr Nan Jun believes his unsmiling countenance cost him his interview.

The 37-year-old started out smiling when he was asked: "If your good friend wants to change shifts with you, what would you do?"

He delivered a textbook answer: "I would first consult the company to see if they agree. If they don't, there's nothing I can do, and I'll be unable to help him."

But when he was asked the same question repeatedly, his smile faded and he got nervous.

"I don't have many years left to be adventurous in my job options," said the former lorry driver, tearing up. "I don't want to start from the bottom again and work my way up."

He turned on the Chinese agent, accusing him of not warning him that the interview would be so chal-

lenging. "You have wasted my time and money," he said.

The agent replied: "If you have gone through this company's interview, the other interviews won't be a problem for you next time."

STAGE 3 WAITING... AND WAITING

By the time it comes to the last stage - the driving test - the original batch of more than 140 has been whittled down to around 40.

The men have to drive along a 6.8km-long route as officials from the transport operator and agents assess their skills and confidence.

One nervous applicant hit the kerb while turning: immediate failure.

Those who pass heave a sigh of relief. But that does not mean they are clear to go to Singapore. They have to wait to be informed by cellphone whether they will get to attend the prized contract-signing ceremony the following day.

In the end, only 35 are chosen.

There is one last step, however. Even though the 35 sign a "guarantee contract", they must now clear a medical check-up, get their driving licences verified and wait for the Singapore agent to get a work permit from the Manpower Ministry.

Only then will they finally sign an official employment contract with the Singapore operator. Not all 35 will get work permits, said the Chinese agent.

As for Mr Zhu Baoliang, his attempt to go to Singapore proves futile once again. He had cleared all the stages and waited all night for the call, but it never came.

The next morning, the agent told him he had failed the psychology test. His first attempt at becoming a Singapore bus driver had also failed for the same reason.

"This is frustrating," said the fa-

ther of a three-year-old daughter.

He said he probably would not apply again to be a public bus driver, but he was not ready to give up his Singapore dream. Thinking aloud, he said he might try to be a chauffeur or tourist bus driver.

"There's nothing to be disappointed about," he said. "It's not like there are no more opportunities."

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Wong Kang Wei, Malcolm Koh, Lee Jian Xuan and Natalie Teo are final-year students at the Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information at Nanyang Technological University. This article is part of their final-year project on the lives of foreign bus drivers in Singapore.

Who is the Singapore bus driver? Find out in The Straits Times tomorrow.

SMRT巴士司机非法罢工 追踪

SMRT巴士司机 加班60小时 月入可达1800元



人力专家梁昌国



公众黄鑫凯担心司机长时间驾驶，会不安全。



司机加班60个小时可赚超过1800元，不过有公众质疑：长时间驾驶安全吗？

说，加班60小时其实不过分。

“劳工法规定本地劳工每月不得加班超过72小时，所以60小时相对来说是合理的。”

不过他强调，加班司机必须有6小时的充足睡眠，换句话说，司机收工与开工时间相隔至少6小时。

他说，很多本地及马国籍司机不愿加班，不少

中国籍司机很乐意接受。

本报记者今早走访武吉巴督巴士转换站，一名服务于SMRT的巴士司机李先生（43岁）也对公司的做法表示支持。

“公司让加班，我们更能赚更多钱当然愿意，要是我有这个机会当然会做。”

他甚至嫌60个小时太少，不介意公司让他加班更长时间。但公众石先生

SMRT一些司机埋怨公司不应向外借人解决人手短缺问题，而应该给予本身的司机加班机会。

SMRT为缓解中国籍巴士司机罢工事件所引发的司机短缺问题，向新捷运和私人巴士业者借用司机，却引起本身一些员工怨言。他们认为，SMRT其实大可以让自己的司机加班，让他们有机会赚取更多收入。

40岁的李女士是受聘于SMRT的本地司机，对于公司借用别家公司司机的举动表示不解。

她说：“公司向外头借司机，我们却在在一旁等候指示。公司完全可以考虑让我们加班，我们想拥有更多加班机会。”

（30岁，销售工程师）却认为为加班时间不合理。

“每个月加班60小时太长了吧，40小时可能较合理。”

**SMRT司机
埋怨没得多赚**

公众质疑：安全吗？

加班时间过长？公众对巴士安全问题提出质疑。

司机加班60个小时可赚取超过1800元，不过有公众质疑：长时间驾驶安全吗？

公众威尔逊说，开巴士需要精神高度集中，司机加班到60小时，无法想象他的精神状态会怎样？

“让司机加班这么多小时，我很担心我的安全。”

另一名公众黄鑫凯则认为，司机必须先考虑自己的身体状况，才决定是否要超时加班。

“如果司机太劳累，对驾驶巴士构成安全问题，他就不应加班。”

John Koh
Managing Director
Newday Consulting Private Ltd

SINGAPORE is a clean city, in my opinion, whether "cleaned" up or not. Not many major cities in the world have the same level of cleanliness that we currently enjoy.

Although it's good to always strive to be cleaner, we need to be mindful not to overdo it. I believe that human behaviour can be better influenced by rewards than pain, and the current situation shows that draconian rules and fines are not working with the segment of recalcitrant offenders. Some of them may even take a secret pleasure in littering just to spite the law enforcers.

As a Singaporean who has spent a good part of my professional life here, I started to notice the scarcity of rubbish bins in our common areas in recent years. Perhaps this is where the root of the problem lies, and not the seemingly worsening behaviour of littering among our people.

Philippe H J Huinck
Regional Managing Director, South and South East Asia
International SOS

WHEN it comes to cleanliness, I give Singapore high marks. Singapore is indeed a clean city – a VERY clean city in fact – especially in comparison to other global cities.

Yes, Liak Teng Lit, head of the Keep Singapore Clean Movement, has a point when he says that it is clean because it is being kept clean. But isn't this the case for most cities?

Keeping Singapore cleaned has encouraged residents and visitors to keep it that way – a sign that cleanliness has indeed started to take hold in our shared consciousness.

Through public service campaigns and debates, the government, too, has taken the right steps to keep Singapore's reputation as a clean – and green – city intact.

On a personal note, my regular evening stroll around the block is a constant reminder of the effort that we are all putting in to keep our property – and therefore our city – clean and tidy.

Nick Foley
President, South-east Asia & Pacific
Landor

AESTHETICALLY speaking, Singapore is a very clean city, especially when compared to other capitals in the region. To ensure the everlasting notion that Singapore stays clean, there cannot be such a reliance on a workforce which constantly cleans. More needs to be done to transform this façade of a clean city into one that is intrinsically valued by all.

Forging a population driven by a collective responsibility for protecting the environment is a tough task. A city is a brand. Many authorities around the world desire these social responsibilities but fail to connect the audience emotionally with the brand.

Landor believes that for Singapore to be successfully known as a clean city, the people living here need to feel a sense of ownership. The cultivation of a proactive culture is required to keep the city truly clean. Involve the population. Let them take pride and ownership in Brand Singapore.

Madhu Verma
Founder
SoCh in Action

WE all need to feel a sense of personal responsibility and pride in keeping Singapore clean, and maintaining its reputation of being a world-class city. Right now, this reputation is being maintained simply because we have an efficient system to keep the country clean. We have people working around the clock to clear trash cans, sweep the streets, and even hose down bus shelters. In addition, we have laws and fines to force people to maintain at least a basic level of cleanliness. This is similar to a child who has a wonderfully clean room because his mum cleans his room regularly and because he's afraid of being punished for messing it up and not because he understands what he is doing.

It's time for Singapore to grow up. Children are often coerced into doing what is right by their parents and teachers. We need to start sowing the seeds of civic responsibility from the time that children start to

David Leong
Managing Director
PeopleWorldwide Consulting Pte Ltd

SINCE 1968, Singapore has initiated various national anti-littering campaigns and movements to keep Singaporeans mindful of cleanliness. The government, through the National Environment Agency (NEA), town councils and many other agencies, employs cleaners to upkeep our environment.

Such an image reflects well on Singapore since cleanliness is something that not many governments can maintain. Many Chinese cities are emulating Singapore's way of city planning including our greening and cleaning initiatives. Our formula cannot therefore be entirely wrong.

Given our First World aspirations, we must maintain the image of our "clean and green" city. Collectively, we must encourage a concerted civil movement to ensure that each and every Singaporean plays a more proactive role and participates with a civil-minded consciousness.

Innovative ways must be used to foster this behavioural change. One way would be to let students own spaces in school to keep clean. Whatever format is adopted, it should not be overly punitive in nature.

Having a gracious and civilised society requires slow transformative change, and it must be moulded in love – love for our society, love for our community and love for Singapore.

David Low
CEO
Futuristic Store Fixtures Pte Ltd

IT took great vision to see the importance of a clean city and many decades of concerted effort to place Singapore as a reputedly clean and green city. These

A complete list of views
from CEOs is also available at
<http://businessimes.com.sg>

THIS WEEK'S TOPIC

Do you agree that Singapore is a "cleaned city" rather than a clean city where cleanliness is seen as everyone's civic responsibility? Which are the areas needing the most urgent attention, and what immediate steps would you recommend?

Clean or cleaned?



PHOTO: FILE PHOTO

Robert Waters Singapore

TAKING our country to its current hygiene standards takes extra effort indeed. Our "clean and green" branding is not just achievable by making it a part of every Singaporeans' civic responsibility, hiring an army of sweepers and launching government initiatives is also essential. If we boast about hosting world leaders and holding global-scale events, getting our environment right should be of top priority.

That said, there are still pockets for improvement, such as the lack of services to dispose of bulky items. Often, pieces of old furniture end up piled outside private property for months or abandoned in HDB void decks. Over time, rainwater collects and this breeds dengue mosquitoes. Companies specialising in removing this cumbersome waste should spread awareness on such hazards more actively.

Despite the progress that we have made, Singapore is still pretty much a pampered nation. The simple act of clearing their own food trays does not come as second nature to some Singaporeans, who often rely on the cleaners to clean up after them. By and large, we are a "cleaned up" country but we have slivers to improve on before we can call ourselves spotless.

Zaheer Merchant
Regional Director (Singapore & Europe)
QI Group of Companies

I CONCUR that we certainly need to instil a greater sense of responsibility to keep the country clean. We do rely overly on the cleaners employed to keep public areas litter-free. Food courts or fast-food restaurants are a case on point with trays left about. This is in sharp contrast to some Western countries. Singapore has needed anti-littering campaigns and laws to encourage a mindset against littering.

The key is really to alter the mind sets of people living here. By and large, it has worked. However, it needs extension as our population grows. This would include foreigners who have made Singapore their home. A softer approach might work better than a "name and shame" one. Awareness classes would help especially if these are made part of the school curriculum. Litterbugs who are caught can be made to clean up neighbourhoods.

Ultimately, a lot of factors go into creating a civic-minded society – culture, upbringing, personality and education, among others. Creating a broad cohesive understanding of this is truly the key.

immunity. It is a "cleaned city" because of the investments in employing sufficient cleaners.

A country needs its citizens to take civic responsibility upon themselves, as well as have resources such as cleaners.

One should not view the issue in a siloed manner.

That said, no country is a utopian society; and there are areas in which Singapore could improve, such as the cleanliness in crowded food centres.

However, instead of solely implementing punishments on the recalcitrant, Singapore can also focus on rewarding and encouraging civic-mindedness.



PHOTO: FILE PHOTO

民生民财

经济前景不明 不请长期工



经济前景不明朗，以合约方式受雇的员工人数已增加。(档案照片)

合约员工 5个月增30%

郭倩婷 报道

经济前景不明朗，公司不请长期工，部门合约员工，在过去5个月里增加近30%!

合约一般介绍

陈志强说，合约员工主要是从事速递、邮件事务(mail room)和包装等工作。外国公司聘请合约员工的情况尤其常见。

另外，调查也显示，除了金融科技与人力资源行业，都是越来越依赖合约员工的领域。

雇主与合约员工所签订的合约，通常都是固定期限的，合约到期后，雇主可以选择不再续约。

陈志强说，合约员工在固定开支里，工资是主要的成本。而合约员工的工资支出，在公司的账目里，或开销，或者项目成本 (project cost)。

他表示，另一个公司薪金不超出应付的薪金，可是为了应付合约员工的增加，所以请合约员工的人数的增加，是意料之外的。

郭倩婷 报道

也是较灵活的表现。万家公司不喜欢这些员工，也可以在他们的工作合约满了之后，不再续约。

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‘一天一鸡蛋，医生远离我?’ 国人爱吃鸡蛋 几乎每天一个

苏世鹏 报道

sohsp@sph.com.sg

“一天一鸡蛋，医生远离我?” 国人吃鸡蛋有增加的趋势，每家几乎吃一个; 专家指出，对于健康的人来说，每天吃一个鸡蛋是可被允许的。

农粮局的数据显示，国人去年每人吃了308个鸡蛋，或者每人每天0.84个，也就是几乎一个; 这和2009年的300个与2010年的309个比较相差不多，但比2002年的282个多了26个。

专家指出，鸡蛋的含胆固醇量高，但现在或在研究显示，其害处或许没有那么严重，有些专家甚至相信，“一天一鸡蛋，医生远离我”。

这是因为，一般人每天可摄取不超过300毫克的胆固醇，每个鸡蛋含有胆固醇约150毫克，每天吃一个鸡蛋是可允许的。

受访的陈美娥医师也指出，一天一个鸡蛋对人体有好处，鸡蛋所含的卵磷脂以及蛋白质是人体所需要的，特别是小学生与青少年。



专家也赞成

蛋白与蛋黄的比例约三比一，有助营养均衡。(图片/ Antoine)

达到营养均衡

卵磷脂 (Lecithin) 与蛋白质、维生素并列，被誉为“第三营养素”; 卵磷脂能辅助脑部记忆力，减缓动脉硬化的沉积物，可改善注意力不集中、记忆力减退等问题。

同时，陈医师说：“一个鸡蛋里蛋白与蛋黄的比例大约三比一，一天一个也能达到营养均衡的效果。特别是早餐，一个鸡蛋，加上麦片等饮料，就能提供充足的营养。”



陈美娥医师 (档案照)

去年每人吃掉 33公斤鸡肉 医师:其他肉类宜节制

陈美娥分析说，国人去年每人吃了33公斤的鸡肉，陈医师:其他肉类宜节制

鸡肉; 一天100克的蛋白质是正常的，但如果果还有吃太多其他肉类，就是超标了。“超标会使到人体的嘌呤代谢比较高，导致体内的酸性多，以致有关节痛的问题。” 同时，鸡肉属温性、湿热，吃多会影响消化能力，吃鸡肉要适度。

我国失业率偏低 雇主需全职工

陈志强又说，我国失业率偏低，所以雇主需要继续聘请全职工。

第三季失业率微跌0.1%至1.9%; 一些行业如餐饮、高档或名牌商店、资讯科技、酒店和医药保健业等还是面对人手吃紧的问题。

其中，最缺乏和难请到的是销售及行销人员，来应付市场的需要。

我国今年第三季就业人数增幅比去年同期的3万1900个少了7000个。截至第三季，本地就业人数超过331万人。

受电子制造业和零售业的拖累，第三季被裁员或提前解雇的人数有3300，创下2009年金融危机结束以来的新高。

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Nick Foley

President, South-east Asia & Pacific
Landor

ONE of the great aspects to Singapore is its "mixing pot of different cultures". Somehow, despite this fusion with so many people from diverse backgrounds, one core value has been overlooked: benevolence. Singaporeans need to find more occasions to demonstrate their compassion for others.

Landor Associates has 70 years of experience in building brands. Sometimes we get asked to create new brand values for countries or cities. If Landor was helping Singapore to progress its brand persona, we'd look at values that brought out Singapore's caring side. Mutuality, reciprocity, compassion, empathy and the ability to nurture are all values that would help balance Singapore's successful and entrepreneurial spirit.

Singapore is such a productive and special place. Its image among other developed nations will only improve if it can shift the perception to being one that is generous in spirit.

Hugues Delcourt

Country Executive, ABN Amro Bank NV Singapore; and
Chief Executive Officer of ABN Amro Private Banking
Asia & Middle East

PERSONALLY, I would like to see greater emphasis on the value of family togetherness, as strong family ties play an important role as an anchor in the lives of individuals, which in turn helps to create a stronger social fabric for Singapore as a whole.

Besides the pursuit of material comfort, greater empathy for our fellow men is also key to cultivating a congenial living environment which improves lives in ways that tangible gains cannot provide, and for the society to function as a truly gracious one.

Companies can play a role in making these values part of the Singapore society, by empowering their employees and promoting these causes internally. At ABN Amro, we encourage our staff to work hard, play hard and to pursue other interests in life that contribute to their own and their family's well-being via company-organised and sponsored social and CSR activities and family days. We also practise diversity in staff hiring from across all races and creeds based on merit, thus creating an environment where people from different cultures work closely together and learn from each other.

I am excited that Singapore is embarking on this journey to create its unique identity. With the right mindset, attitude and proactive effort from all parties, I believe we are definitely on the right track to making Singapore an even better place to work and live in.

Toby Koh

Group Managing Director
Ademco Security Group

COMPASSION, kindness and tolerance are evident in many Singaporeans on a daily basis. As an individual, we encourage people we meet to practise such values.

Each and every corporation should have a corporate social responsibility programme to give back to society and display the very values that we want to encourage. In Ademco, we practise CSR both in monetary terms as well as in person. Such activities help to bond our staff which comprise foreign talent too, and integrate them into Singapore's community. When Singaporeans see our foreign talent helping in non-profit organisations and other worthy causes, it also increases acceptance. This is one positive step to making Singapore a happy and cohesive nation.

David Dzienciol

Regional Vice-President and General Manager,
Asia Pacific
Parallels Software Pte Ltd

SINGAPOREANS have always valued excellence and achievement. This has helped propel Singapore from a developing country to a First World nation. However, as the country continues to develop and its residents get wealthier, the pursuit of material goods and services sometimes distracts us from being gracious citizens. While being go-getters is good, Singaporeans should also consider how teamwork, openness and respect are important values that need to become an integral part of Singapore society, a city state that is a melting pot of different cultures and backgrounds.

The diversity of Singapore resembles that of Parallels. We were founded in Singapore by a Russian businessman (who is a Singapore citizen) but currently have our corporate headquarters in USA. Our senior management comprises different nationalities and many have brought with them experience in top MNCs from around the world.

With such a diverse mix of people, it poses a huge challenge for us to create a culture that accepts both similarities and differences at the same time, but we have done so because it is imperative for our success.

In order to propagate these values, corporate leaders need to lead by example. Only by exemplifying the meaning of teamwork, openness and respect in their actions and behaviour towards employees can they create this culture that will exist throughout the entire organisation.

Low Lee Yong

CEO & Founder
MHC Medical Network

KINDNESS and inclusiveness are important values as Singapore's society becomes more diverse.

We live in a fast-paced society where many people work long hours. Yes, I agree we need to show more kindness to one another, and people will respond to kindness with kindness. Kindness begins with each individual regardless of whether we are leaders or not.

I also think that inclusiveness is important. As our society becomes aged, it is very important to never forget the contributions our senior citizens have made to our country's progress. As Singapore continues to grow, we must include them as we share the fruits of the growth story.

David Leong

Managing Director
PeopleWorldwide Consulting Pte Ltd

ALTHOUGH kindness, graciousness and courtesy are

THIS WEEK'S TOPIC

What are the values you would like to see as an integral part of Singapore society, and why?
What can people, and corporate leaders in particular, do to propagate these values?

Values that S'pore values



ST FILE PHOTO

acknowledged as universal social values, these values should be embedded values within society. The most valued principle still alive in Japanese society today is the concept of "wa", or "harmony". The preservation of social harmony dates back to the first constitution in 604 AD where the society and community harmony precede the notion of "self". In business terms, "wa" is reflected in the avoidance of self-assertion and individualism and the preservation of good relationships.

In Singapore's multi-racial and multi-cultural societal structures, such tolerance is paramount and the notion of collective assertiveness and togetherness above "self" must be shaped from a socialisation process. Such socialisation process must be initiated in schools since young and not from a workplace environment. In the workplace context, corporate culture may bind individuals to sets of values.

In the end, it is about building a harmonious society, and acts of graciousness and kindness are the resultant behaviour of our harmonious society.

Charlie Foo

Vice-President
Brocade Asia Pacific

SINGAPORE'S biggest resource is its people who have helped propel our economy's growth and put us on the global stage.

Being a small country, the actions of individuals can become associated with Singapore as a whole. It is therefore essential that we improve on our core values of empathy, respect and tolerance.

Business leaders can lead from the front and spearhead policies that promote a culture of mutual respect and teamwork based on a set of key values. A key component is to organise activities that allow employees to bond at a more personal level, where they will go out of their way to help and motivate each other.

Philippe HJ Huinck

Regional Managing Director, South and South East Asia
International SOS

AS THE country continues to face rapid population growth and an increasingly diverse community, maintaining a kind society is becoming a real challenge.

Nevertheless, from giving up a seat for an elderly in the bus to volunteering to help onboard a newly arrived foreign worker, Singaporeans from all walks of life are doing their bit to contribute to a kinder society.

A certain level of selflessness, empathy and a real appreciation for diversity are what, among others, make up a better Singapore.

As business leaders we should always encourage these values in the workplace and embed them in the way they conduct business. This will obviously help to foster business relationships, while in parallel it contributes to a kinder Singapore.

At International SOS, we too do our bit to contribute to this vision. Our philosophy of "Worldwide Reach, Human Touch" underpins what we do for our patients, customers and staff on a daily basis.

Simon Barlow

President, Asia Pacific
Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group

AT CARLSON Rezidor Hotel Group, we are driven by and rooted in a strong set of values exemplifying the bold entrepreneurial spirit and high quality standards embodied by our founder, Curtis L Carlson. We encourage our employees to live the Carlson values of Integrity, Innovation, Customer Focus, Empowerment, Accountability, Responsibility and C-Factor, which is daring to be different in a fun and rewarding way. Each year on Values Day, all employees around the world get together to reflect and reaffirm their commitment to these values, which act as a guiding light to better understand how their actions help Carlson Rezidor attain its highest aspirations in service to each other, to our business partners, our guests and to the communities we work and live in.

By living these shared values within our organisation, we hopefully become part of a multiplier effect that is aligned with the aspirations of Singaporeans who want a kinder, more gracious society.

Karl Chong

CEO
Groupon Singapore

WE AT Groupon see profitability in being socially conscious by prioritising corporate responsibility. For example, kindness is a core value of Groupon Singapore that is integrated into our operational philosophy and execution, propagated through the way we treat our customers, merchants and employees.

For customers, we deliver great customer service with a smile and ensure we achieve first contact resolution to live up to the Groupon Promise. For merchants, we prioritise and train our relationship managers to interact kindly with them, regardless of the situation.

Lastly, we take a personal interest in the professional and personal growth of our employees, instilling a sense of kindness, through personal training and monthly town hall meetings.

We live in an age where social responsibility is a necessity, and corporations can play a larger role to influence and inspire the younger generations by the contributions and impact of their behaviour.

Zaheer Merchant

Regional Director (Singapore & Europe)
QI Group of Companies

MY WISH for Singapore is for it to become a more inclusive and gracious society. This includes the way we generally communicate and treat people with common courtesy. It would make for a more conducive environment which in turn permeates every facet of life. If one element means treating people with dignity, respect and fairness regardless of race, economic status or a different viewpoint, then as corporate leaders, we need to walk the talk.

Aside from achieving profits, which is important,

companies should also focus on building a workforce that is gracious and selfless. Involve staff in CSR programmes which benefit society and themselves, yet crucially treat them right. The adage, "good begets good", holds true and our actions ultimately reflect upon us.

We've found that once employees see the positive difference they're making, it makes them more understanding and respectful of the community they live in, and compels them to work towards making an even bigger change. We are ultimately the change we want to be. As Professor Tommy Koh noted in the recent debate, it makes for us "wanting" to be kinder.

Values that make a society proud of itself are generosity and perhaps social justice. They result in a society that gives, and not just takes.

Daniel Soh

Managing Partner
Leadership Advisory Inc

THE importance of integrity and accountability can't be overstated. A person without integrity is like a house built on sand. Today, information is widely accessible, people expect to be more inclusive, and things happen much faster than before. No doubt our environment has become more interconnected and complex in recent years; we need to live with strong integrity and a deep sense of accountability. While this seems like a given, just take a look at all that have happened in the US and European banking sectors over the last few years, and you will see what I mean.

For corporate leaders, be prepared to lead by example and "walk the talk". It earns you the right to have responsibility over others. Secondly, be authentic and have empathy for people across different races, religions and cultures. This will naturally draw faithful followers who respect what you value. Be realistic too. Every organisation's means are limited by today's economics. Foolish egos and greed unfortunately have led to many downfalls. Hence I believe it is very important to work hard without being blindly ambitious.

Susie Martin

General Manager, South East Asia and India
Servcorp

KINDNESS is a two-way proposition. As a leader in providing world-class service to our clients, we strongly believe that true service comes from genuine caring and kindness. In return, when a customer or guest receives great service, they can do their part and acknowledge the efforts a team has put in, in delivering the best possible experience for them.

Another example of how corporations can incorporate a kind work culture is their long-term commitment to their team, especially during a financial crisis. The first reaction for many corporations is to cut headcount with the remaining teams being stretched very thin. Corporations can instead think of creative ways of retaining headcount. More often than not, colleagues will happily give up bonuses and additional perks if it means keeping the entire team on the payroll.

Teo Lay Lim

Managing Director – Singapore and Asean
Accenture

FOR Singapore to successfully meet the demands of a growing population, it has to aggressively pursue two goals: manage resources sustainably and create an attractive economic and social environment in which citizens, businesses and governments can live, work and interact. Singapore can maintain its leading position as a liveable city by leveraging technologies and being environmentally conscious in its planning. Planning should include providing solutions across housing and office space, natural resource management, transportation, health and safety, waste management, public administration and services, as well as education and culture.

If Singapore is to take focused, cost-effective actions to embed intelligence and sustainability in all its services, the government together with the public and private sectors should work to put in place the right kind of foundation – an open, intelligent architecture of governing and operating systems, capable of delivering smart services now and then scaling as the city's needs grow.

Tan Wang Cheow

Executive Chairman
Food Empire Holdings Limited

EVEN as we calibrate the inflow of foreigners into Singapore, perhaps we should also recalibrate our mindset and consider a more sustainable, organic approach to population growth. The challenge is to achieve a critical mass without resorting to an instant formula, which strains public infrastructure and erodes the social compact between the government and stakeholders of the country.

We could consider more family-friendly policies to encourage procreation, foster entrepreneur risk-taking, creativity and social harmony. This creates space for greater diversity, vibrancy, and a sense of ownership and well-being in the longer run. A measured pace of growth will also allow planners time to think of better urban solutions.

Chia Wee Boon

Chief Executive Officer
NCS

WITH the burgeoning population, there is a need to utilise intelligent technology to ensure efficient use of limited resources in an urban cityscape. In transport, predictive analytics using data on traffic usage can help in the planning and design of a city's transportation system. Sensing and machine-to-machine technologies coupled with analytics can enable vehicle-to-infrastructure communications, enabling automatic diversion of cars to less crowded routes to manage urban congestion. In healthcare, analytics can be used to predict and manage chronic disease trends and ensure better patient outcomes. Telecare consultations coupled with medical sensing devices can enable remote consultations and diagnosis from home.

Indeed, innovative use of emerging technologies can uncover new value and bring greater visibility and insight to decision-making to solve current population issues.

Mindy Tan

CEO
Newstead Technologies

TWO critical factors that will determine the future of a harmonious and economically competitive society are employment rates and affordability of housing.

Singapore should continue to pursue foreign planning to align supply with demand.

Other areas to focus on include general facilities in healthcare, education and entertainment. It is inevitable for our population to grow as the country gets more developed, and it is important to recognise the dynamics this number brings in terms of economic growth and social development. Engaging the general masses through multimedia channels for two-way communication helps in shaping perception and mindset in a bustling nation.

Philippe HJ Huinck

Regional Managing Director, South and South East Asia
International SOS

A CONTINUOUSLY rising population is putting pressure on Singapore's infrastructure, but it also means a lot of extra manpower that the government can tap into to maintain economic growth. Making this goal a reality calls for close collaboration between the government and the private sector. In addition, Singaporeans and residents need to understand, accept and even embrace this target. Both the government and the private sector need to keep an open dialogue with the public to engage and facilitate.

The government needs to invest in urban planning projects to expand housing and improve transportation, power, and waste and water treatment systems. Private companies can significantly contribute by helping their workforce cope with the stresses of crowded living and work environments, for example, through flexible working arrangements.

International SOS is committed to working in partnership with the government to strengthen the quality of healthcare infrastructure here, while promoting a healthy work-life balance for employees.

Annie Yap

Managing Director
AYP Associates Pte Ltd

IT IS difficult to enhance quality of life for a population expanding within a short timeframe, whatever the source of growth. We can only work towards alleviating pressures related to overcrowding. One way is to segment the property market between Singaporeans/PRs and foreigners so that locals do not

THIS WEEK'S TOPIC

How can Singapore accommodate a population of six million while maintaining, if not improving on, its current quality of life? What steps should the government, and the people themselves, take to make this goal a reality?

The population conundrum

**David Leong**

Managing Director
PeopleWorldwide Consulting Pte Ltd

THE population dilemma for Singapore is that our population growth is not organic, indigenous growth. The main growth thrusts are predicated on immigration substitution by increasing permanent residents and foreign-born citizens and workforce augmentation through foreign talent importation. The cracks in infrastructure – transportation, housing, public spaces – were evident when the growth of population outstripped infrastructure capacity growth. Demand in areas like transport, housing, education and healthcare consumption was higher than expected. The congestion and strains were acutely felt.

Singapore's finite land space has a scalability issue. Our only way to grow more space will only be through vertical growth – building high up and building low down. In the longer term, Singapore may have to consider underground city development and subterranean living as an extension to our on-land living.

In the shorter term, the government should articulate clearly a coherent vision – Singapore's 2020 vision and how it will translate that vision into a reality.

Ronald Lee

Managing Director
PrimeStaff Management Services Pte Ltd

SINGAPOREANS' concern of a burgeoning population is certainly justified as the population growth thus far has already resulted in overcrowding on public transport and escalating property prices. Honestly, I'm not sure if it is possible to maintain, let alone improve, our current quality of life should Singapore's population hit six million. The authorities are doing their part to improve the country's infrastructure, but these efforts may need to be accelerated if we are going to realistically accommodate six million people on this tiny island – without incurring additional issues concerning our infrastructure and social fabric.

One suggestion to take the heat off the central areas could be to build more business parks in the outlying areas of the island, like what they have done in Tampines, Changi, and Toa Payoh. Hopefully, this would help to ease the overcrowding on trains during peak hours. The more difficult challenge that Singapore

government has confirmed that we can accommodate a population of six million. If we do not have the requisite population mix to grow our economy, as expounded in the report from our National Population and Talent Division, there is really no quality of life to talk about. As an example, we will need foreign labour to help build the physical infrastructure for a high quality of life, since few Singaporeans want to be construction workers.

We are in a conundrum. Singaporeans will have to make the tough choices and accept some trade-offs, in the near term. The problem is that we all want to have the cake and eat it. While the government could have done a better job in planning in the past, we need to rally behind the government, going forward, to close the gaps causing overcrowding, higher property prices, and all the concomitant problems associated with a disproportionate increase in foreign labour.

One area to which we can all contribute is to spare no efforts in improving productivity through continuous upgrading at the individual level and the wider and deeper use of technology and automation in our companies. Our national productivity is not keeping pace with labour headcount increase, and this trend has to be reversed, while we collectively work to strike a healthy balance between local and foreign labour to keep our economy going and to maintain a good quality of life.

Thirumalai Chandroo

Chairman/CEO
Modern Montessori International Group

WITH the steady rise in competition from neighbouring countries and the expansion of Singapore's own service sector, population growth is essential. Being one of the world's most attractive global cities, Singapore should benefit from the spread of brainpower, network and culture from immigrants to enhance the quality of economic growth and upgrade the skills of the population.

Undoubtedly, Singapore has a window of opportunity to calibrate its population growth to soften the negative impact. For instance, Singapore should improve its public transport system to cater for the much higher population densities. However, localised concerns of over-crowdedness, competition for facilities and other environmental impact in residential towns should be addressed. With consideration to the change in the

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Ho Meng Kit

CEO
Singapore Business Federation

PLAYING our role as a bridge between the business community and government, I have the following messages to them.

To businesses: The impact of foreigners on our resident population is real and serious. Businesses must bite the bullet and reform. Raise productivity, be less reliant on cheaper foreign workers, employ more Singaporeans PMETs (professionals, managers, executives and technicians).

To government: Be pragmatic and flexible in the implementation of foreign workers' restrictions. Help small businesses adjust to this new environment. Be careful that we do not erode Singapore's reputation as the top Asian city in welcoming global talent and businesses.

Deb Loveridge

Managing Director for Asia-Pacific
Randstad

WITH 2 per cent unemployment, Singapore has a very tight labour market and companies are under a great deal of pressure to secure the right talent. A number of our clients are faced with this reality currently. If over the long term Singapore continues to face constrained labour supply, this could have an impact on productivity and economic growth.

Randstad's *World of Work Report 2012/13*, due for release in mid-October, shows that the No 1 human capital challenge in Singapore is attracting new talent for the next phase of growth; and recruiting more people from overseas (45 per cent) is the No 1 strategy that employers believe that they need to take to address talent scarcity in the next decade.

The challenge for companies will be to continue "balance building" a strong local workforce with foreign talent (both white and blue collar workers). While the social impact of foreign workers needs to be considered, further tightening of foreign labour quotas could have the unintended consequence of constraining business growth.

John Ng Peng Wah

CEO
PowerSeraya

YTL PowerSeraya believes in hiring candidates on the basis of their strengths and merits while building a Singaporean core in our company.

According to the *Hiring Trends Report 2012*, one in two companies indicated that Singaporeans are becoming choosy when looking for work. This may be expected as the workforce becomes more affluent. Singapore's per capita gross domestic product (GDP), already one of the highest in the world and forecast to increase into 2050, would indicate a workforce with increased affluence. This will lead to many locals shunning certain jobs considered as less attractive.

Although the universities and polytechnics are producing graduates with technical skill sets which will potentially become a talent pool for engineering industries, the reality is that engineering graduates may continue to pursue non-technical career options in hospitality, finance and entrepreneurship outside the engineering industry. Consequently, there is a need to hire foreign workers to fill the manpower gaps required in sustaining the engineering industry.

Hence, it is important that the foreign worker policy be tightened with care and caution to allow local businesses the needed flexibility to hire requisite foreign manpower to support key operational requirements.

Choun Chee Kong

Managing Director
Edenred Pte Ltd

HAVE a COE (certificate of entitlement) for foreign labour which companies can auction for and determine the real value of a foreign worker. Similar to road usage, additional population inflow strains the infrastructure, worsens congestion and adds hidden social costs and inflationary pressures. A COE system will reverse the situation currently where the company hiring the foreign worker enjoys access to additional resources, but it's society at large that pays for the social costs and inflation. A bidding system will force companies to calculate their sums and think twice before hiring foreign workers.

The authorities need to consider the nuances of each sector and put in place tailored approaches that acknowledge the unique difficulties that each industry faces. Ultimately, the losers are the SMEs and small-cap companies that need the services provided by mid-tier and small accounting practices. With continual labour shortages, they will not be able to get them.

Joshua Yim

CEO
Achieve Group

AS a recruitment and human resource development consultancy, we are an intermediary for companies' recruitment needs. One of our areas of business is to bring foreign workers into Singapore on behalf of our clients. Another area is the job placement of locals and PRs, which makes up a larger part of our business. So the tighter foreign labour measures do not affect us that much, unless they are accompanied by a reduction of recruitment needs in Singapore's overall employment market.

Our hearts go out to other businesses that really need foreign workers to survive, such as SMEs in the construction and F&B industry that have a hard time adjusting to the new rules. The tighter measures will be crippling for some sectors, and I believe that there will be a levelling of industries.

I have spoken with many CEOs about this, and most are resigned to accepting the tighter measures and are not even hoping for a U-turn on the policy. So their focus is on how to manoeuvre within the new framework and solve this problem. We need to think out of the box and come up with more effective and innovative ways of doing things to improve productivity and to survive, whether by incorporating automation into our business processes or other measures. Ultimately, it will be a matter of survival of the fittest.

Paul Endacott

Managing Director, South-east Asia
Ambition Singapore

IN the white collar space in which Ambition recruits, there are certainly constraints in hiring foreigners -

THIS WEEK'S TOPIC

How has your business; and/or businesses in your industry, been affected by the tighter foreign labour measures? How can the current foreign worker policy be tweaked to meet the needs of the private sector, and Singaporeans generally?

Labour pains and gains



FILE PHOTO

Managing Director
PrimeStaff Management Services Pte Ltd

BEING in the recruitment business, we have a vested interest in the foreign labour policy as it impacts most of our clients that engage our services in their hunt for talent - local or otherwise. We hear the same complaint from many employers about the labour crunch, and we empathise with their difficulty in finding the right talent for their business needs. The tighter foreign worker measures do exacerbate these workforce issues.

Societal pressures have forced the government's hand in calibrating the inflow of foreign workers, and it is indeed a very delicate process. It is unlikely that a single solution can be developed to please all parties, from satisfying the needs of the local workforce to ensuring a sustainable pipeline of talent for the business community. It is quite natural that certain industries and types of jobs are more heavily reliant on foreign workers.

The authorities should thus conduct in-depth assessments of the different needs of the various sectors and design their policies accordingly. Unfortunately, blanket rulings may not work for this. Additionally, any measures that are developed cannot be too drastic, as companies need time to adapt and restructure their business models if necessary.

Zaheer Merchant

Regional Director (Singapore & Europe)
QI Group of Companies

THE QI Group takes pride in its mixed staff nationalities. It adds talent, creativity and vibrancy. We ensure a balance between Singaporeans and foreign labour, and give preference to locals, but have found difficulties here.

One facet of our business in Singapore, for instance, is travel/tourism-related where we require Russian speakers for a customer service position. It is virtually impossible to find a Singaporean to fill this position. We have found it becoming a common problem in a global company like ours in servicing a significant customer base in regions such as the Middle East, Africa and Russia. In keeping with the government's concept of offshore diversification, we have diversified our

David Leong

Managing Director
PeopleWorldwide Consulting Pte Ltd

MOM should review the dependency ratio based on the grade of jobs defined by pay pegs (equalised with imposition of levies and tiers based on the number of foreigners employed), industry/sector and the number of Singaporeans employed. MOM should consider providing a quota booster - employment of elderly workers or unemployed Singaporean workers taken out of a registered unemployment roll. A national database of unemployed workers can be registered, tracked, trained and deployed. A booster will allow a company to add a certain percentage to their foreign hires if they recruit senior workers or take in unemployed Singaporeans. This way, there is a direct proportionate relationship between hiring foreigners and reducing the unemployment rate.

The current labour crunch cannot persist until companies die of manpower asphyxiation. A dead company tells no tales. A re-look by MOM of labour needs and the equation of supply is sorely needed at this juncture.

Patrick Liew

CEO
HSR Global Limited

THE question that begs to be answered is: Are we calibrating for political currency or for socio-economic gains? To resolve this challenge and prevent it from becoming a vicious cycle, we may need to start by taking a top-down approach, beginning with changing the mindset of policymakers. As many of them have not operated or operated long enough in the private sector, they cannot be deemed to comprehend the multiple issues faced by SMEs and the tightrope that they are walking on.

There are also no major indications that our key politicians are actively engaging SMEs so as to fully appreciate their challenges and sentiments. By analysing surveys based on historical information, my fear is that by the time they realise that SMEs cannot expand their operations, or worse, have to close down

since the 1980s. The real problem then, as it is now, is the difficulty in attracting capable locals to work in manufacturing SMEs because of the presence of a large number of MNCs.

I don't think that foreign labour is directly affecting productivity. However, because the social costs of foreign labour have reached a critical level, the government has to adjust its policies to reduce our dependency on it. I hope the government will phase in the policy changes gradually so as to give SMEs like Aldon Technologies time to implement productivity measures and adjust to the impact.

Ultimately, government and industry have to address the problem of lack of interest among locals to work in manufacturing SMEs. I believe that the solution starts with our education system. I am glad to know that the government has recently been mulling over a new university model in which students alternate between semesters of full-time study and relevant paid work. This model may change mindsets and release many undergraduates to work with SMEs while they are pursuing their education and at the same time provide relief to the tight labour market.

Low Lee Yong

CEO
MHC Asia Group Pte Ltd

THE measures to tighten the influx of foreign labour have been felt by businesses. But its impact has been minimal for us because we were not overly reliant on foreign labour. At MHC, we have been on the lookout for good local talent because we need people who understand Singapore well. Of equal importance, we also believe that raising productivity is the most sustainable way forward for us as well as for our partners and corporate clients. As the supply of foreign labour is tightened, perhaps measures could also be put in place to help businesses to cope and also to hire local talents including older workers.

For the complete list of views
from CEOs, go to
<http://businesstimes.com.sg>

Nirvik Singh Chairman & CEO Grey Group Asia Pacific

BEING the only night race in the world, the Singapore Grand Prix has strong brand equity as a premier global event and has stamped Singapore's presence on the world map. However, more concerted work can be done to make it a "Your-Singapore" experience. Food sold on race days, for example, could be extended to local delicacies, instead of the current fare of hot dogs, nachos and beers. Localising every experience is a step to engaging an increasingly perceptive audience – both locals and international visitors.

Iconic projects have to therefore, look beyond economic reasons. The roaring success of the Singapore Night Festival 2012 which focused on local acts and provided complimentary access is testament to the positive responses fostered in advocating creativity among Singaporeans. It's not as grandiose as the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, but these local art festivals are accessible and most importantly, engage the masses. Iconic projects in the future should not only appeal to the locals, but they must also be reflective of Singapore values and heritage.

Dhirendra Shantilal Senior Vice-President Asia-Pacific Kelly Services

THE confirmation of another five years of the Grand Prix is great news for Singapore. The global exposure and soft power dividend brought through association with such a high-profile event is unparalleled and should be welcomed as a considerable benefit to the local and regional economies and as a key means in attracting foreign investment and human capital.

To maintain the fixture's position as a global showpiece and a favourite in the F1 calendar, the technical difficulty of the track should be reviewed with a view to increase the excitement of the race. Also, over the next five years, businesses in Singapore must take advantage of this local treasure and do more to use the race as a platform to promote themselves regionally and globally.

Patrick Liew CEO HSR Global Limited

I WOULD like to see Singapore strengthen its reputation as a global hub by being involved in cause-related events and publicity. Just as Davos, a small municipality, has been well positioned on the world map because of the Global Economic Forum, such planned events can attract positive attention to us. They can strengthen our reputation as a responsible member of the global community, one that is committed to being a thought leader and a major promoter of social and environmental contributions.

When we position ourselves as a hub for supporting worthwhile causes, starting with this region, it can help local enterprises to build bridges to the global community. It may help persuade corporate customers and individual consumers to be more inclined to do

Zaheer Merchant

Regional Director
(Singapore & Europe)
QI Group of Companies

F1 has showcased Singapore as a vibrant, modern and cosmopolitan city. But enjoining it with integrating local arts and culture into the race would enhance it as a 'local' and global platform, such as by introducing local artistes into the roster of live performances currently dominated by international acts.

QNET, the flagship company of the QI Group and one of the sponsors of the Marussia F1 Team, sponsored an F1 in Schools event here last month. The global project aims to teach students about technology and design through F1. Involving the local community in similar projects can help get them excited about the race, even if they don't attend it. Singapore could consider pioneering an Asian-based music festival featuring a good mixture of local, Asian and international acts.

Festivals like ZoukOut and Laneway here do well despite focusing on niche genres of music. A festival that features different genres would undoubtedly be very popular. Such projects can be carried out involving different creative disciplines.

Asia is emerging as an incubation spot for many artists and designers. An example of a project that has capitalised on that is BLUEPRINT, which promotes Asian fashion. The annual event gets worldwide press. Not only would projects of this nature promote the 'softer' and cultural side of Singapore, they would be instrumental in positioning the city as more than just an economic and financial hub.

business with us. We can leverage on our unique strengths to champion pro-environmental causes in the areas of education, urban living, corporate governance and social responsibility, and targeted green causes such as the development of garden cities.

Rather than riding on existing movements and framework, we might need to pioneer a new industry and create a different ecology of support and services. By creating and innovating global cause-related events, it will solidify our reputation as a city of the new economy. It will improve our relationships with the

Paul Endacott
Managing Director, South East Asia
Ambition Singapore

SINGAPORE has already excelled in its promotion of the Grand Prix. The decision to renew for another five

years is correct as the prestige and high profile publicity surrounding the GP showcases Singapore as truly international.

And the momentum must continue. We shouldn't underestimate the significance of projects such as Gardens by the Bay to promote Singapore (it's quite outstanding) and in the last four years of living in Singapore, I have seen the country go to great lengths to attract more arts and culture. However, Singapore has a major opportunity in further differentiating itself from Hong Kong as 'Asia's truly international regional city' by attracting even higher profile acts that really will make people sit up and take note.

Andrea Ross Managing Director (Singapore & Malaysia) Robert Walters Singapore

TO really mark the occasion, Singapore should look at giving a public holiday so that more can participate in the event with their families and friends. This will no doubt increase incentives for sponsorship deals and attract more traffic (both local and international) to the event.

Singapore should definitely encourage such events. Singapore did a fantastic job at hosting the occasion and we are extremely excited that this will continue for another five years. It will pay off in the long run with the global marketing of such an event and put Singapore well and truly on the map.

Singapore could look to host more esteemed events like the London Fashion Week, MTV awards, fringe festivals (to encourage the comedy/arts in Singapore) and Mardi Gras to really showcase our country on the international stage. Original projects, such as our very own ZoukOut each year, are also clear examples of how an event could really elevate Singapore's profile.

David Leong Managing Director PeopleWorldwide Consulting Pte Ltd

GETTING a larger mindshare of tourists to Singapore necessitates constant innovations on our appeal factor. Tourists' spending receipts increase with higher traffic, and to generate higher traffic, iconic events like Grand Prix, international beauty pageants, international fashion shows are crowd pullers. Our earlier concentration on MICE – meetings, conventions and exhibitions – are good magnets to draw visitors but iconic events will draw global attention.

Singapore should attract the stars of Bollywood, Korea, China or even Taiwan and get film directors and producers to make Asian movies that are tagged to Singapore and involve Singapore in the script.

Iconic or not, Singapore should also consider any star-studded events that build traffic to our city state and promote it as a hub for arts, high fashion and even IT and engineering innovations.



For the complete list of views from
CEOs, please go to
<http://www.businesstimes.com.sg>

THIS WEEK'S TOPIC:

Are the recently announced changes sufficient to achieve the transformation of Singapore's education system or does more need to be done? How can businesses and families contribute to this transformation?

Educating for the future

Tan Choon Seng

Group CEO
WBL Corporation (Wearnes)

MANY Singapore-bred business leaders have benefited from the country's system of meritocracy and have risen through the ranks, regardless of their *alma mater*. In our selection of new employees, our preference is always for those who project a good work attitude and are a good fit to our corporate values. A candidate's previous work experience and academic achievements can only provide insights into his/her potential to contribute to the company.

A shift in focus to a more rounded education system would put our youths in better stead to compete for jobs in an increasingly globalised economy.

Madhu Verma

Founder
SoCh in Action

DOING away with the Secondary School Banding System is a positive step towards ensuring that the Singapore education system stays competitive and relevant. The future realities and challenges that our children will face will be very different from ours today. Skills in maths, science, and languages are important but these alone would not guarantee success for the next generation. Creativity and character are as essential. Unless the academic pressure moves away from strictly favouring grades and exams, there is very little room for these to shine and be nurtured.

Through our work with children, we have had the privilege of seeing nine- to 14-year-olds rising to the challenge of addressing real community problems. We have witnessed that when children are encouraged to think, express their thoughts freely, and act by choice, they can bring fresh perspectives and solutions to problems that we adults tend to overlook or undervalue.

Well-designed activities like service learning and creative arts support better learning, and they should be woven into the fabric of our children's education, either through policy changes to improve the current system or through collaborative programmes by the private sector and social enterprises.

Parents, too, play a key role and should be regularly consulted as changes are being defined and implemented. We all have a stake in the future of our children, and by inspiring them to be the change they



Dora Hoan

Group CEO
Best World International Ltd

THE education system all along focuses too much on exam grades, which has given both parents and students tremendous pressure. The changes will slightly lighten the students' burden but we need to also tackle a current issue which is the problem with our youths, who are too engrossed in their gadgets that they have lost touch with the outside world. The moral education syllabus should be reformed to nurture the good character in students to be responsible citizens who contribute to society. They should be taught to embrace Western technology but still stay true to our own Oriental values.

Given how times have changed, parents should be more attentive to the well-being of their children and supportive in developing their social skills and civic values instead of being too pushy when it comes to academic performances.

Hugues Delcourt

Country Executive, ABN AMRO Bank N V Singapore and Chief Executive Officer of ABN AMRO Private Banking Asia and Middle East

AS a parent with hopes and aspirations like any parent would for their children to excel, and being possibly conditioned by the French educational system that I experienced, I am inclined to favour an education aiming at a high level of academic excellence. Imparting good social values and behaviour, character-building etc, all start at home and these are experiences that we cannot expect any educator or system to impart to our children.

Having said that, a good early education should not only focus on fact regurgitating and rote learning at a tender age all in aid of passing exams or for streaming purposes. Additionally, not every child is able to pursue academic excellence, but everyone of them can excel in an area or another. One just needs to identify that particular field. A mindset change is needed for parents to accept and support a broader education for their children that encourages creativity and supports excellence in different and diverse fields which is necessary for the future of Singapore.

Certainly from a business perspective, organisations are always on the lookout for bright, young sparks with outgoing personalities, good character and interpersonal skills coupled with excellent academic grades. Businesses can do more by looking beyond academic achievements within a broader talent search criteria and framework and even supporting internship programmes to support and further develop the talents of young graduates who demonstrate non-academic excellence.

Joshua Yim

CEO
Achieve Group

IN my role as a corporate business leader and human resource development specialist, I help companies find people to join their workforce. I look at the quality of the candidates and I've come across so many instances of people without the right values; some lie, others lack commitment, the list goes on. Although it is not wrong to focus on academic achievements, it is imperative that our education system moves towards a more holistic approach so as to inculcate stronger values in our younger generation.

David Leong

Managing Director
PeopleWorldwide Consulting Pte Ltd

WE must agree that holistic education development is important and the academic scorecard is one, but not the whole, thrust of the education. Other developmental areas like creative thinking, social skills, leadership development and whole person development, including values inculcation, are important.

Though there is no one yardstick to measure the effectiveness of a school now with the banding taken out, we should not lose sight of the idea that we still want to have good educational output and a strong and robust educational framework that will measure success through a myriad of metrics. These metrics must be clearly defined by the ministry. In business, we are measured first by our "Profit and Loss" and "Balance Sheet". Perhaps, students can be measured by their monthly "P&L" by identifying the "revenue areas" and the "expenses items" they need to work on to produce a better bottom line - a whole person education outcome.

The "Balance Sheet" approach will, therefore, mean that the student's whole education journey will be mapped on a unique personal "Balance Sheet" with his/her assets and liabilities identified, with a commitment to work on the liabilities over the course of the educational journey. This will reduce the stress of having to perform well on one academic scorecard.

Lim Soon Hock

Managing Director
PLAN-B ICAG Pte Ltd

MANY teachers and parents still place meritocracy at the centre of our education system, despite our government's efforts to promote a rounded education that includes character-building and the inculcation of values. There is nothing wrong with meritocracy *per se*, but because it focuses on academic and scholastic excellence, it has inadvertently bred "kiasuism", which is unhealthy. Much of the angst and stress faced by students, parents and educators today, are the result of this "kiasuism".

If the announced changes to transform our education system are to achieve the intended outcomes, our education system has to move away from a focus on meritocracy to one of talent-centricity. A talent-centric system, apart from embracing academic excellence, promotes excellence in other non-academic fields such as the arts, sports, music, volunteerism and community service, to name a few. The whole of our government needs to make this paradigm shift to pronounce less on meritocracy and to promote more on talent-centricity, if we are to kill "kiasuism".

Our education system is one of the best in the world, as is evident from the spectacular performance of many of our students in global academic competitions and in tertiary institutions overseas. If there is one bold step that all stakeholders - educators, parents, the general public - need to take to "work together to shape our education system" for our children, and Singapore's future, it has to be a determined effort to remove "kiasuism" altogether.

For the complete list of views
from CEOs,
go to <http://business-times.com.sg>

We welcome IHH Healthcare into the The Straits Times Index

The STI is the key benchmark for the Singapore stock market and is used as the underlying index for financial products such as Exchange Traded Funds (ETFs), Contract for Difference (CFD), futures, warrants and other derivatives. The STI's 30 constituents account for about 62% of stock market turnover* and 64% of market capitalisation*.

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*Source: Singapore Exchange, data as at 20 September 2012 market close

我国教育大调整

剪学生头 老师没错 王瑞杰部长

沈思涵 报道

教师剪学生头发，竟被家长报警，教育部部长王瑞杰表示，学校应尊重家长要求，不应无理要求让步。

12岁男童今年8月间，参加小六会考时，因剪掉刘海，遭班主任刘老师和家长投诉。

针对这起事件，教育部部长王瑞杰表示，学校应尊重家长要求，不应无理要求让步。

部长说，如果家长不尊重学校规定，那么年轻一代也会没有纪律，这样好的社会人才怎么会有呢？

新闻见报后，迅速成为网民讨论话题。为批评得严厉，学校

觉得网民讨论话题，为批评得严厉，学校



(档案照) 洪小弟今年8月参加会考口试前，因为头发太长，被老师强制剪发。

报警指老师剪儿子头发

黎雪莹 报道 laixy@sph.com.sg

报警指老师剪儿子头发的家长：“我媒体之前报道，就读协和小学(Unity Primary)六年级的洪小弟，今年8月参加会考时，因剪掉刘海，被老师剪掉刘海，和鬓角，母亲因担心孩子表现受影响，愤而报警！”

王女士今早受访

家长：我没错！

时强调，她没做错，做报警只是为了备案，做记录，以防日后再起争执。

“我要尊重老师，但我非常尊重老师，但是我认为他们不该滥用职权。我才应该先通知我的同事，一旦得到我的同意，我就会去做。”

王女士说：“女佣抵新



梁昌国支持教育等级制度，也不担心学生之间的学业竞争力量。(档案照)

多数受访家长支持学校维持纪律立场。

仁立国际执行董事梁昌国受访时，支持教育等级制度，也不担心学生之间的学业竞争力量。

“家长为孩子好，好成绩，都会自行督促孩子的学业，他们果功课就差就安排

校长挺老师：一番好意

事发后，学校校长力挺老师是出于一番好意。协和小学校长婕丝玛丽坦承，班级任

醒学生注意发型，她们这么做是为了让他们看起来整齐些。

当时班任老师不愿针对事件置评。不过王女士表示，老师事后已向她道歉。

多数家长 欢迎新教改

去补习，所以废除中等学等级制度将减少他们的压力。他也力挺学校采取必要手段维持校内纪律。

“我的儿子明年制就，我不希望他进会下某所学校，但成绩不下降。”

她也说，在家头，家长应该支持并维持纪律。

请菲佣 将更贵?



菲佣将更贵? 菲佣保护法案，本地雇主或将支付更高薪金女佣。

根据《新报》报道，菲律宾政府上周签署了保护女佣法案，也提醒本地女佣中介公司遵守条约，确保菲佣获得约500元月薪。

菲佣中介表示，菲佣抵菲前，一般上雇主会跟菲律宾海外就业处签订合约，说明菲佣的月薪至少400美元(约493新元)，每周休息一天。另外，雇主也不能向菲佣收取额外的安排费。

菲律宾海外就业处表示，菲佣抵菲前，一般上雇主会跟菲律宾海外就业处签订合约，说明菲佣的月薪至少400美元(约493新元)，每周休息一天。另外，雇主也不能向菲佣收取额外的安排费。

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自主学校 明年调高学费

营运成本上升 因营运成本上升，美以美女中和英华学校(自主)通知家长，明年起调高每月学费40元到45元。

两家著名自主学校，最近通过电邮或发信通知家长，明年起学费调高。这两所学校都是公立学校，英华学校则是女校，公民学校则是男校。公民学校学费将从每学期的295元，增加到335元；英华学校则从300元调到345元。

《新报》报道，美以美学校董事主席昨天在电

洪小弟剪发前的样子。(档案照)



荣寿司老板吐苦水:

月薪3000元 请不到清洁工



沈斯涵 报道
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月薪3000元请不到清洁工收碗碟? 荣寿司老板符标雄上100.3早班节目吐苦水, 引起热烈争议。

荣寿司创办人、远朋国际集团总裁符标雄是在上星期五上UFM100.3节目。

他昨天受访时进一步说: “我确实很难找到洗碗碟工人, 至今还要填补10个空缺, 很多人最后无法适应工作所需的条件。”

他说, 洗碗碟工人不需要洗碗碟, 但要负责打理店内卫生。我们全面使用自动洗碗碟系统, 不需费力洗碗盘, 但需清理碗盘上的食物。清洁工也需提早半小时开工, 清理店面和移

引起争议

除垃圾袋。”不过, 一些听众还是觉得清洁工月薪3000元不可信, “在车大炮”, 甚至有人嘲讽: “我当助理经理月薪才2500元, 若(清洁工)真的月薪3000元, 我也要去应征。”

“众议院之部长开讲”的节目, 常任嘉宾是财部长杨莉明, 每逢星期五早上8时30分至9时30分播出, 符标雄当天以雇主身份受邀参与访谈。



符标雄: 愿付3000元月薪, 却找不到清洁工。

难请人3因素:

难堪、辛苦、前途无‘亮’

清洁工难请3因素: 遇到朋友时难堪、工作时间很长很辛苦、前途无“亮”。

符标雄说, 3000元请不到清洁工, 主要因素: 1. 多数人认为, 清洁工身份较低下, 工作时碰到熟人很丢脸。

2. 工作时间很长很辛苦, 一般工作时间从中午12时到晚上9时, 需要跑进跑出、长时间站

人力专家:

可考虑轮班制

人力专家: 轮班制或能解决请不到清洁工的问题。

仁立国际执行董事梁昌国说, 3000元月薪确实非常吸引人, 但随之而来的工作要求也将具挑战性。

“或许雇主可以考虑以轮班制雇用60岁以上国人, 制造更多职位空缺, 也解决人手不足问题。”他说, 目前市场上清洁工的月薪在1000至1400元, 若实行轮班制, 还能降低工资成本, 帮助公司省钱。



梁昌国: 轮班制或能解决请不到清洁工的问题。

歌手郑展伦

郑展伦在泰国烹饪学校当1个月学徒。(取自郑展伦面簿)

高健康 报道

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 MMS或WhatsApp传照片: 92288736

为进军中东开餐馆做准备, 歌手老板郑展伦不惜花2000元飞到泰国学做菜!

郑展伦是本地知名歌手, 近年却很少演出, 忙着和几个兄弟姐妹打理父亲创立的速冻点心公司。

最近有人在郑展伦的面簿上看到他穿厨师袍的照片, 怀疑他改行



郑展伦原本有意在去年到中东开亚洲餐馆, 却因埃及动乱而搁置计划。

“虽然暂时无法落实计划, 但我仍在积极物色理想地点, 同时做好准备工作。学做泰国菜是第一步, 接下来我还想学做其他亚洲菜。”

泰国颇有名气, 创办人是一位教授, 学员以专业厨师居多。郑展伦分基础和高级两种, 为期一个月, 学费2000多元。

郑展伦认为, 餐饮业者掌握烹饪技艺对管理很有帮助, “我不一定要亲自下厨, 但对聘



▲烹饪学校校长给郑展伦颁发毕业证书。(取自郑展伦面簿)



▲郑展伦煮的泰式佳肴。(取自郑展伦面簿)

赞助8000肉包 支持文化活动

“例如本月14至16日, 由台湾话剧大师赖声川和王伟忠编导的《宝岛一村》, 将在滨海艺术中心演出4场, 我们将赞助8000个肉包, 观众看完演出就能吃到免费包子。”

他说, 赞助肉包是配合话剧情节, 也是为了庆祝点心公司50周年。“话剧里有一句台词说‘出门别忘了带个肉包’, 这和我们公司的‘点心思, 窝心暖意’的标语相当契合。”

以另类方式赞助文艺活动, 郑展伦为话剧《宝岛一村》免费提供8000个肉包。

郑展伦的事业重心, 近年从音乐转到家族生意, 但他还是很乐意以企业赞助的形式支持文艺活动。

Lim Soon Hock
 Managing Director
 Plan-B ICAG Pte Ltd

TODAY, both men and women in Singapore want to work to fulfil their career aspirations. Nearly half of married couples are drawing a dual income. It is therefore important to create an environment that supports shared parenting so that fathers can play their role in raising the family with their working wives.

For a start, the government could consider making the fourth month of maternity leave gender-neutral. This will encourage more fathers to be involved in child care and allow the couple to work out arrangements best suited to their circumstances. At the macro level, this measure will not affect the employability of women as they can choose to return to work earlier.

The common impediments to marriage and parenthood identified by our discussions with stakeholders include work-life imbalance, the rising cost of living (especially costs of housing and raising children), and the lack of infant care and childcare support. However, specific measures are not sufficient if not accompanied by more fundamental changes in mindsets. We need to develop a Family First mindset, which our National Family Council has promoted since our inception in 2006, within all levels of the society. We believe that it is possible and pragmatic to establish a Family First mindset without compromising the economic interests of businesses and the global competitiveness of Singapore.

To illustrate, the traditional 5Cs, which focus solely on materialistic gains, can be achieved in tandem with an alternative set of 5Cs. These are companion (ie a spouse), children, clan (ie an extended family to tap on), charity (ie a caring disposition) and creed (ie spiritual well being), when all key stakeholders try hard enough.

Note: Lim Soon Hock is also the chairman of the National Family Council and Chairman of the Centre for Fathering

David Leong
 Managing Director
 PeopleWorldwide Consulting Pte Ltd

PATERNITY leave is a family-friendly measure from a human resource (HR) perspective, and forms only a part in the overall environment to encourage procreation. Measures such as priority allocation of HDB flats for first-time applicants who are married and who can show proof of pregnancy; larger grants for HDB purchase for first time applicants starting a young family nucleus; larger subsidies for medical charges for delivery of babies; and childcare help schemes for both parents who work are all procreation initiatives.

The government should consider building a "Pro-Family Compact" through its national conversation; and incorporate suggestions and craft policies to assist procreation and maintenance in terms of childcare and education. Companies can be encouraged to adopt HR friendly and work-life balance measures and get help from the government. Paternity leave could be claimed against a National Procreation Account similarly to how national servicemen claim absenteeism payroll.

Whatever the measures, Singapore's future depends on its ability to regenerate and create a sustainable population pool, and it must be a national focus as important as national defence.

Hansjoerg Wagner
 President
 Polycom, Asia-Pacific,
 China and Latin America

PATERNITY leave is important and can be practical if there's a central drive by the government to have flexible working policies across the board, thus allowing young families to flexibly manage the parenting process.

Businesses can do their part to foster a culture of work-life balance, at the same time empowering employees to work remotely with proper tools such as video collaboration on various devices such as laptops and tablets. Flexi-working initiatives provide resource management options for young families so it can aid in overcoming impediments such as having to be at the office resulting in lack of help at home.

We also observe that organisations with such policies are more likely to retain talent in the company, which means an overall increase in productivity.



Deepali Chaturvedi
 Head of South-East Asia
 Reed Specialist Recruitment

MANY working Singaporean women are unwilling to think of parenthood until they have established a career and feel that they can be an ideal parent. Fertility rates have consequently suffered as few women are taking breaks from their busy careers to have children, for fear of impeding their career prospects. Recent fiscal incentives from the government, such as baby bonuses, have also not been fully effective in getting more working couples to conceive.

There is a need to move policies towards larger social changes that support children and parenting. As a first step, both government and companies should work closely to enable new mothers to benefit from work-life balance and flexi-work arrangements. The introduction of paternity leave, which should be gradually implemented, will enable families to bond during a child's birth and have a positive effect on birth rates.

The onus is very much on employers too. While flexible working patterns and mandatory paternity leave are still uncommon in Singapore, employers should see them as measures that can help create trust and cooperation as well as help retain talent in their organisations. Flexi-work arrangements are a powerful tool that can stem the drain of mothers who have to quit the workforce because they cannot keep up with the demands of work and home.

Thirumalai Chandroo
 Chairman/CEO
 Modern Montessori International Group

IN Singapore's competitive economy, spiralling inflation has affected housing and general expenses; thus marriage and parenting require a huge personal investment. The prevalence of dual-income earners and ambitious Singaporeans interferes with family formation and planning. The stress of bringing up a child and spending quality time remains the root cause of parental anxiety, leading to impediments in marriage and parenting. Introducing paternity leave may be one of the many initiatives.

Employers may consider assisting in defraying the cost of raising children by offering childcare incentives. Our organisation, for instance, bequeaths a 50 per cent rebate on our childcare fee to all employees.

Most importantly, there needs to be a shift in the mindset of employers and employees to have a good balance in both work and family life in Singapore.

Paul Endacott
 Managing Director, South-east Asia
 Ambition Singapore

IT is encouraging that the government is implementing paternity leave benefits and recognises the equally important role of fathers in raising children. The private sector can play its part with a more progressive approach to paternity leave allowances and flexibility for working fathers, as well as mothers. Organisations are embracing gender diversity in Asia, leading to more women pursuing senior level roles. This is also contributing to people opting for marriage later in life.

Looking at Scandinavian countries, where fertility rates are significantly higher than Singapore, it would appear that generous state benefits are part of the



FILE PHOTO

guidelines that aim to build, over time, a workforce comprising a healthy mix of high-flying fast-trackers and realistic pro-family advocates who co-exist symbiotically in the workplace.

especially for young families, I don't think that having more paternity leave will result in better birth rates.

Young people today have different aspirations. Getting married and starting a family is probably not the top priority for them. The high cost of living in Singapore has also compelled many of them to focus on their careers, inevitably delaying marrying and having children.

I think that we must recognise that the high cost of

Patrick Liew
 CEO
 HSR Global Limited

Ang Swee Meng Allen
Managing Director
Aldon Technologies Services Pte Ltd

THE era of rapid economic growth for Singapore is over. Our economy is maturing and society ageing and more resources have to be diverted for social programmes.

Under such circumstances, more modest growth rates of 3 per cent or less will be the reality in the future. New economic powerhouses such as China and India are growing rapidly and competing against Singapore for markets, capital and talent. These are the changes that Singapore has to adapt to in the years ahead.

In line with slower growth, our workers have to lower their expectations and accept smaller wage increases in order to keep our businesses competitive. We have to keep business costs low and productivity high by exploiting technology like automation, educating future generations of students with innovative and practice-oriented skills, and judicious import of foreign talent.

The new global economic order will offer many opportunities, some of which Singapore has an intrinsic competitive advantage. These include water, environmental engineering, life sciences, air and sea transport and some specialised areas in infocomm technology and engineering.

These are areas where Singapore has a head-start and government and industry should work together to channel more resources to maintain our leadership.

One thing must not change, however. We must continue to maintain the unique tripartism underpinning harmonious labour-management relations which is a key competitive advantage for Singapore.

Patrick Liew
CEO
HSR International Realtors Pte Ltd

AT this point in our nation-building, perhaps we should return to basics and ask ourselves: What makes a great nation great and how do we galvanise our public, private and people sectors to turn this into a reality?

What worked in the past might not work in the future, so we need to be strong and resilient enough to break from the current mould and go into uncharted territory.

This begins with deciding the type of leaders and government that we need to help us survive and succeed. A team that not only has its ears to the ground, but can also unite the people to support policies that are good for the country even though they may not be totally acceptable to every segment of the population.

As we seek to become a pivotal hub in a globalised world, we need to constantly capitalise on our unique competitive advantages to stay ahead. We need to innovate and export future technologies and services, not just be a switching centre, especially to emerging and fast-growing economies.

It is only by being a market-maker rather than a market-follower that we can build a more stable and sustainable economy.

We need to continue to invest in our people to ensure that we will not only have a highly competent and effective workforce but also an inclusive one that will take advantage of the economic tide favouring Asia. Without a strong and highly motivated people sector, we cannot turn our aspirations into reality.

Ronald Lee
Managing Director
PrimeStaff Management Services Pte Ltd

SINGAPORE has, for many years, been South-east Asia's strongest economy. But competition from our neighbours has intensified in recent years. The world is changing rapidly and we cannot afford to be complacent. We have to keep reinventing ourselves to remain relevant.

As a nation, we need to accept that the demographic of our population is changing due to the arrival of new immigrants. This is inevitable because of our falling birth rates.

While the government needs to manage this transition delicately, as citizens we need to exercise greater tolerance and acceptance so that we can live in a society that is truly inclusive and embraces diversity.

For all its efficiency, Singapore does lag behind other world-class cities in terms of productivity. The government has already identified this as an area that requires improvement so companies need to find ways to drive up productivity.

As a knowledge-based economy, it is imperative that we continue to upgrade the only resource we have - people - while ensuring that we remain at the forefront of technology.

Lim Soon Hock
Managing Director
PLAN-B ICAG Pte Ltd

WE are now living and operating in a new business and social environment, where companies are encouraged to maximise their bottom line at the lowest possible cost, and where consumers are becoming more discerning.

As collaboration plays a fundamental role in doing business, it is important for Singaporeans to adopt a high level of civic consciousness, commensurate with our status as a first world nation, and to have an open mindset and mutual respect for each other, including immigrants and foreign workers.

As Singapore opens her doors to the rest of the world, we cannot stop the inflow of foreign talent to our shores.

I hope Singaporeans can embrace this necessary change and try to learn from our "newly minted" citizens. We need to cast aside preconceived ideas, attitudes and prejudices, especially those with a xenophobic undertone.

Only by doing so will the world continue to be our oyster. We can aspire to be proud Singaporeans as well as highly admired global citizens.

Gerald Foo
President
Walton International Group (S) Pte Ltd

SINGAPORE will face many challenges in coming years. These include socio-cultural challenges brought on by an increase of foreigners. Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong mentioned in his National Day Rally speech that most Singaporeans understand the need for immigrants and foreign workers, and accept them.

There will be issues and points of contention between Singaporeans and foreigners from time to time, and Singaporeans must learn to be circumspect and level-headed in their response. Singaporeans must

THIS WEEK'S TOPIC:

What do you see as the key adaptations Singapore will need to make in the years ahead, and what emerging opportunities do you believe it should exploit?

Staying nimble to seize opportunities



FILE PHOTO

do their part in helping new arrivals who are willing to integrate into our community.

At Walton, we recognise the importance of helping new citizens and foreigners adapt to their new environment. Our presence in six countries across three continents gives us the experience to foster strong multi-cultural ties among employees of various nationalities.

In Singapore, our induction programmes and team-building events emphasise the need to be sensitive to cultural differences. These go a long way in helping non-Singaporeans understand the new community they live and work in, and help them integrate into our society.

Thirumalai Chandroo
Chairman/CEO
Modern Montessori International Group

THE influx of foreigners has supported Singapore's economic imperatives for long-term growth. In the light of their contributions, Singaporeans need to alter their mindset and insecurities about foreigners by letting go of such fears and learn to compete on even terms with them.

The emergence of new opportunities in fostering commercialisation of research & development (R&D) should be exploited, to place Singapore on a more sustainable and inclusive growth path.

In other words, the long-term aim is for Singapore to be among the most research-intensive, innovative and entrepreneurial economies in the world so as to create high-value jobs and prosperity for all.

David Leong
Managing Director
PeopleWorldwide Consulting Pte Ltd

THE power to shape Singapore's future lies in how we see the future. Is it bloom, gloom or doom? Are our past successes a hindrance and limiting our imagination?

Singapore has not arrived at where it is today purely by chance. My fear is that the younger generation demands more but is less willing to persevere to make a difference to the country.

I worry that Singapore will shrivel and lose its hunger for progress because we demand more social goods and services but at the same time fail to appreciate Singapore's vulnerabilities and lack of natural resources.

The balance of power in Asia is evolving. By 2020, China and India will drive much economic growth globally. Singapore needs to integrate itself with these countries, especially in the areas of finance, education and services.

Being the second clearing house for the renminbi will give Singapore a tremendous edge. This provides many opportunities for investors keen to participate in the internationalisation of the RMB.

We should also consider allowing more Asian students to come to Singapore to study. This can be done by encouraging more Asians to come here to

have their babies, which will in turn boost healthcare and service consumption. Every foreign baby born here will be entitled to study in our school system.

By doing so, we are sowing the seeds for our growth since these Asian students will grow up here, have a stake in the country and eventually build bridges between their country of origin and Singapore.

This will also encourage population growth since some will stay on and become Singaporeans. Singapore's story has to be a part of the larger Asian growth narrative.

Liu Chunlin
CEO
K&C Protective Technologies Pte Ltd

GOING to the next level will be as tough if not tougher than the challenge our founding fathers faced when they established Singapore more than 40 years ago. Looking at the situation in some developed countries, it is easy to stagnate when one has to move off from a high base level of economic development. One of the dangers is a sense of complacency.

The next rung of economic progress will require us to be innovative and be trend-setters, to be ahead of the curve and go where no one has gone before. This will rest on the shoulders of the younger generation. They need to be equipped with the skills for technological innovation and creativity.

More than that, we need the younger generation to develop a greater entrepreneurial spirit, and not look towards the government to provide a living for them. Each one has to carve a niche for himself in the global economy.

In the past, Singapore had aspired to a Swiss standard of living. Now developing countries like Rwanda are emulating us.

We should aim to continue to be a place with sound governance, security, financial prudence, a place that allows Singaporeans not only to make a living but also to transfer technology and expertise elsewhere. With an entrepreneurial and resilient spirit, we can reach the next level of development.

Glenn Tan
Executive Director
Tan Chong International Limited

SINGAPORE'S business owners need to be more nimble, use Singapore as a platform, review and re-skill existing resources, and deploy manpower to focus on expansion into the emerging markets of Asia.

To stay successful, we need to stay relevant. Given our current manpower and rising cost issues, we need to start viewing the entire Asian region as our business arena with Singapore as its headquarters.

A strategy that we have adopted at Motor Image is to create a world-class training facility in Singapore to transfer knowledge and skills to our subsidiaries in the region. This helps us to compete effectively with the big, established brands from Europe and the US in terms of quality.

In the automotive industry, we adopt a two-pronged

approach to stay competitive: first, take the product closer to the markets by working with manufacturers to leverage on Asean's growth; and secondly, initiate partnerships with established Asian brands, combining our marketing expertise with their engineering excellence to launch brands specifically engineered for the Asian environment.

Teo Lay Lim
Managing Director - Singapore and Asean
Accenture

SINGAPORE'S transformation in the past 47 years has been remarkable. In its move towards becoming one of the world's most liveable cities and fulfilling its vision to be the global city in Asia, Singapore has created jobs and opportunities that have attracted talent and businesses from around the world.

Talent continues to be key in delivering success for this city-state and it has grown to be a microcosm of talent diversity.

To ensure that we continue to attract, develop and retain the talent to drive growth and competitiveness in the years ahead, we will need to continue to evolve our competencies in managing inclusion and diversity in the workplace, adopt new practices to enhance work-life balance objectives, and embrace new technologies to push the envelope on enhancing the productivity of our talent pools.

We have the opportunity to be the talent capital of Asia, to be the nurturing ground for current and future Asian leaders for global and regional organisations, and in so doing maintain our place as a key member of the connected global marketplace.

Chee Kong Choun.
Managing Director
Edenred Pte Ltd

THE 2009 Eurobarometer Survey on Entrepreneurship places China at the top of most rankings on entrepreneurial attitudes and traits, with Japan and Europe scoring lowest. Could this help explain the different fortunes of these regions in the economic turmoil?

If the last 10 years is any indication, the global marketplace abounds with opportunities - but it will be increasingly volatile with shorter cycles than before. Singaporeans will need to have a much more entrepreneurial mindset to time and take advantage of these opportunities.

To make the change, relying on government policies and tax incentives is a start, but the key will be adapting our education system. We need to produce students with the mindset to take risks, and overcome the fear of failure.

Large classroom sizes of more than 40, with an over-emphasis on conformity, are not conducive to cultivating entrepreneurial traits. The classroom environment has not improved at all in the last 40 years, despite great strides made in other areas of life in Singapore. It's time to invest, adapt and prepare for the future - starting with education.

THE STRAITS TIMES

SINCE 1845

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 29, 2012

Economy can support more grads: Govt

Jump in university places won't lead to unemployed grads, say leaders

By SANDRA DAVIE
SENIOR WRITER

THE move to substantially raise university places will not undermine the value of a degree or lead to a glut of graduates, government leaders said yesterday.

Figures show the economy is already able to support a fairly large number of university degree holders, said Senior Minister of State

for Education Lawrence Wong.

Manpower Ministry figures indicate that close to half of Singapore residents in the 25 to 29 age group hold degrees, and 44 per cent of those in the same age group earn at least \$3,000 a month, which could be taken as a proxy for graduate-level jobs.

The demand for graduates is likely to rise further as Singapore needs a highly skilled workforce

to drive its future economy, he added.

One sign of this is how professional, managerial and executive type jobs are the fastest-growing segment of the workforce, going from 27 per cent in 2001 to 32 per cent last year.

"Going forward, clearly we can accommodate more university graduates," he said at a press conference to announce details of a plan to expand university places. But Education Minister Heng

MORE REPORTS: HOME, B6

OTHER NATIONAL DAY RALLY REACTIONS: HOME, B1-5; FORUM, A23

EDITORIAL, A20

Swee Keat, who was also there, said Singaporeans should not see the expansion of university places as an opportunity for a paper chase. It should be a chance for "our people to

deepen their learning, to upgrade and to seize new opportunities".

The assurance came after many expressed surprise at the generous increase in university places announced by Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong in his National Day Rally speech on Sunday.

By 2020, he said, the government will add another 3,000 undergraduate places a year. This will raise the university participation rate of each cohort from the current 27 per cent to 40 per cent, or from the current 13,000 places a year to 16,000.

The increase will be achieved by expanding programmes run by the Singapore Institute of Technology (SIT) and SIM University (Uni-SIM). They will offer more applied, practice-oriented ones.

These recommendations, submitted by a university review committee led by Mr Wong, have been accepted by the Government.

The 40 per cent figure does not include Singaporeans in part-time degree courses and those who head overseas or pursue degrees through private schools.

In fact, as Mr Wong pointed out, if students in part-time degree programmes were included, the cohort participation rate through publicly funded places will go up to 50 per cent.

While students and parents were cheered by the news, some asked if more university places would lead to underemployment or unemployment of graduates.

Some experts noted that in 1990, only 15 per cent of a cohort went to university. The new 40 per cent rate, they said, will put Singapore ahead of other Asian economies such as Hong Kong and South Korea. It will also bring it close to the level of Britain, where degree holders are finding it hard to land jobs.

Mr David Leong, managing director of human resources firm People Worldwide Consulting, said the Government must plan carefully to ensure SIT and Uni-SIM produce a different type of graduate. "Employers appreciate graduates who are job-ready and can hit the ground running."

sandra@sph.com.sg

TOP OF THE NEWS, A6

Daring sea rescue amid typhoon

South Korean coastguards swung into action yesterday, conducting a daring rescue after two Chinese fishing vessels smashed into the rocks as a powerful typhoon pounded South Korea.

One vessel broke apart. Rescuers braved high waves and churning seas in Jeju, off the southern coast, to get to those aboard the other vessel.

Twelve people were rescued while six others swam ashore. Five bodies were recovered but 10 people were still reported to be missing.



PHOTO: ASSOCIATED PRESS

French supermarket Carrefour to exit Singapore

By NG KAI LING

CARREFOUR, which pioneered the hypermarket concept in Singapore, has been squeezed out of the retail scene and will close its two outlets here.

A Carrefour Singapore spokesman yesterday said it decided to quit because it does not see itself

not be where Carrefour is now located.

Dairy Farm Singapore - which is also behind the Cold Storage and Shop & Save supermarket chains - said it was interested in the Plaza Singapura site.

Two other big players - NTUC FairPrice and Sheng Siong - would save only that they are look-

one could buy anything from vegetables to underwear to bicycles.

Over time, however, it was overtaken by other hypermarket operators. Giant, which opened in 2000, has nine outlets; FairPrice Xtra - part of the NTUC FairPrice group - entered the market in 2006 and has five stores now.

Hypermarkets are one-stop

€98 million in 2006 to €76 million (\$119 million) last year. The group's net profit fell 14 per cent to €371 million last year.

Over the years, Carrefour Singapore announced plans to expand but they never materialised. There was talk in 2010 that it was looking to sell its Singapore and Malaysian operations but that fell

big enough for hypermarkets, which are typically 70,000 to 80,000 sq ft.

Whenever a space became available, Carrefour often lost out to the local players because their stronger ties with developers made it easier for them to negotiate leases.

Ms Letty Lee, director of retail

More varsity places and a new breed of grads

By SANDRA DAVIE

PARENTS have welcomed the larger-than-expected increase in university places announced by Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong.

But economists and recruitment experts said the new courses must be rigorous and give youngsters an extra edge, otherwise Singapore could end up with unemployed graduates if recession hits.

PM Lee surprised many parents on Sunday by announcing that 16,000 undergraduate places will be available annually by 2020, up from 13,000 now.

He said the increase – which is bigger than in recent years – will be achieved by expanding the programmes run by the Singapore Institute of Technology and SIM University (UniSIM).

Parent Alicia Tan welcomed the move. The 39-year-old office manager had been facing the prospect of paying for her daughter to

study business in Australia due to stiff competition for university places here. “I expected a small increase, not the 3,000 that PM announced,” she said.

But Mr David Leong, managing director of human resources firm People Worldwide Consulting, said the higher number of places needs to be matched by an increase in jobs for those leaving university. “The Government must ensure the economy is healthy and that more graduate-level jobs are created in a range of fields.”

Mr Leong welcomed the announcement that the two institutions providing the extra places will have a more hands-on, practice-based approach than the other four universities and take more students from polytechnics.

“We can’t have more of the same type of graduates,” he said.

He added that many employers appreciate those who come through the poly route. “They are

more hands-on, practical and ready to roll up their sleeves and get the job done. The universities must build on these qualities.”

Labour economist Randolph Tan from UniSIM said the Government must tread carefully. “However dynamic the economy, at the end of the day Singapore is a small economy. Even the large economies like the US are faced with graduate unemployment.”

He agreed with the plan for the new programmes to produce a different breed of graduates, adding: “They must be able to switch to related careers or even go on to new ones. And they must be able to head overseas if the opportunities here dry up.”

However, National University of Singapore economist Shandre Thangavelu pointed out that the evidence showed educated workers are able to ride business cycles better than unskilled ones. They are also able to secure better-quality

ity and high-paying jobs. “Thus, increasing the opportunity for Singaporeans to acquire education and life-long education is in the right direction,” he said.

PM Lee’s announcement was a surprise as each time the Government has raised the university cohort participation rate over the past decade, it has usually been by about 5 percentage points. This time, it is rising by twice that figure, from less than 30 per cent now to 40 per cent by 2020.

The Singapore Institute of Technology, which offers niche degree programmes in partnership with overseas universities, will increase its yearly intake beyond the projected 2,000 in 2015, and offer its own degrees.

UniSIM, which provides part-time degrees for working adults, will start running full-time programmes but stay a private university. ✉ sandra@sph.com.sg

NTUC cheers openness to paternity leave

By JANICE HENG

THE National Trades Union Congress (NTUC) yesterday welcomed Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong’s willingness to legislate paternity leave – one of the suggestions it made last month.

Paternity leave is now “almost a norm” in the unionised sector, said NTUC secretary-general Lim Swee Say at the last of the labour movement’s National Day ceremonies this month.

“We’re very happy that this may become a national norm.”

During Sunday’s National Day Rally, Mr Lee said paternity leave was one measure the Government was considering to boost birth rates.

The NTUC had earlier called for mandatory paternity leave of two days, along with other family-friendly measures.

But though paternity leave is a “big step”, it should not be the only step, said Mr Lim.

“If the Government gives X days of paternity leave, it does not mean that the father only spends the X days to take care of the babies and the other days are the duty of the wife,” he said.

Nor should fathers’ involvement in parenting end once the babies grow older, he added.

Many of the 1,500 unionised companies already offer two days’ paternity leave, NTUC assistant

secretary-general Cham Hui Fong told reporters.

But two days is “certainly not enough”, she said, which is why the NTUC has also suggested a week of paid infant care leave, to be taken by either parent.

While welcoming the prospect of paternity leave, Ms Cham tempered this with caution: “We hope that, should there be any paternity leave, it should be in addition to the 16 weeks’ maternity leave that the woman is already enjoying.”

What the NTUC does not want is for paternity leave to be included in those 16 weeks.

The Government may have taken one of the NTUC’s suggestions on board, but it has been less open to another.

On Sunday, the Prime Minister said keeping maternity leave at 16 weeks “was about all right”. The NTUC had proposed extending this to six months.

Ms Cham said that fellow female union leaders were “quite disappointed” by the Prime Minister’s reaction, but noted that he had not specifically said “no”.

The labour movement will continue to push the idea, not least through its ties with unionised companies, she said.

“I think we will certainly talk to the more enlightened companies to see if they can grant this.”

✉ janiceh@sph.com.sg

In your **STRAITS TIMES** tomorrow

Never-before-seen **Raffles letters** go on show



Why aren't Hong Kongers happy?



Retailers gear up for new lemon law

THIS WEEK'S TOPIC:

What have Singaporeans, and the Singapore authorities, got right in the area of healthy living?
What is still lacking and what more should be done?

Promoting a healthy and active lifestyle

Lim Soon Hock
Managing Director
PLAN-B ICAG Pte Ltd

SINGAPORE had the foresight, under our first Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew, to promote a healthy lifestyle early. After several decades, Singapore, through our Health Promotion Board (HPB), is still actively promoting a healthy lifestyle, through regular exercise, healthy diet, smoking cessation and mental wellness. The annual national healthy lifestyle campaign is still a major event in our nation's calendar, often with the Prime Minister as the guest of honour. It shows our government's seriousness in creating a healthy nation, and continuously investing in public education on a healthy lifestyle. It takes years to achieve the kind of results that Singapore has been recognised for.

A healthy lifestyle requires sustainable behavioural change, which often takes time, sometimes years. In our society, there are also cultural barriers to cross; for example, rice is our staple food, and more often than not, much of our food is fried and consumed without the minimum daily servings of vegetables and fruits. Although more Singaporeans are health-conscious, more can be done.

As an example, since many Singaporeans eat out regularly, more hawkers should be incentivised or encouraged to serve healthier food. The HPB may want to give this a greater impetus by outsourcing to a few hawkers in each of our food centres, to offer healthier food choices, and use this exercise to dispel the notion that such food is less tasty or palatable.

Singaporeans must take more personal ownership of their health and lifestyle. When this is prevalent, we can and should expect our healthcare cost per capita to decrease, net of that attributable to our senior citizens.

Our government can consider introducing an individual health scorecard on a person's lifestyle and use a portion of the savings to be given out to deserving Singaporeans, as an incentive, to redeem benefits, for example, as payments for insurance premiums, medical bills, purchase of gym equipment, and so on. It is a win-win proposition for the government and Singaporeans.

(Lim Soon Hock was a board member of the HPB [2001-2010] and chairman of the Committee on Healthy Lifestyle [2000-2006], which organises the annual national healthy lifestyle campaign).

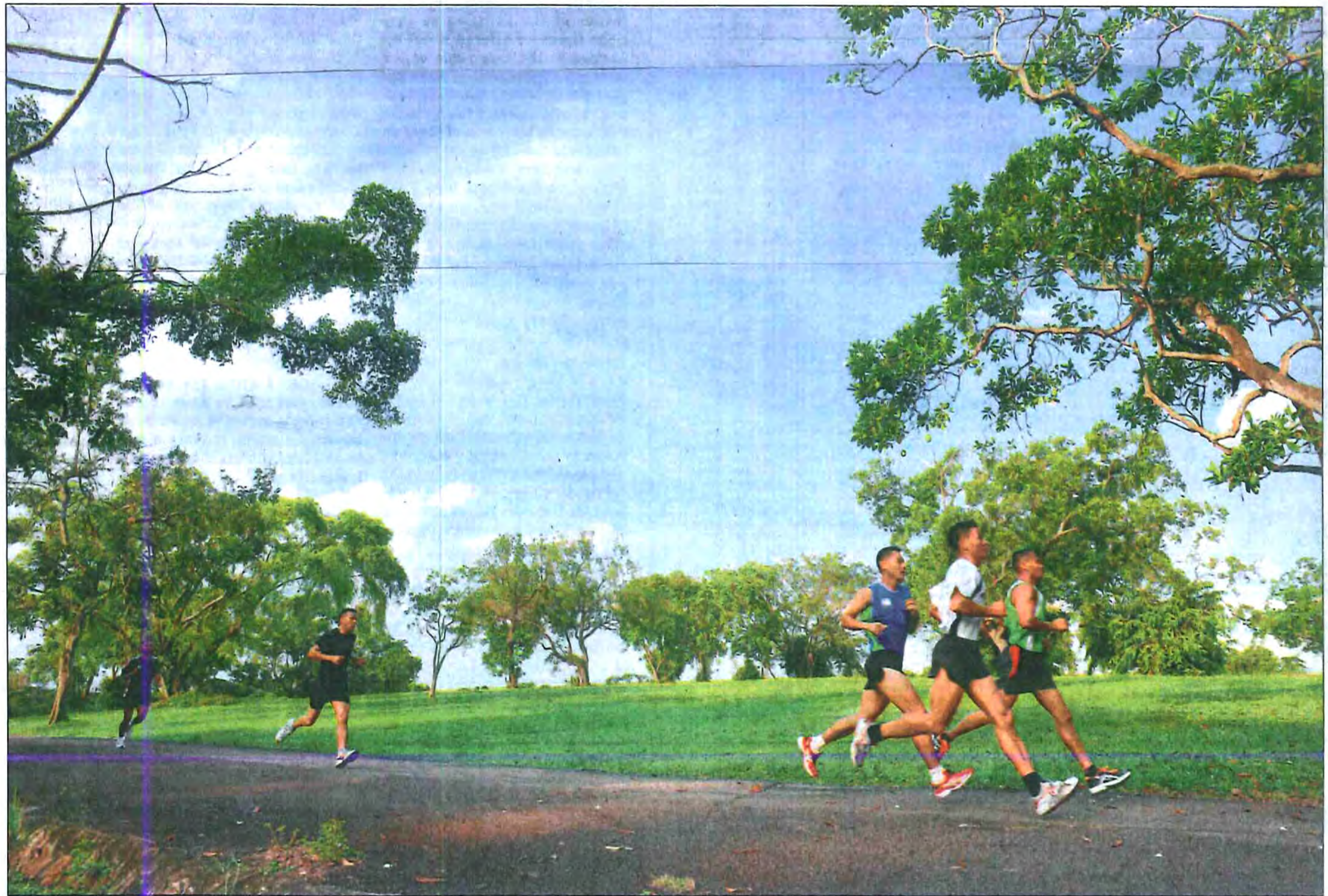
Patrick Liew

CEO
HSR International Realtors Pte Ltd
TO improve the health of our people, we need to re-engineer our mindset about this critical issue and redesign our current healthcare model. We need to not only focus on physical health but also on overall wellness, including improving our mental, emotional, social and environmental conditions, because they are interconnected to one another. The focus should not only be on resolving healthcare issues but also on preventing them. We need to promote not just effective medical practices but also preventive medical practices which include making regular health checks available, accessible and affordable.

We cannot just take a top-down approach with the government focusing on improving the overall health of the people. We need to intensify our outreach programmes to educate the masses on taking responsible ownership for their own health.

Besides establishing healthcare services, we need to also promote an anti-ageing lifestyle. We need to not only set up healthcare facilities but also provide door-to-door healthcare services.

With healthcare costs on the rise, we need to not only look at improving the productivity of our current healthcare system but also explore how we can capitalise on healthcare facilities on a regional as well as global basis. If we focus on just enhancing today's healthcare model, we will only achieve incremental improvements. To achieve quantum leaps of



FILE PHOTO

improvements, we need to creatively break the current mould and redesign it.

R Dhinakaran

Managing Director
Jay Gee Enterprises Pte Ltd
IN my opinion the biggest contributor to Singapore being the healthiest nation in the world is our commitment to lead an active life till later years. We work longer and late into our lives, which ensure that both mind and body are better engaged. The human body is pretty much like a machine which needs to be efficiently used to get the best out of it. Abuse and, most importantly, disuse can make it break down prematurely. An active body and mind well into the late years have helped the present generation of Singaporeans remain healthier.

Our enforcement of rules to thwart unhealthy habits like smoking and drinking in public places minimises opportunity to indulge in unhealthy habits to a large extent. However, our food habits are changing fast, especially with the younger generations who seem to rely on fast food and junk food. Our affluence is relatively new. Hence, the ill-effects of affluence on dietary, cultural and other habits are yet to show up in full in the statistics.

We must educate our youth on the benefits of eating the right food at the right time and in the right quantity. Their habits need to be cultivated in our schools, through parents at home and even through employers. This will ensure that our next generation remains at least as healthy as our present one.

David Low

CEO
Futuristic Store Fixtures Pte Ltd

OUR government has continued efforts that promote active lifestyles and work-life balance. As with all affluent societies, Singaporeans are generally well-travelled and adequately educated on health matters to truly appreciate the importance of good health. Coupled with the accessibility of quality healthcare and services, it comes as no surprise that we are the healthiest population in the world. Prevention is always better than cure.

David Leong

Managing Director
PeopleWorldwide Consulting Pte Ltd

A HEALTHY population, especially one with an ageing profile, is not a naturally occurring phenomenon common in developed countries. Singapore has strong governmental intervention in healthcare and its policies have enabled the national healthcare expenditure to be lower than most developed countries.

The government's promotion of active and healthy lifestyles and its increasing focus on self-care and co-sharing of healthcare expenditure have made the population a healthy one.

The government's healthcare policies are evolving and the Ministry of Health's recent roll-out of new initiatives and policy review are steps in the right direction. The expansion of primary care partnership

schemes for private family physicians, expansion of medication assistance fund and raising Medisave withdrawal limits to cover some outpatient expenses augur well for the promotion of healthy lifestyles as Singaporeans can now exercise discretionary control over their health expenses. Policies aside, Singaporeans need to manage their lifestyles, through discipline and constant health monitoring. The healthy lifestyle journey must begin with each Singaporean taking the first step.

Andrea Ross

Managing Director (Singapore and Malaysia)
Robert Walters Singapore

THE relevant ministries in Singapore have done well in advocating a healthy lifestyle, for example, by recommending "healthier" versions of local foods. The access to a good healthcare system also makes healthy living easier for Singaporeans. If we take a look at healthy living at the workplace, some companies have set a good example by promoting group exercise days. At Robert Walters, we provide healthier options for our employees such as fruit in the pantry on a daily basis, as well as low-fat milk for making tea and coffee. Our social committee also organises football and badminton sessions for staff to work out and bond in the process.

However, not all organisations have started taking steps to encourage healthy living for employees. As Singaporeans spend the majority of their time at work leading a sedentary lifestyle, employers can look into schemes that are easy to implement – such as providing fruit or healthy snacks in the pantry.

PRODUCTIVITY MATTERS: ELECTRONICS

It's like a sci-fi world at GlobalFoundries **PAGE 11**



SME Inc
Nuts about keeping it in the family **PAGE 10**



OLYMPICS 2012
Britain takes a final, triumphant bow **PAGE 4**

DEAL-HUNGRY BAER
Julius Baer to buy Merrill unit **PAGE 2**

THE BUSINESS TIMES

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Big stick awaits errant bosses of foreign workers

By **LEE U-WEN** [SINGAPORE] Sweeping changes are in the pipeline to punish employers of foreign labour here more severely if they flout the rules. Bigger fines, longer jail sentences and even caning in one instance are what errant bosses stand to face under a new bill introduced in Parliament that will give authorities sharper teeth to deal with violations. What the Manpower Ministry (MOM) wants to do is to ensure that Singaporeans remain at the core of the country's workforce and to compel employers to pay the true cost of hiring foreign workers. The bill to amend the existing Employment of Foreign Manpower Act was introduced yesterday by Acting Manpower Minister Tan Chuan-Jin and will be debated at next month's Parliament sitting when the bill is read a second time. Last December, there were 1.19 million foreign workers in Singapore, up from 1.05 million in December 2008. MOM has been taking measured steps to tighten the work pass framework since 2010. The ministry has, over the years, encountered employers who have run the gamut in trying to circumvent the regulations set out in the current work pass framework.

Some companies forge the educational certificates of these workers just to make sure they meet the minimum qualifying employment criteria. Others receive employment kickbacks from foreign workers as part of the deal to give them jobs in Singapore. These acts and several others will all be designated criminal offences carrying heavier penalties. MOM is going to be especially hard on those who set up shell companies that employ foreign workers illegally. Those who run shell companies with more than five foreign workers will be caned, in addition to being fined and jailed. Another key proposed change is the setting up of a new administrative penalty regime to complement prosecution efforts. Under the new regime, some offences will be classified as administrative infringements rather than criminal offences. This would allow cases to be settled more quickly - within six months as opposed to 1-2 years if the matter were to go to court. MOM will appoint several civil servants as Commissioners of Foreign Manpower to oversee this regime. They and other employment inspectors will be given greater powers to investigate suspected breaches. The act of circumventing dependency ratio ceilings by using "phantom" local workers to secure higher foreign worker quotas will be regarded as an administrative infringement. Those guilty of this face a maximum \$20,000 fine and a possible ban from hiring foreign workers in the future. Among the other proposed changes is that employers will be responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of foreign workers during their entire stay in Singapore, including the period when they are waiting for their complaints to be resolved. To facilitate enforcement, MOM will presume that any monies collected from foreign workers are

Some proposed changes

Employment of Foreign Manpower Act

- New financial penalty regime to complement criminal prosecution
- Authorities to have greater powers to investigate breaches
- Heavier fines and longer jail terms for some offences to enhance deterrence

collected as employment kickbacks.

Similarly for forged certificates, the ministry also has the right to presume that the foreign worker knew that the educational qualification provided in his own work pass application was false. The employer or worker will have the right to rebut these presumptions if they can furnish proper proof. The list of proposed changes, which were made public on the website of the Reach feedback portal yesterday, were compiled after MOM consulted the public from May to July. The ministry also held discussions with stakeholders such as employers and migrant worker non-governmental organisations. The plan is to debate the bill during its second reading in Parliament next month before implementing the changes by the end of the year.

With tweaks and snips, NOL chief steadies ship

Ng Yat Chung slashing costs and reorganising business to achieve a turnaround

By **LYNN KAN**

[SINGAPORE] In ten short months since becoming CEO of shipping giant Neptune Orient Lines (NOL), ex-defence chief Ng Yat Chung has pruned US\$225 million in expenses, let go of hundreds at NOL's liner business APL and, to the surprise of everyone, tabled the sale of the NOL headquarters at Alexandra Road to free up capital. In other words, Mr Ng is still a man on a mission to get NOL back to profitability after a disastrous US\$478 million loss in 2011. "I was asked to come on board by the board to help the company turn around. The performance of NOL was affected by the downturn in the shipping industry, but relative to its competitors, it was also not performing well," says Mr Ng. "Ten months on, that goal remains." Last Wednesday, Mr Ng had a slight turnaround to flag. Yes, NOL was still dunked in quarterly losses of US\$118 million, but strip out one-time vessel write-downs and restructuring costs, and its core container line business was back in the black with US\$7 million for the first time since Q4 2010. "If you ask me if I'm satisfied, then the answer is no. You must never be satisfied. The pressure remains and a lot more work needs to be done. What gives me comfort is the big turnaround," he tells BT in his first media interview since taking the helm. The market joined Mr Ng in his sentiments. On the first trading day after the H1 2012 results, NOL's stock fell five cents to \$1.165, but yesterday, brightened 0.5 cents to \$1.17. But Mr Ng is sticking to his gameplan, which is to trim the fat off NOL's cost structure. Costs have been within his crosshairs since Mr Ng's first NOL results announcement in February. Then, along with FY 2011's losses, he unveiled a huge US\$500 million cost savings plan with the practised confidence of a man used to being in command.



Mr Ng: He is still a man on a mission to get NOL back to profitability after a disastrous US\$478 million loss in 2011. He is sticking to his gameplan, which is to trim the fat off NOL's cost structure

And that he has been - though never of a commercial company, let alone a shipping company. Yet, it seems natural that Mr Ng, who earned a mathematics degree at Cambridge University on an SAF overseas scholarship, returned to making sense of numbers after capping off a 28-year military career. In 2007, he joined NOL's majority shareholder, Temasek Holdings, as its managing director of portfolio management. At Temasek, "one of the companies I paid attention to is NOL. So that's how I got to know the company from the outside", he says. And his diagnosis - from the inside now - is this: "APL has always been seen as an innovator and providing good premium service for our customers. That model works when container shipping is in short supply, but it hurts us in a down cycle. Because to provide the service that customers valued, our costs tended to be higher than our competitors." Mr Ng's laser-beam focus

on costs can also be chalked up to his second stint at Temasek where he oversaw investments into energy and resources, which resembles shipping in its capital-intensive and cyclical nature. "What's applicable is this idea that in a capital-intensive industry you can still make money - as long as you have one of the best cost structures," he says. "Even if there's overcapacity, as long as your marginal cost is better than competitors', you will be able to make a return through the downside." About half of the US\$225 million in cost savings to-date have come from lower fuel consumption as five obsolete vessels were sold and six newer, more fuel-efficient ships were delivered. More savings will come as NOL intends to retire most of the 22 charters of older, less fuel-efficient vessels that expire in 2012. And another US\$19 million was saved from re-working how APL usually carried containers empty on its backhaul routes.

Last year, transporting 'empties' cost NOL "hundreds of millions", says Mr Ng. The organisational restructuring tightened coordination between APL's mainhaul East-West and bakchaul teams so boxes were filled on a round-trip instead of a one-way basis to add revenue while reducing cost. "It's a commercial decision to take business and match it on the back-end leg. That requires good systems and good organisational structure - part of what we were trying to achieve with our organisational restructuring," he says. But the biggest surprise in Mr Ng's NOL career has been the decision to sell its headquarters. It sparked off concern that under new hands, NOL was still struggling to cope to foot the bill for 28 new vessels it would take delivery of from H2 2012 to 2014. But, financing for all the vessels has already been arranged and settled. The building sale, he says, is to address NOL's balance sheet and, in particular,

gearing levels that had risen when it sustained losses in 2011. "One of my philosophies is this: as a transportation company, the assets we have must all contribute to our core business. Everything that is not contributing directly to core business are what I call non-core or 'lazy assets', and this building is one of them. "As a matter of good stewardship of capital that our shareholders have given to us, my basic philosophy is to channel it to something that contributes to the development of the core business," he says. For the shipping outsider, Mr Ng's actions are all about "providing the leadership to take the hard decisions". "One thing APL is not short of is its shipping expertise," he says. "But what APL could benefit from is a different perspective, folks who can see the business with fresh eyes. . . What APL needs is ideas from different industries who face similar problems, like in the petrochemical industry and the airline industry."

MARKETS DIGEST

▲ **ST INDEX**
3,064.81 (+10.61)

▲ **ST INDEX FUTURES**
3,050 (+10)

▲ **SIMSCI**
351.84 (+1.57)

▲ **SIMSCI FUTURES**
351.50 (+1.50)

FOREX

	US\$	S\$
US\$ (S\$ per US\$)	-	1.246
€ (US\$/€ per €)	1.566	1.952
EURO (US\$/€)	1.228	1.530
Foreign currency per US\$		
YEN	78.20	62.80
RM	3.122	2.505
HKS	7.757	6.224
BAHT	31.44	25.23
RUPIAH	9.488	7.612
RENMINBI	6.360	5.103
INDIAN RUPEE	55.45	44.49
AS	0.949	0.761
NZ\$	1.234	0.990

MARKETS

	Monday Change
KL COMP	1,646.32 +0.96
NIKKEI 225	8,895.15 -6.29
HANG SENG	20,081.36 -54.76
SET INDEX	Closed
JAKARTA COMP	4,102.53 -39.03
MAMILA COMP	5,271.78 +8.43
SEOUL COMP	1,932.44 -13.96
SHENZHEN B	561.13 -11.23
MUMBAI IND	17,633.45 +75.71
	12noon EDT Change
DOW	13,130.72 -77.23
NASDAQ	3,006.81 -14.05

PRIME RATES

SINGAPORE	5.38
MALAYSIA	6.55
HONG KONG	5.00
INDONESIA	14.201
TAIWAN	5.036
JAPAN	1.475
KOREA	9.33
BRITAIN	0.50
US	3.25
CANADA	3.00
SWITZERLAND	0.50
INDIA	14.75

Source: Bloomberg



John Keung

CEO
Building and Construction Authority

IMPROVED accessibility in the built environment for everyone is increasingly relevant to Singapore's demographic profile as we need to cater to the changing mobility needs of our population. An accessible built environment allows our elderly and the physically disabled to maintain links with their family, friends, and the wider community and have more employment opportunities, enabling them to be independent as we strive for a more inclusive society in Singapore. For BCA, this means pushing for Universal Design (Design for all) in the built environment. I believe this will contribute immensely to the continued growth of our city and a higher quality of life for everyone.

Melvin Vu

CEO
Marina Bay Cruise Centre Singapore

I FEEL that Singapore is facing a negative feedback loop, caused by a lower birth rate, an increasing ageing population, higher immigrant arrival numbers, and lower economic growth, and we need to urgently but carefully break this cycle.

For example, if we were to suddenly stem the numbers of immigrants, it would choke the economy and cause short-term shocks, affecting economic growth and resulting in trade-offs that may not necessarily be better for Singaporeans. Instead, the fundamental issue of infrastructure (both hardware & software) should be addressed, focusing on supporting young parents who are raising a child, pro-family policies that would provide a better work-life balance, and resources that would allow the ageing population to contribute meaningfully.

Robert Wilkes

Managing Director
Towers Watson Singapore

strong local workforce while encouraging foreign talent (both white and blue collar workers) to support economic growth. While the social impact of foreign workers needs to be considered, further tightening of foreign labour quotas could have the unintended consequence of constraining economic growth.

Patrick Liew

CEO
HSR International Realtors Pte Ltd

FOR a change, we should address the challenge of a greying population from a bottom-up perspective. First, we need to look at how to enable the elderly and the soon-to-be elderly not only to age gracefully but to also commit themselves to a meaningful and productive life. Without their will to live and the spirit to contribute to society, any national policy and programme will amount to nothing.

For example, we need to step up our educational programmes to help them enhance their financial literacy, improve their knowledge of preventive and anti-ageing medicine, and learn the benefits of proven techniques in wellness and positive psychology.

THIS WEEK'S TOPIC

What are Singapore's main demographic challenges as they relate to business and the economy, and to Singapore's well-being generally, and how can these be resolved?

Baby blues



emphasise quality over quantity. It may seem counter-intuitive to regulate the inflow of foreigners, but it is a right move to ensure that immigrants can contribute to our economy and society.

Companies will need to manage their talents more proficiently and strategise the full use of their people assets. Most importantly, we must pay careful attention to the younger generations and hone them to be effective leaders of the future. Though we cannot expect substantial growth of our population, we can be certain that our people have the substance to advance our country.

Teng Yeow Heng Michael

Managing Director
Corporate Turnaround Centre Pte Ltd

IT is heartening to learn that our government has asked for feedback on demographic challenges. Our focus should be to put Singaporean well-being first and even above the well-being of Singapore at times, when dealing with this matter. Failing which, we see the unhealthy divide between Singaporeans and foreign talent, problems of integrating old and new citizens,

Thus, as a nation, we ought to manage our mindsets with regard to the arrival of new immigrants in our backyards.

Another phenomenon is the increased pace at which Gen Y workers are entering the workforce. These individuals are Internet-savvy, well-connected, and they live and breathe social media. They are more likely to expose the undesirable behaviour of organisations and express their disgruntlement with the government through social media channels online, as we have witnessed of late. Companies are therefore required to ensure even greater transparency in their dealings and ensure that their conduct is always above board.

Dora Hoan

Group CEO
Best World International Ltd

THE declining TFR (total fertility rate) in Singapore has led to the implementation of foreign immigration policy, which affects the supply of residential and commercial property, as well as the supply of private and public transportation. When the policy implementation does not go concurrently with the increase of property and

David Leong
Managing Director
PeopleWorldwide Consulting Pte Ltd

ECONOMIC stagnation will accompany a shrinking population and this is only stating the obvious. The less obvious is that Singapore will be sapped of its enterprises' vitality and marketplace buzz if we continue to raise the bar for young foreign talent. Our size is a limiting factor and by itself is a disadvantage and we cannot be constrained by the limits of our shores. Singapore must have porous shores and be a throughput hub with freer flow of goods, services, capital, and people.

Socially, the government has reconstituted its cabinet ministries to sharply focus on integration and assimilation of new citizens and PRs and to build the strength of our communities. The government's renewed focus on societal and community integration is assuring. Infrastructurally, Singapore needs to build capacities in housing, transport, and education to cater to population growth. It is all about economic sensibilities versus Singaporeans' sensitivities and the balancing act will never be easy.

民生民财

本地老板： 经济不明朗 今年花红将减少



梁昌国



陈立发

沈斯涵报道

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经济不明朗，本地老板受访时说，今年花红将减少。

美国经济复苏步伐缓慢、欧洲债务危机持续，和中国经济增长放缓等因素，不少本地企业对薪金和招聘展望持较谨慎态度，并表示花红可能因此比去年少。

新加坡人力资源学院一份报告指出，今年的可变动花红增幅预料将介于1.6到两个月之间，比去年则可能进一步减少到1.6到1.9个月。

仁立国际执行董事梁昌国则表示，受到全球经济增长放缓冲击，他可能把员工今年的可变动花红定为1到1.5个月，并将谨慎行事降低公司营运成本。

新加坡艺公司董事陈立发受访时说，公司一般上依据公司和员工过去一年的表现，同时视员工在公司里的工作年限，这三个方面来制定花红的多寡。



花红减少，打工仔表示要省吃俭用，开源节流。

“尽管目前世界局势不稳定，公司必须量力而为，但对于勤奋的员工，我们也不能亏待他。”

此外，远朋国际集团总裁兼荣誉主席符标雄也表示，虽然经济呈现低迷，但有时危机就是转机。

“像进军美国市场，现在的成本可能比较低，所以我们是能够从中获得盈利。而在给员工花红方面，员工表现也很重要，多数企业还是以论功行赏来制定花红，肯定他们的努力。”



郭先生



李先生

打工仔表示 要省吃俭用

花红减少，打工仔表示要省吃俭用，开源节流。

张先生（32岁、工程师）说，花红缩水，他会尽量减少生活开销。“原本计划要在今年年底去欧洲旅行，现在在经济不好，所以改成和家人去中国潮州探亲。”

郭先生（27岁、行政人员）说：“花红缩水也没办法，但还是不可以意气用事，冲动辞职。行情不太好，所以只能尽量忍下去。”李先生（27岁、公务员）也表示，少花红就必须减少开销，这样才能为将来做好准备。

接受40小时培训 酒店保安员 薪金增15%

苏世鹏 报道

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MMS或WhatsApp
传照片：922887361

酒店保安员，接受40小时的培训，薪金增加15%。大约3000名酒店员工，将在新式薪金结构下受惠，赚取更高的薪金。

酒店保安员接受的，除了30小时看门人的训练外，也接受10小时的酒店侍者服务训练。他们在受训后，可以在需要时一兼两职，收入也因此增加。

职总今天下午与食品饮料业行业工会（简称FDAWU）以及新加坡酒店协会（SHA）联合举办第30届生产力研讨会，主宾是职总副秘书长王乙康。

职总在会上也为酒店业推出新式薪金结构，职总酒店与消费行业公会群体领导杨木光指出，这有助行业里的低薪工友获得加薪与提高技能。

在新式薪金结构下，职总希望通过训练，让大约2250名收入最低的客房服务员以及主客房服务员，以获得加薪。

酒店员工 渐进式薪金

第二阶段 以本地人为主的经理与管工人员	经理 超过3000元
助理经理	超过2000元
执行受训员 (管理层专业发展计划,目标是吸引250人加入)	超过1800元
管工	超过1600元
第一阶段 通过生产力获得加薪	超过1300元
主客房服务员 (新职务,目标500人受惠)	超过1300元
副客房服务员	超过1300元

职总的另一目标，是在酒店业建立一支以本地人为主的经理与管工级人员。

职总与就业与职业技能培训中心(e2i)以及劳动力发展局(WDA)协调，在今天推出一套“管理专业发展计划”(Executive Development Programme,简称EDP)。

在计划的最初阶段，职总希望吸引250名本地中级专业人士、经理、执行人员等白领族(PMEs)加入，后持续扩大人数。



杨木光：渐进式薪金将提高低薪工友的薪金。(档案照片)

此外，职总也希望，500名酒店员工可以通过“重新设计客户服务”计划，在酒店前台、客房、餐饮服务，获得两个，或者三个职务的技能，从而提高职业展望。

职总指出，自2010年8月，在增长与受惠计划(简称IGP)下，已使到38间酒店的1600名员工受惠，这些员工中，有1200人是低收入者；渐进式薪金结构将继续改进低薪员工的收入。

职总另一目标

酒店业经理 本地人为主

Gary Lai
Managing Director
Charterhouse

MANY market analysts have forecast weak corporate earnings for Q2. This is based on the International Monetary Fund (IMF) cutting the global growth outlook, the US Fed chairman's bleak outlook for the US economy, China's quarterly gross domestic product (GDP) growing at its slowest in three years, Singapore Q2 GDP unexpectedly contracting, and the ongoing eurozone crisis. However, much of this pessimism has been priced into the market.

Although corporates have generally announced weaker earnings, many of them, especially those with a large interest in Asia, have beaten market expectations. Additionally, there have been positive surprises, such as the BOJ's (Bank of Japan's) upgrading its assessment of the world's third-largest economy, China's property prices bottoming out, and Singapore's NODX (non-oil domestic exports) year-on-year growth. The West may be going through a difficult period, but Asia has generally fared better. Many US and European companies have pumped greater resources and transferred key personnel to their Asian operations.

Singapore, being the regional headquarters for many international companies, has benefited from such investments. Although the global outlook remains uncertain and decisions taken to invest or hire may take longer, companies doing business in Asia are still wanting to grow headcount and to attract the best talents. The sentiment on the ground is at worst, one of cautionary optimism and we expect the Singapore economy to maintain a high level of employment opportunities for experienced professionals.

David Leong
Managing Director
PeopleWorldwide Consulting Pte Ltd

THE economic horizon and landscape is gloomy going into H2 2012, predicated on the stalemate in Europe and slower growth in China. The US Fed is also warning of a slowdown in the US, short of QE3. In Singapore, we are hit by a confluence of factors, including restrictive policies on foreign manpower and rising land, commodities, and raw material prices. A stronger Sing dollar affected our competitiveness vis-a-vis neighbouring countries. All these combined to make business challenging and difficult.

Businesses are finding creative ways to leverage on the government's Productivity and Innovation Credit scheme to build strengths, competencies, enhance productivity, and encourage innovations but these are mid- to long-term investments which will not see immediate results. In the short run, the business environment and its outlook remains bleak as the credits help the expense side of business but not the top revenue line.

Certain policies on foreign manpower, hopefully, will see some U-turns as those years of growth in Singapore were premised on these foreigners coming in to support our fast-growing economy. The concept is much like how the US uses QE1 and QE2 (quantitative easing 1 & 2) to jump-start and sustain economic growth. We should contemplate a labour quantitative easing for Singapore companies to sustain our growth in certain sectors and industries.

THIS WEEK'S TOPIC

Do you agree with expectations of generally weak corporate results for the quarter just ended? What does your view from the ground tell you about the outlook for the second half of 2012 for your industry and for Singapore generally?

Bright spots to be found



STRAITS TIMES FILE PHOTO

smartphones and use of mobile data together with consumption of all types of content shows no signs of abating. In my view, the TMT sector will see continued strong growth and investment over the medium term and I am optimistic that Singapore-based companies serving those sectors will continue to be busy.

Philippe H J Huinck
Regional Managing Director, South and South-east Asia
International SOS

GIVEN the volatility and contraction in markets abroad, it is not surprising that expectations for corporate results for the quarter just ended are conservative. The outlook still appears to be uncertain, both globally and for Singapore's economy as well. Our strategy in Singapore for the second half of 2012 will continue to be one of pragmatism, one that involves careful

AT the moment, there is caution stemming from the flow of negative news from the US and Europe. The general sentiment is that while there may be further bumps along the road for some Asian economies, the underlying business and economic structure is sound. Real growth remains the trend across most of Asia and this is still the most exciting region in the world to do business. Global economic uncertainties aside, a main concern for many business leaders is the hiring and retention of their "Asia leadership talents".

On the whole, professional services for board and senior-level executive search remain positive and growing. This is mainly due to the following: 1. Demand for leadership talent remains strong. With their past experience of economic crises and understanding that developing regional leaders takes time, most companies are proactively planning ahead to maintain a

the current economic mood. Results from our recently concluded job barometer suggest a tepid job market heading into the third quarter, with financial institutions facing continued pressures to justify headcounts due to the protracted global economic uncertainty. However, a low-hire environment does not mean a no-hire situation as there are industries that have performed well. Even in less-than-positive economic conditions, we do see that oil and gas commodities trading and private banks, especially those with a solid book of clients, being well placed to remain resilient - which could ensure their hiring patterns for at least the next quarter.

Hugues Delcourt
Country Executive, ABN AMRO Bank NV Singapore and
CEO of ABN AMRO Private Banking Asia & Middle East

AT WORK WITH JOYCE TEO

Should firms reach for the stars?

High-fliers can raise standards in a company but also hurt collaboration

YOUR office may have a superstar, the high-flier who exudes power in every step he takes, but managing such a big-hitter can be a delicate job for any boss.

Generally, such superstars are well regarded and rewarded but that means the rest of the staff have to play catch-up while the under-performers are likely to be booted out.

Tension, it hardly needs to be said, can easily result. "You need high-level ambassadors who will rise to the top of your organisation and go beyond to help build excellence across the nation as a whole," says Mr Gary Miles, principal consultant for human resource at Roffey Park, a leadership institute based in Britain and Singapore.

"However, not everyone can be a superstar and there is a need for a group of solid core contributors who still do an invaluable job for their enterprises."

Mr David Leong, managing di-

rector of PeopleWorldwide Consulting, adds: "Star performers set benchmark standards and expectations. They are put as examples for others to follow."

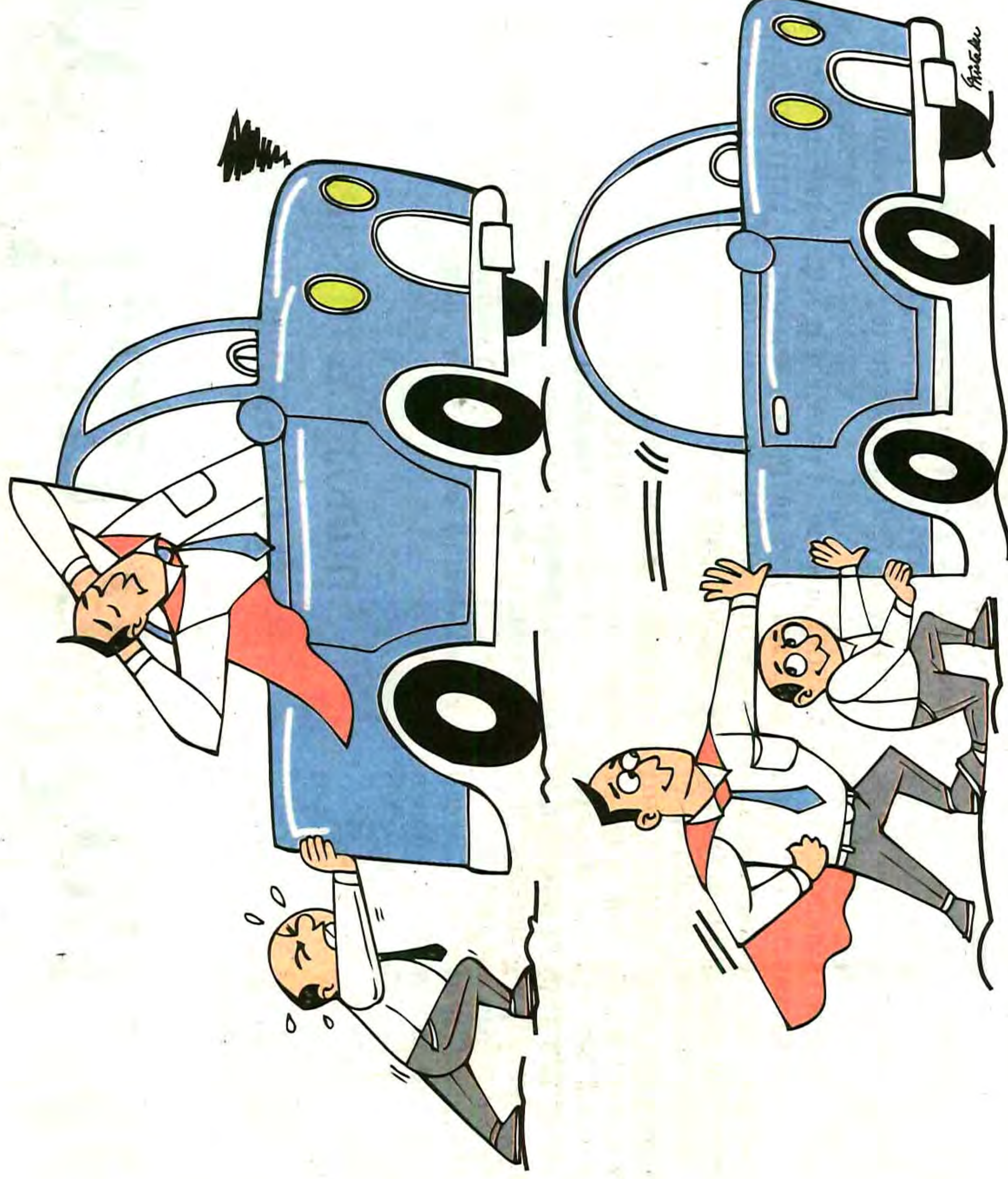
"Workplace competition is unavoidable and in the survival of the fittest, the competition will bring out ingenuities and exceptional performance in individuals."

In some extreme cases, companies systematically eliminate the bottom 10 per cent to 15 per cent of their workforce - the laggards and non-performers - so that better replacements can be found to drive businesses, he says.

"This type of laggard elimination spurs individuals to perform and to be wary of competitors," notes Mr Leong.

The superstar may think he is superior to others. Because he is competitive, he will pick the most high-profile work available or do whatever it takes to stay in the limelight.

But he needs to know that he



may take away all your business. So the best deal may be to collaborate - at least within the organisation.

"I always believe that the business is bigger than any one individual so you have to remind them to be real and to collaborate, and that the competition is outside the firm," notes Ms Chaturvedi.

"By all means, compete with other businesses but don't try to be better than your own colleagues."

A recent Vanity Fair article talked about the management system at Microsoft known as "stack ranking" that effectively crippled the company's ability to innovate.

The system forced every unit to declare a certain percentage of employees as top performers, good performers, average and poor. A former software employee was quoted as saying that it led to employees focusing on competing with each other rather than on competing with other companies.

While Mr Miles is all for what he calls healthy internal competition, he says there is a need to create a common purpose that brings everyone together to mobilise the organisation to be stronger and more innovative than its rivals.

"Where internal competition becomes unhealthy and damaging to the organisation is when individuals focus so much on competing against each other within the enterprise, that they lose sight of the bigger picture and the need to focus on dealing with external competition," he says.

Where there are superstars, they should be mindful that they are working for the team or company.

"If people see little or no collaboration, they will revert to looking after their own interests and may leave," says Mr Bigger.

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This is the last instalment of a two-part series on competition.

does not work alone. "Take a football analogy. The big centre forward No. 9 scores 30 goals a season and gets all the accolades and is considered a hero," says former premiership referee Ray Bigger, who is also the managing director of training and consultancy firm Think8.

"Yet a physically smaller player, No. 8, a midfielder who does a lot of running, ball getting and intercepting, should get just as much credit for he is the oil that keeps the big guns firing. The manager does the blending."

Not everyone can be a star nor should everyone be one. In fact, some experts think superstars are not needed.

Mr James Reed, United Kingdom-based chairman of recruitment agency Reed, who was in

Singapore recently, said of his firm: "We are very transparent so that may encourage competition. But you have to manage that aspect of it, rather than encourage it. Otherwise, you have a superstar culture and that's no fun."

"You will have big egos. A lot of companies end up massaging the egos of a few star performers. You are then sending the subtle message that revenue is better than a collaborative culture and there will then be a toxic culture."

Ms Deepali Chaturvedi, head of South-east Asia at Reed Specialist Recruitment, stresses that the firm does not want to have just a couple of star performers. "It's not healthy and most people do not like to be in such an environment for long," she says.

And if the superstars leave, they

ble team as it's about shared goals. It's been a key differentiator for us as a lot of our competitors have a competitive environment.

"This is actually the bedrock of my hiring policy. I've turned away very high performers because I felt that they would be toxic to my environment."

That could explain the very low attrition rate Reed enjoys here. Singapore-based Ms Chaturvedi adds: "If you have a highly politicised and competitive environment, there will be a situation where people around the stars will never be able to flourish and these people will leave."

The scary bit is that the business will be reliant on one or two people, which the rest will resent.

民生民财

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兑换商日卖200万

温伟中 报道

woonwj@sph.com.sg

新币对马币兑换率创14年新高,令吉大抢手,有兑换商一天卖出200万令吉(约80万新元)!

最近兑换率创下1新元对2.5令吉的高峰,国人纷纷换马币,全岛许多兑换商的门口都大排人龙。

在红灯码头营业的钱币兑换兼批发商Crown Exchange负责人说,平日卖出不超过100万令吉,但过去5天每天都卖出超过100万

令吉,交易量增加15%。负责人说,过去5天每天平均卖出120万令吉(约48万新元),其中一天甚至卖出200万令吉(约80万新元)。

据了解,这几天他的门市生意,平均每天卖出10万令吉(约4万新元),其余都是批发给兑换商。

他说,货源目前还算充足,还不至于“钱不够用”。

在武吉巴督组屋区营业的钱币兑换商陈钦河(58岁)说,这几天的兑换率是1新元可兑

换2.495令吉,兑换商买入则为2.503令吉兑1新元左右。

他透露,最近一两年新山兑换商不约而同压低汇率,在本地换马币,每100新元可以比在新山多换3令吉。在新山每100新元,只能换得大约247令吉。

据了解,这几天换马币的主要是到马来西亚购物的国人,以及在本地工作的马国人。

在文礼营业的一家兑换商说,平日以换100新元到200新元的顾客是主流,这几天更多人拿200新元到1000新元来换令吉。



仁立国际执行董事梁昌国说,马国工友会因为兑换率而更愿意来新工作。



4美菜篮子

福建咸鸭

烧鸭、卤鸭大家都尝过,但你可知道咸鸭有何味道?小晶带你品尝传统的福建咸鸭!

在汤申路上段的熟食中心内,有一家名为“亚一传统福建咸鸭”的摊位。每天早上9时开档,不到5小时,咸鸭都被抢购一空。

老板坚持使用真材实料,所以每天只烹调售卖10来只鸭。

据悉,咸鸭的烹调方法,是将鸭子放入特制汤料中煮熟让鸭子入味,不油腻,最适合讲究健康的都市人。

除了咸鸭饭外,摊位也售卖咸鸭生面。为了一尝咸鸭的味道,小晶叫了一份3元5角的咸鸭生面。

咸鸭肉鲜嫩又带咬劲,是必试的佳肴。生面汤虽然清甜美味,但又不会喧宾夺主。

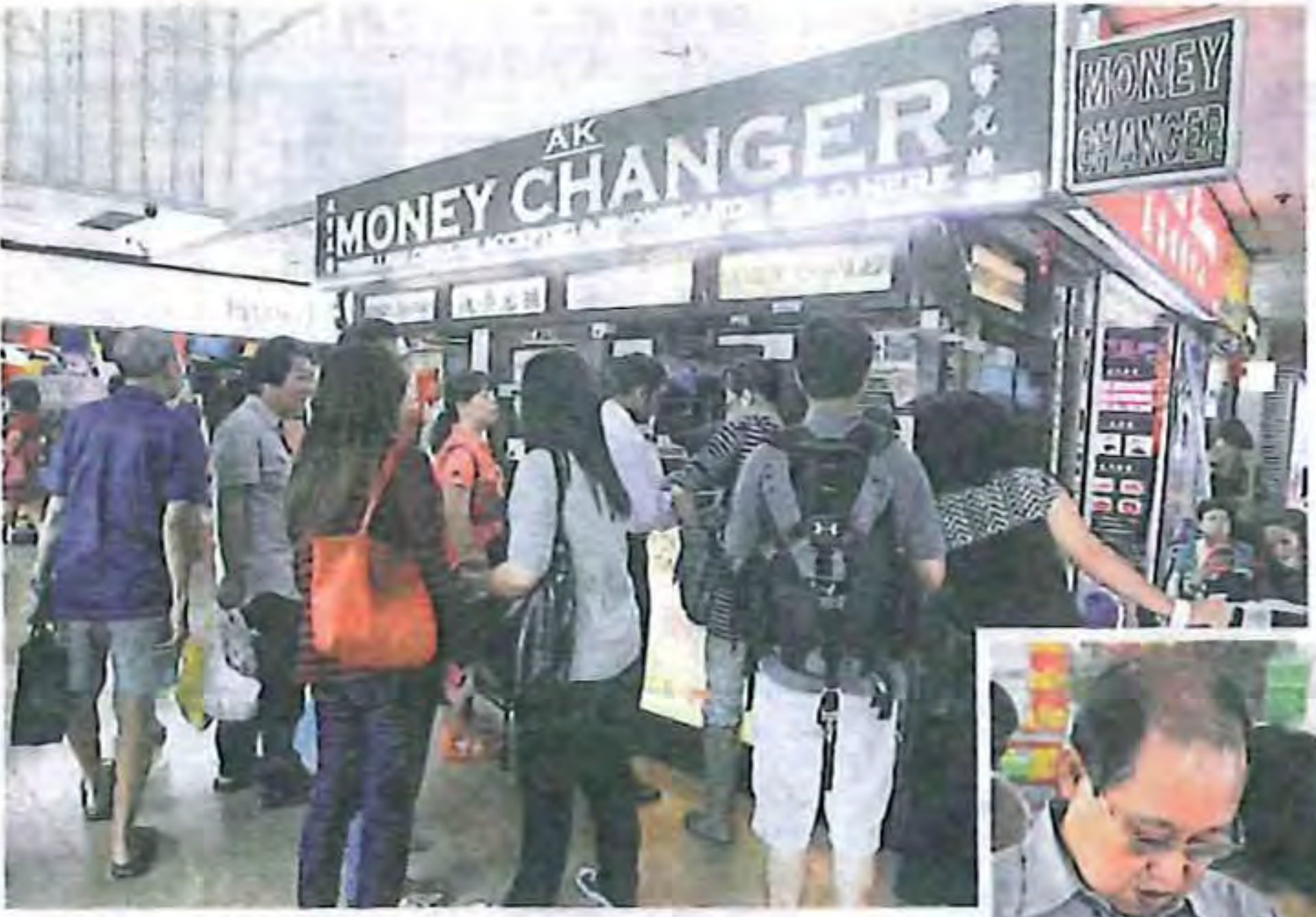
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590 Upper Thomson Road #01-28
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好康密探: 小晶

每逢周一、三、五和日刊登。



马青年准备越堤求职 掀赚新币潮

马企业急应对

马国料掀越堤抢赚新币潮,预料不少人可能来新求职,马国企业急拟策略挽留人才。

据马国报章报道,随着新币越来越坚挺,更多马国青年已摩拳擦掌,准备越堤求职。

新山中华工商总会会长罗烈贤呼吁,企业应采取“软策略”,加强各种员工福利保障和发展机会,以挽留人才。

马国中小企业公会总会长郑己胜说,新国消费高,若不选择每日往返新马,花在狮城的住食消费,将使马国员工的薪资所剩无几,倒不如在本地就业。

他说,对新加坡来说,马国工友的勤奋态度和掌握3种语言都是优势。

更多马国人 来新当巴士司机

人力专家说,未来将有更多马国人来新工作,尤其是当巴士司机。

仁立国际执行董事梁昌国说,从2007到2011年,许多公司较愿意聘请中国工人,马国工友相对被冷落。

“但随着人民币持续坚挺,中国人出国的意愿降低。而在人力市场,因为目前的固打限制,中国、

国人纷纷换马币,全岛许多兑换商的门口都大排人龙。

现在到一些咖啡店、超市、零售店购物时刷信用卡,如果数额少,可以免签名!有公众担心少了防线,被盗刷卡白白损失!

本地多家餐饮店、零售店和超市,纷纷推出免签名信用卡付款系统。例如在星巴克(Starbucks)咖啡店、平价超市、Guardian药房等,使用威士卡或万事达卡结账时,在某个数目以下,可免签名。

公众亚历士说,最近发现,在平价超市购物不超过45元,用万事达信用卡付款,刷卡后不需签名就能过账。他为此担心,万一信用卡遗失,被别人捡到,就

45元以下 刷卡免签名

零售店新做法 顾客怕怕

在平价超市等零售地点消费,如果数额少,可以免签名。(档案照片)



郭倩婷 报道 kwokst@sph.com.sg

可在不必签名的情况下购物。

“信用卡持有人不必签名,这也就是没有保安可言。难道以后用提款卡取款也不必密码吗?”

执行员林女士(36岁)认为,刷卡免签名虽然很方便,但有一些风险。

她说:“优点是年长父母不必随身带太多现金,但如果信用卡不

必签名就算付账,会担心遗失后可能容易有所损失。”

在平价超市购物不超过35元,顾客用任何银行发出的威士卡刷卡结账,不需签名;如果购物不超过45元,用任何银行发出的万事达卡结账,也不需签名。

林女士说,还好不必签名的购物款额不算太高,刷卡超出规定的款额,还是需签名。

平价超市: 不必签名 方便顾客

顾客如果发现丢失信用卡或信用卡被盗用,应立即通知发出信用卡的相关银行。

平价超市回复本报询问时说,不必签名的信用卡付款系统,是要为顾客提供方便。

这个付款系统在本地多个零售领域如餐饮店等,已采用多时。



梁利国(左起),侯爱玲以及符允耀是“晚报6月份最轰动新闻”投选活动的幸运得主。(摄影/赖南达)

晚报6月份最轰动新闻 3读者得奖

参加“晚报6月份最轰动新闻”投选活动,三名读者幸运赢得丰富奖品!

“康希等5人被控失信2400万”的新闻,被最多读者投选为6月份最轰动新闻。

在众多读者寄来的表格中,被抽中的符允耀(32岁,工程师),获得一台5寸平板电脑,梁利国(43岁,货仓人员)赢得一台摄影

录像机,侯爱玲(37岁,美发货品员)获得一台相机。

三人阅读《联合晚报》都已有10多到20多年,除了新闻,他们也喜欢晚报的娱乐与体育新闻。

本报将继续举办“最轰动新闻”投选活动,读者请注意每月底刊登的表格,在截止日期前寄到本报参加,以赢取奖品。

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THIS WEEK'S TOPIC

How is the weaker Sing dollar, and eurozone debt crisis in general, affecting businesses in Singapore, and is it likely to get better or worse? What should businesses here do in response, if anything?

Weathering the euro storm

Alex Hungate
Group General Manager and CEO
HSBC Singapore

GROWTH in Singapore's high beta economy will be constrained by weak global economic conditions and potential downside risks to Europe. However, most of Asia remains in robust shape. Compared to 2008, Asia's trade exposure to the West is lower. We expect that businesses will exercise more caution, and investment and export growth will likely be hampered in the short term with weaker exports to Europe. But, with an adequate policy response, especially from China, which has for many regional economies now become the biggest trade partner, we do not believe that Asia's growth will collapse.

Fundamentals in Singapore remain relatively sound. Private consumption growth is also likely to hold up reasonably well. We believe Singapore's strength as a global hub for international trade will stand us in good stead. As many businesses here are export-oriented with sales in US dollars, the recent weakening Sing dollar will be beneficial.

We are confident that most Singapore businesses will be in a strong position to weather these challenges.

Martin Jones
Country Manager
Atradius Singapore

THE inter-linking of global trade, export consumption and capital markets means that open, export-driven economies like Singapore are not immune from global economic trouble. The likely reduction in GDP growth in emerging economies and recession in Europe.

Philippe HJ Huinck
Regional Managing Director, South and South East Asia
International SOS

AS a trade-dependent economy and a regional financial hub, Singapore businesses will be hit hard by the eurozone debt crisis in the trade and finance sectors.

While International SOS has its global headquarters in Singapore and we mainly transact in US dollars, having to do business across 74 countries exposes us to exchange rate fluctuations on a daily basis. To counter this risk, we hedge our currency exposure to achieve financial stability.

We believe that the Singapore economy may have a challenging time ahead given the climate of uncertainty around the eurozone crisis. The best advice to businesses in Singapore, in this context, would be to hedge against currencies they have exposure to, leverage suppliers that can help reduce cost and explore new markets for boosting revenues.

Dora Hoan
Group CEO
Best World International Ltd

EXPORT-ORIENTED Singapore will bear the inevitable brunt of the uncertainty coming from the eurozone crisis. The weaker Sing dollar will also result in our imports being more expensive, which may in turn reduce our profitability. However, there has been a surge in Singapore-EU trade volumes despite expectations of lower export levels. While the future of the eurozone may seem bleak, Singapore has a record of being relatively insulated from global crises in the past.



To reduce earnings volatility, businesses here must have in place a strong treasury team which will be responsible for the management of foreign currency exchange risk. Even though a Greek exit from the eurozone is less likely after the June 17 elections, no one can predict what the outcome will be. We must be prepared to take appropriate action, such as negotiating special credit terms or in a settlement currency, to cushion any blow lest the situation in the eurozone spirals out of control.

Dhirendra Shantilal
Senior Vice-President – Asia Pacific
Kelly Services

THE weakening Singapore dollar, coupled with the deepening of the eurozone debt crisis, will inevitably lead to an increase in business costs. As growth prospects in Asia and Singapore's financial infrastructure continue to be robust, businesses would not be too negatively affected and may even be able to take advantage of the structural unemployment in Europe to make strategic hires.

It is vital for businesses to continue to be innovative in the way they manage their operations by focusing on effective resource allocations, be it cash flow or talent management in such a challenging environment.

Joshua Yim
CEO
Achieve Group

FROM an economic point of view, a weaker Sing dollar is a plus for exports, given that Singapore is largely an

export-driven country. Products manufactured in Singapore will thus be more competitive in the international arena.

The global economy may continue to face choppy times ahead. But I believe that any fallout from the eurozone crisis will be contained, as world leaders from the G-7 and G-20 nations are more astute and collaborative in terms of devising economic mechanisms and strategies as compared to a few years ago.

Businesses should always be on their guard. My personal take is that we must always be optimistically cautious because otherwise, we will be regressing and not moving forward. The economy will always go through cycles. Given that economic cycles are getting very short, I believe that when we are in a down-cycle, we should capitalise on the opportunity to invest to enhance our capabilities and infrastructure in order to ready ourselves for the upswing.

Annie Yap
Managing Director
AYP Associates Pte Ltd

SINCE Singapore is an export-dependent economy, the weaker Sing dollar immediately translates into bigger profits and increased demand for local businesses with foreign customers. Foreign investors from countries other than the European nations will be attracted to cheaper rates here, and the inflow of investment can help us tide through the current financial doldrums. These effects put us on a natural path to recovery, which is now hindered only by risk-averse attitudes of European investors. As Vishnu Varathan pointed out, we can only head upwards from here once this obstacle is removed.

Nick McGrath
Chief Executive Officer
Aims AMP Capital Industrial Reit

WE are confident that Aims AMP Capital Industrial Reit (AA Reit) would withstand any Singapore downturn that may result from the issues in the European Union. AA Reit has no foreign currency exposure, and is fully funded in Singapore dollars, with no debt due for renewal until October 2013.

The trust, rated investment grade by Standard & Poor's, has a solid and diversified capital structure. We have been prudently managing capital, with leverage maintained at around 30 per cent for 10 consecutive quarters as at March 31. The trust is also delivering stable cashflows and unitholder distributions from the defensive industrial sector and is very well positioned to continue its strong performance.

Teng Yeow Heng Michael
Managing Director
Corporate Turnaround Centre Pte Ltd

THE weaker Singapore dollar will help our Singapore businesses as it makes us more price-competitive. However, it is going to escalate imported inflation.

The eurozone debt crisis is going to be the proverbial straw that breaks the back of the global economy which is already very anaemic. We have not seen the worst of the eurozone crisis yet. The problem has not been resolved for several years as it is both political and economic in nature and will subsequently result in the break-up of the European Union.

In a recessionary market, businesses need to quickly implement turnaround and transformation strategies. They need to form strategic alliances to leverage on each other's competitive advantages. Cash flow is

Nonetheless, businesses here can do more than lie in wait for the crisis to pass. Now is an excellent time for those with overseas operations to reap the profits from abroad or use those profits to drive more business. With the eurozone down, we can still turn to other regions such as Asia as our source of recovery.

David Leong
Managing Director
PeopleWorldwide Consulting Pte Ltd

WHEN the global economy goes into a tailspin as a result of the eurozone debt crisis, there will be revaluation and rebalancing of the economy. The US dollar will continue to strengthen relative to many currencies, including the Sing dollar.

The Sing dollar's depreciation against the US dollar will work better in such a crisis and the Monetary Authority of Singapore is unlikely to intervene and will let the Sing dollar slide in the short term. At the minimum, a weaker Sing dollar will enhance export competitiveness and attractiveness of service-related industries. Businesses should take a hedged position, in the short to mid term, against such wild gyrations of US-Sing dollar paired valuations as movements of both the currencies may affect profitability or entirely wipe out profits.

For the complete list of views
from CEOs, go to
<http://businesstimes.com.sg>

THIS WEEK'S TOPIC

What key features would you recommend to the Entrepreneurship Education Taskforce for its proposed entrepreneurship programme? What else can be done to nurture and encourage entrepreneurial-minded students?

Catching them young



THE STRAITS TIMES FILE PHOTO

Francis Wong
Managing Director
Capitol Optical Co Pte Ltd

TODAY'S business and management schools share management knowledge very well, but fall short of imparting business wisdom. Entrepreneurship is about being hungry for success, having the drive to make any venture a successful business. It is the ability to have an idea and make it happen, tackling problems that come with it, and creating solutions to enable plans to materialise.

Hence, entrepreneurship education should focus on developing skills of problem identification, and lessons can then be on innovative problem solving.

To foster future entrepreneurs with "hunger", one lesson should be a "fasting" module which would entail developing an idea with limited resources. That's one way of learning about business in the real world.

Ron Sim
Chairman & CEO
OSIM International

ENTREPRENEURSHIP is about hunger, desire and despair – so fundamentally, it is about a person's will to change his environment, the desire to pursue his dreams and the circumstantial disparity that forces him to change.

Therefore key features should centre on character building, fighting spirit, challenging norms and fostering the belief that change is the only option for creativity and innovation to survive.

It is not about being structured or being too process-oriented but about nurturing the fundamental understanding that, come what may, it is an opportunity and what you want to achieve in life.

Thomas Chua Kee Seng
Chairman and Managing Director
Teckwah Industrial Corporation Ltd

ONE of the key elements of a strong entrepreneurship programme is to provide a practical element as having theoretical knowledge of business is not sufficient to ensure survival, let alone success. Students need a hands-on approach to their studies and opportunities to get their hearts and minds immersed in business. Business leaders can play a role in mentoring and nurturing budding entrepreneurs, providing a safe environment for feedback and sharing.

Beyond the question of the curriculum, general attitudes and perceptions of society towards failure have to be changed, as the fear of failure is one of the key obstacles preventing many young people from venturing into the world of business.

Karl Chong
CEO
Groupon Singapore

I HAVE learnt through my journey with Groupon that the entrepreneurial venture is extremely challenging and involves a great deal of hard work and risk-taking that is not always rewarded.

The Entrepreneurship Education Taskforce initiative is a commendable one in that it will help the future generation learn the right skill sets, such as a fundamental knowledge and application of marketing and social media.

A savvy business perspective is also required – it's not always about inventing something new to address a specific need or gap but also about improving on existing ideas and bringing them to new markets and better gauging the total addressable market for revenue opportunities.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, I would look to the taskforce to educate parents on the successes of entrepreneurs and the support that government organisations provide, as entrepreneurial-minded students need strong parental and family support to nurture and encourage those who may otherwise feel the pressure to take the "safer" route for job security.

Max Armbruster
Chief Executive Officer
aQayo

THE best entrepreneurs are often not the best scholars, so educators will need to find new ways to spot talent early on – perhaps by organising more practical case studies and fewer paper-based examinations.

Educators should also be encouraging young entrepreneurs to dream big, and to think global. Singapore being a very small market, any local entrepreneur should be thinking about competing in international markets from the time of inception.

Educators can help by sharing the stories of successful Singaporean entrepreneurs who have built global businesses such as Olivia Lum, the founder of Hyflux; or Chew Hua Seng, the founder of Raffles Education.

Yeo Li Pheow
Principal and CEO
Republic Polytechnic

IT would be appropriate for the taskforce to consider creating videos showcasing 10 successful local entrepreneurs, with the successful entrepreneur sharing the critical success factor(s) for his business. In addition, a quarterly forum could be organised to engage young people who aspire to be entrepreneurs.

The organiser of this forum could invite successful local SME entrepreneurs to share their challenges and pitfalls in managing a start-up.

While not all youths will eventually be entrepreneurs, we can create programmes to promote the entrepreneurial spirit among youths. At Republic Polytechnic, through our problem-based learning approach, we strive to provide a unique learning environment to promote the entrepreneurial spirit and good corporate values among our students. In any case, we certainly look forward to the recommendations of the taskforce.

David Leong
Managing Director
PeopleWorldwide Consulting Pte Ltd

STARTING entrepreneurship education in schools is certainly a positive step forward in fostering the spirit of enterprise.

Entrepreneurship cannot be taught in a structured manner or through rote learning. It is not the same as maths where you know the formula and you will get the correct answer. It has to be an experiential process and is about shifting mindset on risk-taking, dare and nerve. The best approach is to organise an apprenticeship and mentorship where the students can get a real-life immersion with entrepreneurs.

From my personal experience of launching 11 start-ups since graduating from NUS, everything about entrepreneurship is intuition, gut feel and the appetite for risk. We can never cross that ocean to the distant shore unless we have the courage to lose sight of the shore.

Teaching entrepreneurship is about inculcating that spirit of enterprise, building charisma and confidence, and most importantly, a "dare to fail" attitude.

Jim Li Hui Hong
President/Founder
JSB TECH Pte Ltd

EARLY exposure of young students in school to entrepreneurship is a natural expansion and potentially fruitful strategy. Particularly in the area of technopreneurship, it is critical to provide basic knowledge on the importance of patents (intellectual property), as a form of competency and especially in stimulating original innovative ideas.

Globalisation and an increase in the middle class income group in our region over the years have also substantially pushed up purchasing power and the number of young consumers.

This requires like-minded would-be entrepreneurs to be well informed, nurtured and to envisage new products or services in response to their generation's challenges and needs.

Joshua Yim
CEO
Achieve Group

THERE is a reality series called *Angel's Gate* on Channel NewsAsia in which entrepreneurs from around the region pitch their dream business ideas to a panel of angel investors. It would be interesting if such an idea could be extended to educational institutions here. The schools can also engage successful entrepreneurs to give more talks to raise the awareness of entrepreneurship.

If the authorities are really serious about streamlining entrepreneurship into the education system, I would encourage incorporating exchange programmes where students can be attached to overseas universities or companies in Silicon Valley, for instance, which is a hot bed for entrepreneurship and start-ups. After all, nothing beats learning from first-hand experience.

Mark Billington
Regional Director, South-east Asia
ICAEW (The Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales)

ENTREPRENEURS and start-ups are important to the economy, so encouraging more entrepreneurship is an investment in Singapore. Finance and business skills, including cashflow management, market research and analysis, and preparing a business plan enhance your chances of becoming a successful entrepreneur.

Working with schools so that young people develop financial literacy early is a great way to lay sure foundations to help them fulfil their potential. Getting inspiration and learning from others is also important.

Providing pupils and students with access to, and input from, successful entrepreneurs who can both motivate and teach them valuable lessons would further encourage entrepreneurship at an earlier age.

Phupinder S Gill
CEO
CME Group

FOR future entrepreneurs in Singapore, the need to innovate in the face of new competition, regulation and economic conditions will be greater than ever. Students who learn not just to come up with big ideas, but also to continuously shape and mould those ideas to meet the needs of customers will have a leg up on their counterparts in an increasingly competitive global marketplace.

I believe that adding an element that includes real-world experience at organisations that recognise the need to constantly innovate will be invaluable to the students taking part in this wonderful programme.

THIS WEEK'S TOPIC

What is the impact of a low total fertility rate (TFR) on businesses in Singapore?
What more can the private sector do to support the family movement in Singapore?

For the family



THE STRAITS TIMES FILE PHOTO

Teng Yeow Heng Michael
Managing Director
Corporate Turnaround Centre Pte Ltd

It is wrong to assume that a growing population or high TFR helps business. One Imelda Marcos is better than a whole rural community of poor people for the shoe industry. Money buys shoes, not people.

A falling TFR can be compensated for by increasing productivity, offering Singaporeans higher-paid jobs and getting them to retire later. This way, as Singaporeans get richer, they spend more and can afford to have more babies.

The pro-family movement does help business as it raises staff morale. The private sector needs to encourage staff to spend more time at home by cutting back on unnecessary overtime. Companies need to offer paternal leave, flexi-hours and allow workers to go on no-pay leave to attend to family matters. Finally, the most important thing that management can do is to set a good example – have a happy family life that speaks more volumes to the staff than any policy can.

Andrea Ross
Managing Director (Singapore & Malaysia)
Robert Walters Singapore

THE private sector can work hand in hand with the government to support family life. Initiatives such as Eat with Your Family Day (EWYFD) that is commemorated every last Friday in May have allowed the private sector to play their part in supporting the family movement in Singapore. On this day, many companies island-wide – including Robert Walters – allow their employees to knock off earlier to bond with their family over dinner.

Additionally, the private sector can spearhead events such as organising company carnivals and fun fairs to cultivate bonding between employees and their family members or providing more support to facilitate its employees to achieve work-life balance.

John Koh
Managing Director
WMRC Private Ltd

THE impact of a low TFR on businesses will be significant and can have serious ramifications for our economy. Not only will it mean less supply of critical talent at their "prime" age, typically those aged 30 to 45, it would mean an even stronger dependence on foreign talent compared with what we are experiencing currently. A shrinking population also means a smaller pool of high-spending consumers. The ability to innovate and create new businesses will also be severely compromised if our low TFR were to persist.

Boon Yoon Chiang
Chairman
Jardine Matheson (Singapore)

DECLINING TFR appears to be a common feature among developed countries. Singapore is no exception.

Low TFR will result in a declining workforce and consequently a slowing down of economic growth unless offset by an increased inflow of immigrants and foreign workers. Unfortunately, this could lead to social issues impacting the value and fabric of our society.

It is, therefore, critical for both the public and private sectors to step up measures to reverse or at least arrest this declining TFR trend. Efforts in providing a conducive environment to have and bring up a family should be beefed up.

Apart from financial incentives, the government needs to moderate the costs of raising a family. The corporations should provide a favourable work environment for staff to achieve a better and happy work-life balance. Flexi-work should be encouraged particularly for women who wish to start a family or spend more time with their children.

The private sector can definitely do more to address the state of problems now. Besides advocating work-life balance in our workplace, businesses could do more to adopt non-traditional work practices, such as flexible hours and telecommuting, which could relieve the stresses of balancing work and family life.

The media can also play a part in reversing our chronically low TFR. Rather than depicting families as those which are economically successful or glamorising the lifestyles of DINKS (dual-income-no-kid couples), more emphasis should be on the joys of children and family life.

Hopefully, these efforts would subconsciously reverse the mentality of many Singaporeans who were brought up thinking that "two is enough".

Mark Billington
Regional Director, South-east Asia,
ICAEW (Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales)

DECLINING birth rates and an ageing population present a challenge for many developed nations. Ensuring that there are enough workers to balance the retired workforce is therefore a key challenge. This



means encouraging and supporting all sections of the population to stay in work but extra effort has to be focused on encouraging women both into a working career in the first place and back into work after a break to have a family.

ICAEW, for example, has a programme to encourage and help women return to work after maternity leave so that having a family and having a career is not an either/or choice.

Similarly, it is important that businesses recognise the valuable skills, experience and expertise of more mature workers. Again, helping ageing employees via more flexible working patterns is something from which employers can reap lots of benefit.

David Leong
Managing Director
PeopleWorldwide Consulting Pte Ltd

FAMILY planning must be a national concerted effort. Initiatives and legislation by the government is important to set the direction for the private sector. A clear articulation of family planning support by the government will allow employers to compute their HR costs better, and encouragement can come in the form

of tax rebates or reimbursable sums to the employers for loss hours due to maternity or paternity leave.

Support for the family movement must be a tripartite effort – involving the government, employer and the family unit. The movement can only begin when the family takes the first step to procreate.

Annie Yap
Managing Director
AYP Associates Pte Ltd

LOW TFR can be countered if paid maternity and childcare leave are extended or made flexible. Employers need to understand the challenges that a new mother faces, and be patient at work. Businesses may need to provide for older workers with delayed retirement, more pensions, smaller workload and slower working pace, and adjustments to the physical workplace. Employees must be viewed as long-term, not short-term, resources.

To support work-family balance, merely having a host of family-friendly schemes is insufficient. The value of the family needs to be integrated into working life, not just promoted alongside work. Family priorities should be acknowledged and accommodated, for instance through customised benefits. It is a continuous, dynamic process, and cannot be achieved within a Family Day or two.

SM Ang, Allen
Group Managing Director
Aldon Technologies Services Pte Ltd

THERE is no silver bullet to reverse the trend in TFR. Some developed countries, such as the Nordic countries, are able to achieve TFR above replacement level by introducing family-friendly policies that are supported by extremely high tax rates funded by businesses and tax payers. If this is the path that Singapore must take to support the family and encourage procreation, then businesses must be prepared to pay high taxes and high costs of doing businesses.

In a world of scarce resources, there will always be a trade-off. Businesses must accept the reality of higher taxes and higher costs of doing business to support the family and ensure that there is a sustainable population growth and steady supply of local labour, or face the prospect of a declining labour force.

For the complete list of views
from CEOs, go to
<http://businesstimes.com.sg>

本地社会学家:

取消小六会考 助鼓励生育



去年小六会考放榜前,学生家长齐聚学校,有些家长比学生更紧张。(档案照片)

温伟中 报道
woonwj@sph.com.sg

本地社会学家主张取消小六会考,减少家长因担心孩子面对“一考定终身”的压力。

新加坡政策研究院昨天发表《人口难题:人口推算》报告,新加坡国立大学社会学系副主任郑宝莲出席相关研讨会时指出,与其一味靠引进移民来解决诸多烦恼,不如自行解决生育率和相关问题。

她认为,已婚妇女因担心孩子无法适应一考定终身的压力环境,而不敢生育孩子。
小六会考能决定学生到名校或直通学校,升中四、中五或直通学校,升中,被视为“一考定终身”。我国25岁到29岁的

男女超过60%单身,为了鼓励他们结婚和生育,郑宝莲副教授提议,取消小六会考减少年轻家长的压力。

不过,教育专家、前中坡校长吴中博(面包物语总裁)今早受访时说,废除会考鼓励生育的提议“太简化问题”。

他说:“不生育或少生育,原因恐怕与生活费压力更有关,房价、车价、通胀涨得付开支,家长不敢多生。”

他说,就算废除小六会考,也需要换一个评定成绩的标准。“如果不要百米短跑,改成长跑选拔,还是难免竞争和比较。”
吴中博说,会考有利有弊,若废除也未必减少压力。

社工与家长:

社工和专家认为,我国教育制度因材施教,只要爱孩子,不与人比较,压力自然减少。

从事青少年辅导多年的张文旭(11青少年中心主席)说,据他接触到的“不生/少生”家长,两大原因是:注重自我空间和享受,以及认为“人生充满压力痛苦,何必生孩子出来受苦?”
他说,小六会考

不与人比较 压力自然减

是测试学习能力的方...
法,问题在于许多家长,“爱面子”过早给孩子压力。
他说:“我国教育制度本身因材施教,本条大路通罗马,工艺教育学院可以升理工大,这样的环境适合父母教育孩子,重点是父母

否给自己和孩子太多压力?”

家长:不太实际

家长符月芳(39岁,文员)说,取消小六会考不太实际。

“会考是公平的,也能合理。它有利于孩子到中学,为家长和学子的态度、风气和作风,需要调整,但取消会考不是办法。”



▲年轻夫妇迎接新生命。你会因担心会考压力和争抢花红,而不生或少生吗?(档案照片)



梁昌国



吴中博



张文旭



郑宝莲

社会学家也提议:

减表现花红 才不误生育

社会学家也提议减少表现花红,这样上班族才不会为了花红而加班加点,误了生育大计。

郑宝莲副教授认为,小六会考和表现花红,是妨碍本地妇女结婚生子的两大绊脚石,因此建议提高底薪的同时,减少表现花红。

人力专家:

表现花红重效率 并非看超时工作

人力专家说,表现花红重效率,而非超时工作;就算“把办公室当家”,花红不见得会多。

仁立国际执行董事梁昌国说,超时工作未必获得更多花红,许多大公司透明的评分机制,以工作效率决定表现好坏,超时多寡不是重点。
“这是一个公平的制度,能推动人们的

1年前为钱与母闹翻 儿坠楼2周 家人昨才知

郑迦馨报道
jxtay@sph.com.sg
潘丰源 摄影

1年前为借钱与母亲闹翻,40岁送货员与家人无联络,岂料半个月前坠楼惨死,家人昨天惊闻噩耗。

死者颜国华(40岁)是饮料送货员,生前住西部的四房式组屋。他是在4月18日早晨7时被发现坠楼,倒毙在家楼下,身上无证件,警方昨天辗转联络上他的家人。

死者母亲今早在女儿陪同下到验尸房办理认领遗体手续,受访时很哀痛,禁不住流泪。

她透露,她有5个子女,死者排第二。她说,儿子当送货员,月入千余元,还得支付房贷,生活相当辛苦,约几年前开始向她借钱。

死者母亲说,其他孩子虽给她生活费,但她也没有余钱,1年多前,为此曾来向她借钱,两人因此吵架。当时她一时生气,对儿子说:“如果来看我



▲死者颜国华的母亲今早到验尸房办理认领遗体手续。

只为了借钱,就别再来

了!”
她说,从那时起,儿子就找她,也没有和其他家人联络。 “儿子其实很孝顺,我知道他日子也不好过,很想念他,但不知道他住哪里,只知道他住蔡厝港或武吉班让。”

她说,女儿接到警方通知,急忙拨电话给她,她才惊悉儿子逝世。

儿称娶中国妻 母没见过媳妇

死者母亲说,儿子曾说已娶中国妻,但她从没见过这个媳妇。

她透露,她一直以为儿子单身,之前曾催他结婚,儿子竟说已娶妻。 “当时儿子似乎是开玩笑地说,我已跟一个中国女子注册,但我从没见过这个媳妇。”

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Hugues Delcourt

Country Executive, ABN AMRO Bank NV Singapore and Chief Executive Officer
ABN AMRO Private Banking Asia

WE applaud and support the government's commitment to building an open, fair and inclusive Singapore. As the oldest bank in Singapore, ABN AMRO has been an active employer and contributor to the local business community for over 180 years.

We actively support equal opportunity and employment for both local and foreign talent, regardless of nationality, gender and cultural backgrounds. We also invest in our existing talent pool in Singapore with customised development programmes with international graduate schools like INSEAD.

We look forward to further initiatives by the government in fostering sustainable inclusivity in the society. The key is to implement them in a transparent and effective manner for the long term without creating discriminatory sentiment within some pockets of society or community.

It is crucial to ensure that the business environment here remains competitive to allow companies and the economy to grow, paving the way for a better quality of life for all Singaporeans.

Jeffrey Goh

CEO
NETS

BUSINESSES can do a lot to help build an inclusive society. At NETS, we believe that for the company to succeed, we must help our people to move forward, particularly those at the lower levels.

For instance, our compensation package is designed not just to reward high performers, but also to take care of those at the lower levels by including one-time incentive payments to help them better manage rising costs and inflation. Our sizeable training budget helps our staff to upgrade and keep up with industry best practices.

We encourage our staff to grow with us as we want to develop leaders from within. And we have a sizeable number of long service staff with over 15 years of service and they are as committed and productive as their younger colleagues.

Eiji Koike

President & Group CEO
Cerebos Pacific Limited

AN "inclusive Singapore" needs to be built from within and more can be done to achieve this. At Cerebos, it is important for us to have ongoing engagement with employees and address their concerns. We are also currently building growth pipelines from within which will enable employees to be part of the company's growth.

In order to achieve this ideal, we believe in building the right values and aligning them between the company and employees. Since the beginning of this year, we have allowed employees time off from work to volunteer for charitable causes.

It is critical to empower employees instead of forcing them to participate in charitable causes as the values should come from the heart instead of being enforced. Cerebos will continue on our learning journey to build an "inclusive Singapore".

Phillip Overmyer

Chief Executive
Singapore International Chamber of Commerce

David Leong

Managing Director
PeopleWorldwide Consulting Pte Ltd

FOR all to enjoy Singapore's growth, the economic dividends must be shared through reallocation and redistribution of wealth to reduce the Gini coefficient and the rich-poor gap.

The slew of assistance programmes that are aimed at improving productivity with an end view of raising workers' incomes is a step in the right direction.

Employers must make the effort to ensure that, while preserving the core of the workforce for Singaporeans, their skills are raised through competency-based training through the Continuing Education and Training (CET) framework.

What the government can provide is stimulus and an enabling environment.

The reaction to this stimulus must come from participatory stakeholders. Only with active participation will there be an inclusiveness in Singapore's growth story.

Thirumalai Chandross

Chairman/CEO
Modern Montessori International Group

INCLUSION should not be viewed as a social agenda; all efforts of inclusion are for business opportunities now. A healthy company begets growth.

Company cultures must change to survive the next century as employee profiles and customer demographics are changing rapidly - particularly for the younger generation.

The choice of work for young people is no longer defined by the mandates of salary and benefits;

THIS WEEK'S TOPIC:

Are businesses doing enough to help build an 'inclusive Singapore'? What more should businesses, the government and workers themselves do to achieve this ideal?

Businesses for an inclusive Singapore



JOHN HENG

No one should be left out: Deputy Prime Minister Tharman Shanmugaratnam delivering his keynote address at the Singapore Business Awards gala dinner on March 20. In his speech, he said that businesses have an important role to play to ensure that Singapore's economic growth is inclusive

economic growth.

To realise this huge potential, there is a need for close collaboration between public and private, as well as people sectors to develop world-class talent and build capability. That is why Microsoft has been working closely with the small & medium businesses (SMBs), NGOs, education and the public sectors to develop these skills. Because through these partnerships, we believe such untapped talent can help secure the country's long-term competitive advantage and economic resilience and make a real impact for an inclusive Singapore.

it is now also influenced by the working culture - an inclusive working culture that embraces their opinions and contributions.

Take for instance Google Inc. Their inclusive and convivial corporate culture has people competing for jobs with them.

We may not be able to embrace an inclusive culture immediately, nonetheless businesses should always start with employees feeling integrated in shaping the organisations' goals and with the knowledge that their talent is recognised and rewarded without bias.

Working towards leveraging differences in companies requires a blended approach for a more engaging workforce.

Organisations which demonstrate that they value diversity enable employees to feel esteemed and heard.



Supporting employees and encouraging personal development through information sharing and informal mentoring opportunities not only fosters inclusiveness and development, but also innovation.

Teng Yeow Heng Michael

Managing Director
Corporate Turnaround Centre Pte Ltd

INCLUSIVE Singapore should mean putting Singaporeans first. Businesses should know that Singaporean workers are internationally recognised as being of world-class standard.

Back in the 1970s-1990s, multinational companies based here embarked on programmes to localise their workforce with Singaporeans as these foreign employers recognised the value that Singaporean employees could bring.

They also employed Singaporeans to manage their Asia-Pacific operations.

Our government needs to impose the requirements for companies to justify recruiting expatriates before issuing employment passes if locals can do the jobs. Many countries have such policies to protect their citizens.

Most importantly, our workers need to set a good example to contribute more to employers and demonstrate why they should be given priority in employment.

David Low

CEO
Futuristic Store Fixtures Pte Ltd

BUSINESSES, especially the service sector where operations are more visible to the public, do exhibit good signs of inclusiveness in the areas of corporate social responsibility.

We do see older workers being employed in various service lines, keeping the grey population gainfully employed. Likewise with the disabled community.

Keeping everyone engaged and connected to the society is instrumental to building an inclusive Singapore.

The spirit needs to be evangelised and fully acknowledged by individuals, not solely by

For the complete list of views from CEOs, go to <http://businesstimes.com.sg>



校方挑义工 有什么标准

由于竞争激烈,不少人要通过面试才能当义工,但校方以什么为依据录取,没有一个公开的标准.....

有家长指校方不透明



许翔宇 报道
hsiangyu@sph.com.sg

家长要当义工,怎么样才会被选上?家长指校方不透明!

教育部宣布,本地公民今年起在小一报名时,有优先权。有家长向本报反映,小一报名仍有检讨空间,家长义工就是其中一项。

为提高孩子进入热门小学的机会,不少家长申请当学校义工。有人指出,由于竞争激烈,不少人要通过面试才能当义工,但校方以什么为依据录取,没有一个公开的准则。

女儿今年4岁,打算明年申请当义工的吴先生(35岁)说,遴选家长义工的过程不透明。

“谁能说一个有能力的当翻译,或一个能指导羽毛球的家长,比一

为提高孩子进入热门小学的机会,不少家长申请当学校义工。(档案照片)

个义务指挥交通的家长,贡献更大?”

33岁的郭太太(家庭主妇)最近成功通过面试,成为大巴窑一所著名小学校的家长义工。

她表示,校方没有告诉她,是以什么条件录

取她。

“可能因为我是职业妈妈,较有时间履行义工工作?我一方面庆幸,另一方面却担心付出时间,孩子还是进了这所学校。”

家长义工得为学校服务至少40小时志愿服务

务,才能让孩子在2B阶段优先报名,但不包中。

2B阶段是让家长与学校有直接关系的教会或宗乡领袖或活跃社区领袖为孩子报名,当学额不够时,仍需抽签。

有家长认为

住越近 越优先

住越近,越优先!有家长认为,住靠近学校的孩子,应有优先权。



议员:

校方 凭需要 选义工

梁昌国:一些行业对身高、身材、肤质等有特别要求。

美貌也是双刃剑

美貌也是双刃剑,因业绩杰出,美貌行销员被同事排挤8年才获认可。

男人长得帅 起薪高 加薪快 美貌溢价比美女多5%

刘婵 报道
liuchan@sph.com.sg

长得美不如长得帅,男人的美貌溢价比美女高5%,起薪高,加薪快。

有海外研究显示,俊男比样貌一般的男性收入高17%,女性的“美貌溢价”只有12%。换言之,俊男“美貌溢价”比女性高。

前美姐礼仪顾问张思丽说,帅哥比美女“更值钱”,可能是重外貌的行业“阴盛阳衰”,竞争拉低了美女身价。“以银行业为例,仪表是私人及投资银行家必修的课,我的班里70%是女性。酒店和旅行社的行銷中层管理,也有60%是女性,女多男少。”

前美姐兼魅力潜能开发培训师梁茵Queenz创办人罗琦说,差距可能是男女的不平等,及女性在事业上常因生育等家庭因素,出现中断。

研究也发现,个人魅力可提升男性的起薪,并加快管理层男性的加薪速度。

罗琦说,长得帅,面试的印象好,谈薪水时自然较从容。此外,样貌好、口才佳,容易获得较多表现机会,促使加薪快。



▲男人的美貌溢价,比美女高5%。(档案照)

▲罗琦说:样貌好,面试官的印象佳,谈薪水时自然较包容。

上完仪态课 才能升职加薪

上完仪态课,能代表公司形象,才能升职加薪。

张思丽说,有些跨国企业在擢升员工前,会让他们上仪表课,确保形象可代表公司。人力资源专家也说,以貌取人还是有有的。

仁立国际执行董事梁昌国说,一些行业如银行、行销、服装及酒店业等,对身高、身材、肤质都有特定要求。



林雅诗,曾在跨国投资公司售卖投资产品,为拼业绩,她在完成一星期培训后,就趁周末打电话找客户。结果上班第一天就交出8万元加币(约10万新元)的漂亮业绩。

不过,同事的冷言冷语也顿时四起。

“到了第4天,都快被口水淹没了,结果我花了8年和各部门同事合作,他们了解我的为人和能力后,闲言闲语才停止。”

“我不否认样貌好是优势,但也要配合技巧及能力,才能成功。”



林雅诗为美貌付出代价,遭同事排挤8年才获认可。



张思丽:帅哥比美女“更值钱”,可能是重外貌的行业“阴盛阳衰”。

THIS WEEK'S TOPIC

Is it now more attractive for Singapore businesses, including SMEs, to invest and set up operations in the Iskandar region and southern Johor, or does more need to be done?
What areas of business would you recommend most strongly?

Looking across the Causeway

**David Leong**

Managing Director
PeopleWorldwide Consulting Pte Ltd

BEFORE Iskandar, Johor was already a great annex to many of Singapore's manufacturing companies, providing comparative price advantages in terms of land rent, manpower and raw materials. With Iskandar, the attraction and propositioning by the Malaysian government is even more compelling. Singapore companies should leverage on the proximity, costs and convenience advantages to develop an integral cross linkage with operations in Singapore, especially with a manpower constraint for many manufacturing concerns.

If the Malaysia government can consider attracting investors with a more liberal tax regime in Iskandar in particular, the region's potential to attract will be immense. Coupled with lesser bureaucracy and corruption, Iskandar will indeed be a must-have outpost for every Singaporean company choked by limitation of space and manpower.

Dora Hoan

Group CEO
Best World International Ltd

THE rampantly developing Iskandar region will be an attractive cost-cutting alternative for local companies in light of increasing business costs and manpower shortages. Singapore SMEs in the manufacturing sector will have a large manpower base to draw on. Healthcare companies might also benefit from fruitful investments in the region amid rising medical treatment costs in Singapore.

To truly establish Iskandar Malaysia as a hub for Singapore businesses, the government should work on several key issues. First, set up specialised departments to handle application and licensing processes for Singapore businesses; they must be transparent, efficient and effective. Second, reconsider the bumi equity policy, which is an impediment on foreign businesses.

Third, offer businesses competitive tax privileges on a par with Singapore. Fourth, increase security in the region to safeguard against thefts and break-ins. Finally, ensure that skilled labour is easy to source out, hire and train.

Ronald Lee

Managing Director
PrimeStaff Management Services Pte Ltd

THE initiatives announced by Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak are certainly a good first step. However, some of these measures will only come into effect many years down the road, such as the Rapid Transit System (RTS), which is slated for launch in 2018.

While the cost advantages of relocating to the Iskandar region may be a key attraction, this option may only be appropriate for certain kinds of businesses and not those that need to be in close proximity to their clients or suppliers who are based in Singapore. Clusters of related businesses need to be in place, followed by supporting businesses coming in after them.

Timing is critical, and SMEs that move to Iskandar at the wrong time may need lots of "stamina" in terms of strong financial backing and the patience to wait to see the fruits. Governments from both countries need to provide sufficient support to facilitate and encourage the move.

Besides those measures addressed by Prime Minister Najib, another factor that SMEs need to consider is the availability of the skill sets required by their business among the local workforce in Malaysia.

Annie Yap

Managing Director
AYP Associates Pte Ltd

THERE is potential for both Singapore and Malaysia to benefit where Iskandar is concerned. Singapore lacks the critical mass and has little land. Iskandar has significantly undeveloped land mass and a relatively youthful population. Coupled with the value of the ringgit, this could offer Singaporean businesses a cost-effective route for expansion and development.

Malaysia, would, of course, stand to gain as well from job creation and investment in the region as well as the increased connectivity that Singapore has. Should this venture prove successful, it would further help solidify the political and economic relationship between the two nations.

Of course, Iskandar Malaysia's potential to benefit Singapore depends on Malaysia following through on its promises that it will put in place better infrastructure, improve transport and reduce crime rates.

That the generally selective Temasek Holdings has decided to invest in Iskandar may be a vote of confidence that Iskandar Malaysia is moving in the right direction.

Teng Yeow Heng Michael

Managing Director
Corporate Turnaround Centre Pte Ltd

IT is timely for Singapore businesses to consider setting up operations in southern Johor. Many local businesses are facing a double whammy: high overheads and increasing foreign labour levy. Instead of investing in faraway countries, southern Johor is attractive because of its close proximity, lower overheads and similar cultural background.

However, I caution that the rules in Malaysia can change frequently; and should our local businesses decide to relocate there, this is one of the downside risks. Labour-intensive industries such as low-end manufacturing, sub-contracting, retailing as well as those dependent on Malaysia for raw materials and marketplace would better be operated from southern Johor.

**Loi Pok Yen**

Group CEO
CWT Limited

CORPORATIONS have more choices today. Iskandar appears logical initially due to its proximity and lower land costs relative to Singapore. However, these are but two considerations on a large laundry list which may also include the size of the domestic market, security and the amplexness of labour, to name a few.

Assuming that a corporation has the balance sheet to also take on country risk, other choices include Vietnam, China, Thailand and Indonesia which have mature and well run industrial parks. There is little else that Iskandar needs to promise; speed of execution is now the key to success.

For the complete list of views from CEOs, go to <http://businesstimes.com.sg>

专家收访: 大学生起薪高 未来加薪或受限

幅度比起薪低的同事来得低。

刘焯 报道
liuchan@sph.com.sg
起薪高也有“副作用”，若不快升级，未来的加薪幅度可受限！

教育部前天公布2011年大学毕业生的就业率和新调查。除了法律和医学院这两传统的“高薪”学系，商科和咨询系统毕业生的起薪也非常亮眼。

国大商学院荣誉学士学位的平均月薪在3871元，新加坡管理大学的工商管理学士学位(Cum Laude)及以上毕业生平均月薪3777元，南大商学院三年直达荣誉学士学位毕业生则月薪3245元。

资讯系统方面，国大电脑系毕业生的平均月薪为3911元；新大的平均月薪则是介于3637元到4294元。

受访人力专家认为，起薪高虽然有其好处，但毕业生也要做好心理准备，未来的加薪幅度恐不高。

幅度比起薪低的同事来得低。

高薪毕业生恐被“绑死”
另外，高薪毕业生在一种行业或机构。

仁立国际执行董事梁昌国说：“他们拿下的是‘精英’薪水，是在同一个圈子里打滚，比较低不会到薪水较低的其他行业。”

对于那些希望在别处发展，获得其他行业经验而成长的高薪毕业生，吴坤豪建议他们要调整心态，考虑新工作的其他发展优势。

他说：“一些公司、行业和职位惯性会给出较高的报酬，比如跨国公司在中小型企业有很大幅度的上调。”

梁昌国说，毕业生踏入社会的时机很重要，就算拥有同等的学历，若经济不好，毕业生的起薪可少10%到15%。



▲起薪高若不快升级，未来的加薪幅度会受限。(档案照片)



▲梁昌国



▲吴坤豪

毕业时机 起薪大不同

毕业时机很重要，经济萧条和经济大小时，毕业起薪可相差10%到15%。

梧槽坊3房式 叫价70万 溢价22万



产业市场经理: 这样的叫价 疯狂

梧槽坊4座被征用的组屋，已有30多年历史。(档案照片)

苏世鹏 报道
sohsp@sph.com.sg

梧槽坊3房式组屋叫价70万，如果成交，将是3房式组屋最高转售价记录。

这个在梧槽坊第4座的高楼3房式单位，面积约82平方公尺，估价48万元，叫价70万元意味着溢价(COV)为22万元。

高进产业市场经理黄奕磊认为，这样的叫价疯狂，3房式组屋70万元可是本地最高转售

价记录。他说：“卖家开出这个出乎可以想象的叫价，是否值得也是买家应该考虑的，即使成交也不应成为往后的参考价。”

黄奕磊也说，70万元可以考考虑申购执行共管公寓(EC)，或购买较小单位的大众化私人公寓。

梧槽坊4座组屋是因为兴建南北高速公路南部路段而被征用，并纳入选择性整体重建计划(简称SERS)。

博纳集团高级副总裁林永

富也指出，每逢建屋局宣布选择性整体重建计划后，就会有人漫天开价。

他说，有意购买者应该问清楚，当他们获得建屋局的新替代组屋时，是否有相等于22万元溢价的折扣。

其次，在获得新组屋和住上5年后，不能通过转售套现这22万元，也是另一个值得考虑的问题。

被征用组屋吸引人处 加冷地铁站 建替代组屋

梧槽坊被征用组屋吸引人之处，是建屋局将在加冷地铁站附近建造的新替代组屋。

在选择性整体重建计划下，卖家一般的叫价，会比市价高出大约10万元。

卖家一般叫价 比市价高约10万

在选择性整体重建计划下，卖家一般的叫价，会比市价高出大约10万元。

林永富举例说，金文泰5道的4房式转售市场价为40多万元，但整体重建影响的组屋卖家，叫价在50多万元。

他说：“从经验来说，与转售市价高出来，与转售市价高出3万元、5万元还比较，高出10万元还合理，因为多5万元就能获得SERS配

套。”

金文泰5道第321、322和323座3座组屋的374单位，去年2月被征用。受影响居民可选择搬到金文泰3道镇中心旁的新替代组屋。

建屋局过去1年宣布的选择性整体重建计划，还包括红山弄第1至3座以及第5至22座组屋、东海岸路4座组屋以及文礼通道第167至172座组屋。

Dip in hiring hits SMU's Class of 2011

HR experts say finance institutions, banks cut back on recruitment

■ BY AMELIA TAN

THE slowdown in the banking and finance sector has hit at least one university here.

Of last year's crop of graduates of the Singapore Management University (SMU), 95.6 per cent found jobs within six months of completing their final examinations - an impressive enough figure in and of itself, but below the 99.9 per cent of the Class of 2010 clocked.

The employment rates within that time frame for graduates of Nanyang Technological University (NTU) and National University of Singapore (NUS), on the other hand, held steady at about 90 per cent last year, compared with 2010.

Among NUS graduates, the rate was about 91 per cent, and among NTU graduates, about 90 per cent.

These numbers come from the Gradu-

ate Employment Survey just released by the Ministry of Education.

Human resource experts contacted said banks and financial institutions, known to hire heavily from SMU, had scaled back on recruitment in the past year because of worries the euro zone and United States debt crisis would worsen.

Ms Andrea Ross, managing director of professional recruiting consultancy Robert Walters for Singapore, Malaysia and Vietnam, said: "Many organisations - especially those in the banking and financial sector where these SMU graduates may be headed - are very cautious about bringing in new hires; they will do so only for replacement or critical positions."

But Mr David Leong, managing director of regional human resources firm People Worldwide Consulting, pointed out that the overall employment figures from NUS, NTU and SMU were still "very respectable". He said he was "conservatively optimistic" graduates here would find jobs in the coming months, now that the euro zone crisis seems to have stabilised.

Singapore Human Resources Institute executive director David Ang said he foresees hiring in the banking and finance sector to remain slow in the next few

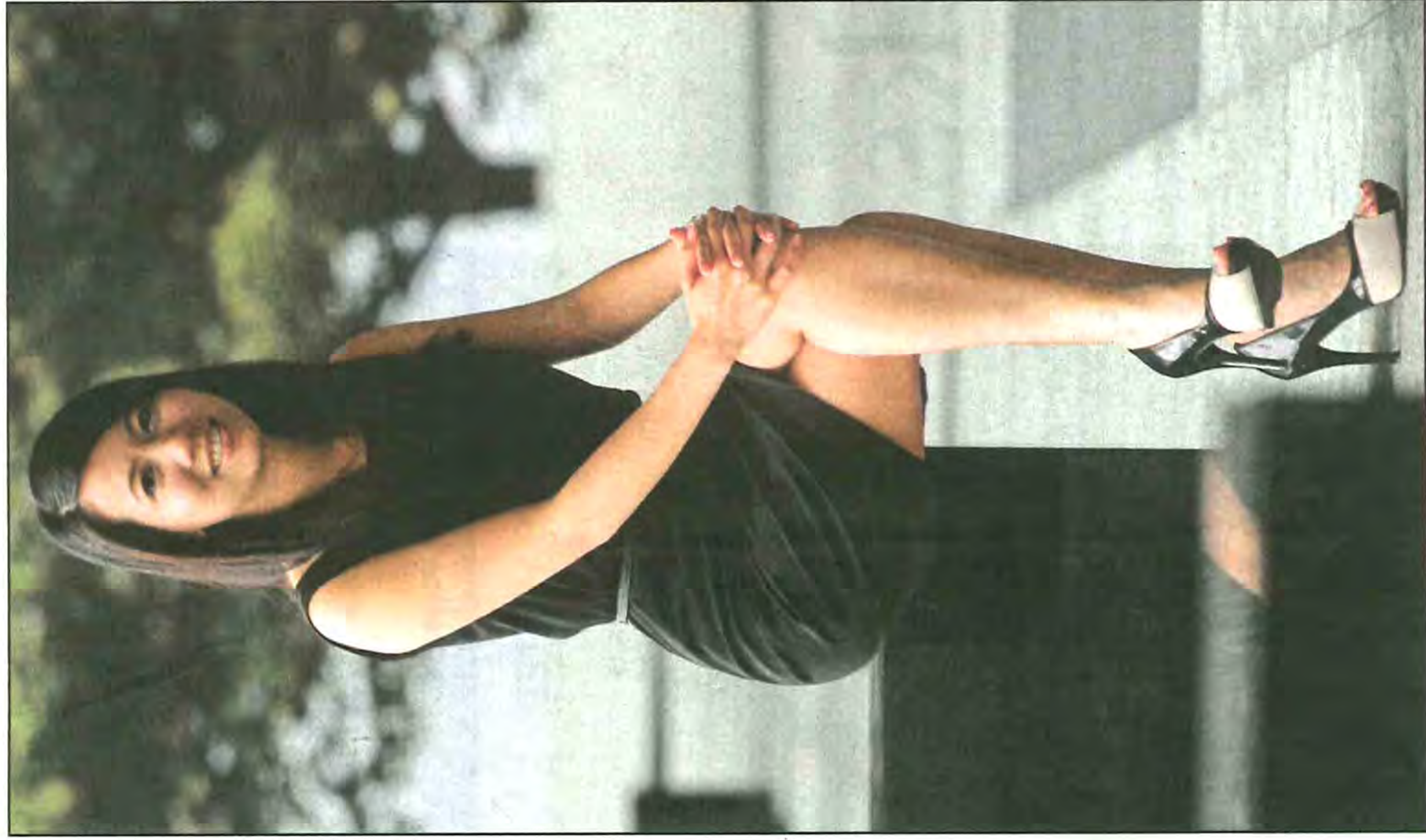


PHOTO: TERRENCE LIM FOR THE STRAITS TIMES

EXPERIENCE A BONUS

"I made use of the opportunities such as going for an exchange programme in Finland, doing an internship in Hong Kong and community work in Myanmar. I also took on leadership roles like being the tennis captain. I think having a well-rounded university experience helped me to stand out and land the job."

SMU graduate Jacintha Tan (left), now a management associate with Citibank

uncertain global economic conditions, which had a dampening effect across several sectors, including the banking and finance sector in the second half of 2011."

Newly minted teachers, lawyers and dentists, on the other hand, have posted a 100 per cent employment rate six months after their final examinations.

The Graduate Employment Survey also had figures on graduates' starting salaries, which increased for those who had completed their studies in all three universities. The average monthly salary among SMU graduates across five of the university's degree programmes and in full-time jobs was \$3,388, a rise of 3.6 per cent over 2010's figure of \$3,271.

It is the highest for the school, which has produced graduates since 2004.

The top 20 per cent of SMU graduates, generally in financial institutions, consulting and multinational corporations, took home \$5,039 on average.

Among NTU graduates, the average starting salary rose \$127, or 4.2 per cent, to \$3,152. NUS' Class of 2011 had average salaries of \$3,112, up 4.8 per cent from \$2,970 the year before.

At NTU, the top earners were computer engineering graduates, with a mean monthly salary of \$3,577; aerospace engineering graduates were next with \$3,489.

At NUS, law graduates were the top earners, with mean monthly salaries of \$5,037; medical graduates ranked second with mean monthly salaries of \$4,016.

Graduates who managed to land bank jobs said they are thankful.

SMU graduate Jacintha Tan, a management associate at Citibank, said she went on an exchange programme in Finland, did an internship in Hong Kong and community work in Myanmar. Now 23 and a holder of a double degree in accountancy and business management, she said: "I also took on leadership roles such as being the tennis captain. I think having a well-rounded university experience helped me to stand out and land the job."

✉ ameltan@sph.com.sg

months. "I advise graduates who want to get a job in banking and finance to do their research. The banks are hiring for specific departments and not across the board. Graduates may be in for a wait - perhaps about six months," he said.

An SMU spokesman said the 99.9 per cent employment rate posted by the Class of 2010 set a high base for comparison. Of last year's cohort achieving 95.6 per cent in six months, she said: "These healthy results were achieved despite the



▲英国调查,人生10大憾事中,最后悔存款太少。

人生10大憾事 最后悔存款太少

(伦敦讯)英国调查发现:人生有10大憾事,最后悔存款太少!

你常会为对自己做过的事情感到懊悔吗?英国一项调查显示,每人平均在每周会花费45分钟在“懊恼后悔”,希望时间能够倒退重来,让他们有机会补救。

大致上所有后悔的选项当中,后悔感情生活的人,占最多有20%,其次是家庭占18%,职业16%、健康14%和资产14%;有人后悔没有发财致富,当上有钱人,也有人后悔没在年轻时,过上一段浑浑噩噩的生活。

英国调查发现后悔的事情种类很多,排名前10的后悔事项当中,第一名是后悔存款积蓄太少;依序为后悔求学期间没有认真学习;后悔没充分锻炼自己;后悔没更努力了解世界;后悔染上烟瘾;后悔没与更多人保持联络;后悔没有年轻时好好照顾身体;后悔没有表达自己对长辈的感谢;后悔没有在成长过程中多拍些自己的照片;后悔太早结婚。

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民生民财

中医师守老店传家族生意

50年中药行

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叫价400万不卖

苏世鹏 报道
sohsp@sph.com.sg
吴庆顺 摄影

50年中药行,叫价400万也不卖!61岁中医师守老店,传家族生意。

老店座落在实龙岗花园大道。中医师曾浓盛(61岁)说,从没想过要卖店,这是因为有感情的牵绊,不是金钱可以衡量。

曾医师的父亲曾道杏是在60年代,以4万元买下这间店面,并创办中和保健参茸药行。“我10岁起,就和6个弟妹到店帮忙,

这间店简直就是我们的命根子。”

曾医师是长子,父亲在2001年过世后,店铺由他经营,他的母亲至今还健在。

“我如果现在改行,怎么向我的母亲和弟妹交代,况且这间店也是我的心血,不需要也不可能变卖。”

他也说,药材店已有一批忠实的顾客群,要是搬迁,对这些顾客也会造成不便。

顾客王太太(50岁,托儿所职员)就说,到相熟的店比较亲切,除了购买中药,也可以来求诊。



▲曾浓盛(右)和曾晨春父子都是中医师。



一家培育出 10多名医师

中医师家族,一家出10多名医师。

曾医师的6个弟妹、1个姑姑、1个妹夫,再加上他的妻子和1个儿子,都是中医师,称得上是中医世家。

“可能是相互影响,如果仔细再算,我的堂哥和好几名近亲也是中医师。”

晨春说:“从小在药材店里耳濡目染,对我决定学中医肯定有影响,现在也开始在店里为病人诊治。”



美研究: 上流精英较爱说谎

(综合讯)美国最新一项研究发现,经济能力较佳的上流社会人士易因个人利益说谎。

英基本上都追求自利,因此助长了连续的不道德行为。研究中进行的多项



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刘婵 报道
liuchan@sph.com.sg

免费帮阿叔阿嫂找工作!只需填姓名和电邮,阿叔阿嫂也能轻松上网,知道哪里有机可打。

这个由人力资源公司仁立国际推出的网站,名为“人力才酷”,将工作按性质分为24种职业领域,

包括销售、客服等,虽然也有高阶工作,但主要以蓝领工作为主。

市场蓝领工作 缺乏统一平台

仁立国际执行董事梁昌国说:“目前市场的蓝领工作,缺乏一个统一平台,雇主主要找人不知上哪找,工人要找工作也不知道从何找起,我们希望能填补这个空缺。”

他说,网站的资源将来自要找员工的



▲仁立国际执行董事梁昌国:目前市场上在蓝领工作缺乏一个统一平台。

希望能和基层及政府机构合作

为进一步“网罗”阿叔阿嫂,希望能和基层及政府机构合作。

究竟要如何吸引对网络一窍不通的阿叔阿嫂上网找工作?

梁昌国说,希望能和基层及政府机构如劳动发展局(WDA)与全国职工就业与职能培训中心(e2i)合作。

“若能和WDA及e2i合作,我们就在蓝领工人受训后,直接将他们的文凭资格及履历放上网,若有适合的工作可直接联络他们。我也希望通过基层,帮助到议员求职的选民。”

梁昌国说,公众也可直接联络他的公司,由其员工协助将资料放上网。仁立国际的电话是63252088。

今晚哪里看歌台

今晚(3月1日晚上7时30分)

歌台	地点	乐队	司仪
魅力灿烂夜	友诺士地铁站旁的广场 (航管官、丽声唱片和Everbee娱乐传媒呈献)	新蛙蛙	许琼芳、小辉(来宾: 劲Everbee舞群、丽声陆玟静、薇薇、爱真、杨丽莎、郑美容)

明晚(3月2日晚上7时30分)

歌台	地点	乐队	司仪
魅力灿烂夜	友诺士地铁站旁的广场 (航管官、丽声唱片和Everbee娱乐传媒呈献)	新蛙蛙	陈建彬、婷婷(来宾: 劲Everbee舞群、丽声陆玟静、薇薇、爱真、杨丽莎、郑美容)

THIS WEEK'S TOPIC

Does Budget 2012 address the most important issues facing Singapore and its people? What specific measures do you see as having a particularly significant impact on your industry, and on you personally?

A Budget that tackles key business, S'porean concerns

Jeffrey Goh
CEO
Nets

BUDGET 2012 was structured to ensure the long-term survivability of Singapore and its people. By raising the CPF contribution rates for older workers, the government is taking care of those who worked hard to build this nation. It is also a way of promoting self-reliance rather than dependence on the state.

The measures introduced to offset employers' costs in hiring older workers will help to encourage companies to hire them. But the measures to reduce the inflow of foreign workers would have a big impact on smaller businesses in the medium term, until sufficient numbers of older workers are able to fill the gap.

Rather than impose a blanket quota, perhaps we should be more discerning in determining the categories of foreign workers we require, and which we can do without.

Jeremy Lim
CEO
Fortis Healthcare Singapore

THE measures highlighted in Budget 2012 to encourage higher productivity and lesser reliance on foreign staff are painful but necessary. Singapore and Singaporeans will benefit from this restructuring.

However, in tightly regulated sectors like healthcare, these need to be accompanied by a review of manpower norms such as nurse-to-patient and staff-to-resident ratios which are set by the government. Companies embracing productivity initiatives such as tele-monitoring should be permitted lower ratios.

Matt Daly
General Manager
REC Solar, Asia Pacific

THE government has correctly identified an increasingly competitive labour market as a key business challenge, not only for Singapore but also increasingly so around the world. The industries of tomorrow will have to innovate and adopt new business models to ensure their survivability in this changing labour landscape.

At REC, we see this requirement to innovate come into practice in the operation of our Tuas facility in Singapore. While a plant of a similar size may employ 10,000 employees in China, our Tuas facility efficiently deploys 1,600 employees to ensure production quality and augment innovation and productivity.

THE Budget does not prepare us for the major problem of a looming global recession which will affect us badly as we are an export-oriented economy. The Budget or future off-Budget measures should consider pump-priming our economy by further investing in our infrastructure such as building underground city to create more land, developing underground reservoirs to mitigate the flooding problems, as well as for our future water storage, improving our MRT system, etc. And the Budget needs to make sure that our local SMEs get a bite of the cherry in all these projects.

However, the Budget does help improve the welfare of Singaporeans as compared to previous Budgets. For instance, the additional healthcare benefits and subsidies for senior citizens will help people like me. I also welcome the additional financial benefit of allowing for tax write-off for merger and acquisition costs. This will hopefully encourage companies to merge and restructure.

Paul Endacott
Managing Director, Singapore
Ambition

BUDGET 2012 has set the tone to address the challenging issues of slower economic growth and the ageing population of Singapore. The Enhanced Productivity and Innovation Credit and Training Support Grants would benefit those employers that commit to the long-term strategies approach in the areas of training, development and retention of its employees in this talent crunch.

As a specialised recruitment agency, we see some of our clients facing difficulties in building their businesses in the current skills shortage environment in



developing and developed countries, and we are seeing the same here. Enhancing productivity at all levels and employability of older workers are crucial towards economic growth, and Budget 2012 demonstrates initiatives addressing these elements.

In our industry where the labour force is largely based outside of Singapore, there is minimal direct impact but the various measures supporting SMEs in beefing up the human capital reinforces the key message in this year's Budget, driving growth with productivity.

Dora Hoan
Group CEO
Best World International Ltd

BUDGET 2012 underscores the government's desire to restructure Singapore's economy for the long term and demonstrates its willingness to deal with hot button issues. The government's firm measures, however, might lead to a shortage of manpower and rising business costs for SMEs. Burdens of SMEs are, to some extent, alleviated through schemes such as the PIC and SEC that offer rebates to offset certain business costs and encourage employment of locals and mature workers. SMEs may need to leverage these government grants and schemes to upgrade their businesses and stay competitive.

As Singapore heads in a new direction, SMEs need to buckle down and focus on two Rs. First, *replace* foreign manpower with locals. This involves a change in employment mindset, such as including flexible work hours and increasing part-time employment. Second, *reduce* manpower and, consequently, operating costs, through increasing productivity. SMEs unable to adapt

and change the way they operate their businesses, or phase out. While this will continue to be a challenge for many of our members, the introduction of a calibrated reduction in Dependency Ratio Ceilings will provide a transition period to ease companies' difficulties in reducing their reliance on foreign workers.

The immediate challenge facing companies is the high cost of doing business and this has not been addressed in the Budget. However, enhancements to the PIC scheme will benefit smaller companies in terms of cash flow and assist them in moving up the value chain through productivity improvement. Companies also stand to gain from the enhanced PIC claims on in-house training costs.

Providing certainty of tax treatment of capital gains and exempting charter fees for ships from withholding tax are areas that SICC has been putting forth in our recommendations to the MOF and we're pleased to see that these have been included in the Budget this year. These measures will enhance Singapore's competitiveness in the region.

Annie Yap
Managing Director
AYP Associates Pte Ltd

SINGAPORE'S new Budget seems to address many of the key concerns voiced by Singaporeans, such as the influx of foreign workers and improving public transportation – two issues that have come under scrutiny in recent times. It is also a positive sign that attention is paid to help the disabled, those from lower incomes as well as the elderly.

However, perhaps attention should also be given to other issues that may not impact Singaporeans in immediacy, but are no less important. One of this is environmental protection. A new scheme promises rebates for green vehicles, but more could be done, for instance, to compensate for deforestation taking place in order to widen roads.

In terms of businesses, it is encouraging that support will be provided for productivity enhancement and training as firms transition towards hiring more locals as per the new measures. Allowing SMEs to claim more expenditure costs when renovating is certainly helpful, but the Budget was silent on rental issues when spaces everywhere are dearly priced and lessees are sometimes at the mercy of their landlords. Such offsets would help ease the burden of companies, especially SMEs, as they adapt to the likely salary increases from hiring locals.

Loh Hoon Sun
Managing Director
Phillip Securities Pte Ltd

David Leong
Managing Director
PeopleWorldwide Consulting Pte Ltd

IT is clear that this Budget is a socially conscious Budget that features on the poor and aged – to be a more inclusive society taking care of Singaporeans with GST Vouchers and enhancements of essentially existing social frameworks like ComCare and Medisave. It is not a perfect Budget but I think it is a fair one in a year when Singaporeans are entering into an uncertain world.

From the business angle, it does look less than fair and employers have to scramble to look for ways to mitigate higher costs and manpower shortage. However, having said that, enough is never enough for manpower. I think the point is balance of needs. Eventually, statistics will show if the computational dependency ratio is fair or if it drives businesses down, out or away. Surely lack of manpower will not drive business up, only costs.

Now with \$1.1 billion worth of new buses to increase transport capacity, who will be driving these buses? A good ponder.

Singapore Human Resources Institute

THE SHRI supports the national productivity and innovation movement and we encourage all to take a positive approach to enhancing labour productivity of the employees.

Productivity and innovation improvement can certainly be achieved through investing in technology. And, it is welcome that such investments in capital enhancements can be supported through Budget reliefs and allowances from the government. However, more can be achieved through labour productivity, which is not limited to "training". It is not that these initiatives are wrong or unimportant. They are indeed necessary as investments in the right strategy can indeed bring about dramatic productivity improvements.

However, for long-term business sustainability and cultivating a productivity-minded workforce, more needs to be invested in manpower and organisational development. It is not enough to simply exhort workers "to be productive", management and leadership have the responsibility to lead the way.

The Budget can provide liberal support for companies seeking improvements in human resource management practices targeted at productivity enhancement.

Patrick Liew
CEO
HSR Property Group

AS the government tightens the tap for foreign workers, the hardest to be hit will be the SMEs. They have the least resources to improve productivity and even if they

For the complete list of views
from CEOs, go to
<http://business-times.com.sg>

THIS WEEK'S TOPIC:

How serious is the current eurozone crisis, and how could it affect businesses in this region? What do Singapore companies, particularly those in your own industry, need to do to protect themselves?

Andrea Ross

Managing Director (Singapore & Malaysia)
Robert Walters Singapore

AS global economic sentiment remains wary, financial hubs such as Singapore are undoubtedly impacted in the light of the troubled European economies. However, we do see potential for further growth within the region that companies can leverage on.

Within the recruitment industry, Robert Walters has weathered previous financial crises and tough market conditions.

Our strategy remains focused on organic expansion in key markets, and we will focus on talent retention as a growth strategy, investing in exceptional staff and teams to deliver the best recruitment service and trusted advice to our clients and candidates. Our longevity in the region – and continued expansion in emerging markets – will help us gain market share even during difficult times.

Paul Endacott

Managing Director – Singapore
Ambition

THE eurozone crisis is of much wider concern than just to organisations which sell products and services directly to it. The business world is currently very uncertain and this has dampened hiring activity, especially within the banking world. Talented workers are also taking a more cautious stance and are less inclined to move jobs, creating fewer vacancies in the market.

However, Asia is still seen as a growth opportunity and we believe companies must continue to invest in talent management strategies. This region will become increasingly competitive and, when the economy rebounds, what will differentiate the market leaders from the rest will be their people.

Dan McConaghy

President
FICO Asia-Pacific

THE IMF and World Bank have sharply reduced their forecasts for global economic growth, citing the eurozone crisis. In a recent FICO survey of senior bank risk officers on global issues that could put pressure on economic recovery, the eurozone crisis was cited most often, just edging out US government policies.

No one can predict the outcome in Europe, so

could create a silver lining for Singapore and our region given that the investment attention will be on Singapore and the Asia-Pacific.

Therefore Singapore companies could still be prepared for this “potential growth” and hedge the risk by diversification despite the eurozone crisis.

Lim Soon Hock

Managing Director
PLAN-B ICAG Pte Ltd

ALL indications point to a protracted delay in resolving the current eurozone crisis. It is prudent for businesses to take a pessimistic and conservative view. Even if the Greek debt is resolved, there are other hot spots within the eurozone that need to be addressed. This is evident from the recent downgrading of Moody's rating for many of the eurozone countries.

The current eurozone crisis is without doubt a contributing factor to business pessimism. Global external demand is trending down. Singapore companies are therefore better off deploying resources and attention to the region while the prospects remain good in the short term.

That said, businesses should remain conservative and spend money or invest only when there is greater certainty of returns and can be supported by positive cashflows, given the longer term uncertainty.

Businesses should brace themselves and plan for very tight liquidity in the market.

Dhirendra Shantilal

Senior Vice-President – Asia-Pacific
Kelly Services

FROM a human capital perspective, the crisis in the eurozone will inevitably help open up the talent migration pipelines towards APAC. We may see an increased migration of talent from the West as APAC continues to present career growth opportunities.

Global mobility has never been so seamless, and organisations looking to broaden their talent base should welcome the incoming talent population with open arms.

The global talent shortage is one that presents opportunities for the informed and the willingly mobile and it seems the first mover advantage is there for the taking.

Ho Chye Soon

General Manager, Commercial Business
Dell Singapore

THE volatility of the eurozone crisis has resulted in organisations in APAC, whether directly impacted or not, taking a more cautious approach and curbing their CAPEX.

Specifically within the technology sector, CIOs continue to face shrinking IT budgets. IT vendors are also caught in a fierce competition to provide the best-valued solutions to meet the changing needs of today's mobile workforce and demand for real-time collaboration solutions.

Yet, these challenges present many opportunities. Enterprises today are starting to adopt newer technologies such as cloud solutions and newer data management systems.

These open opportunities for vendors to deliver tailored end-to-end solutions. In helping to develop solutions that can be tailored to suit their varied needs, businesses can then focus on other aspects of their growth.

Patrick Liew

CEO
HSR Property Group

THE eurozone crisis is not the first nor the last crisis that will directly or indirectly impact Singapore companies. The key focus is not just to find ways to respond to every challenge but to develop a more resilient organisation that will not only survive turbulence but also exploit opportunities in every crisis to create advantages over less adaptive companies and build for stronger growth.

Entrepreneurs must have the willingness and capabilities to reinvent their current business model. Learning new ideas, competencies, and business processes is an ongoing process.

David Leong

Managing Director
PeopleWorldwide Consulting Pte Ltd

THE persistent eurozone crisis may lead to some dislodgement of member states or in a worst case situation, dissolution of the eurozone. Businesses across the world will have to re-peg and re-value their

trading currency and transactions including futures and derivatives based on the euro. That period can be mayhem as erratic price movements of the currency can wipe businesses out.

For Singapore, any size crisis in the eurozone will impact us and will invariably lead to a slowdown. However, that impact can be mitigated by Singapore's linkages to other larger markets like China, India and Indonesia.

Trade between these blocs may cushion the impact as the eurozone crisis mounts.

The eurozone crisis will bring about huge structural unemployment in Europe. The flow of human capital may witness a different trajectory – European talent fleeing to Asia.

David Low

CEO
Futuristic Store Fixtures Pte Ltd

WITH rising political pressures and unsettling huge debts, the euro crisis is real and here to stay with great impact in the foreseeable time frame.

My greatest concern is the worst scenario, seeing Euro disintegrate. This will create havoc in the market and no amount of preparation will alleviate any pain, as the consequences are too large to be quantified.

Businesses in this region are generally better protected given the high level of foreign reserves coupled with Asia's saving habit. The negative effect will seemingly be less pronounced compared to other regions. GDP will definitely take a hit, and across the board with no sectors spared.

As with all other companies, we need to practise greater financial prudence with due diligence on investment and spending.

On the other hand, being overly cautious may result in opportunity losses. A good calibration between the two, savings and spending, is very much needed to seize opportunities amid crisis.

For the complete list of views
from CEOs, go to
<http://businessimes.com.sg>

商家反应



对中小企业带来冲击

梁昌国
显然，这是一个具有社会意识的预算案。对穷和老弱的预算案。对企业来说，雇主必须设法应付出成本提高、人力短缺的问题……去年已推出调高外劳税、紧缩外劳配额顶限的措施，今年进一步减低外劳配额顶限，对企业必带来冲击，尤其是中小企业。

公众反应



让社会变得更和谐

钟添飞 (45岁，模特儿公司老板)
这是一个非常公平的预算案，让援助有需要的人，有助缩短贫富差距，让社会变得更和谐。从捐款的热忱来看，新加坡人一般都很很有爱心，应该不介意政府在资金集中中在帮助有需要的人。

民众反应



关怀老人 我感欣慰

徐德华 (56岁，摊贩)
这次的预算案特别关怀老人，我感到很欣慰，也是直接的受益者。我母亲患病坐轮椅，我清女照顾她，今后可享受120元津贴，差不多把外劳税(170元)都抵消了。其他医疗和护理津贴对我将来也会很有帮助。



低收入者 承受较小冲击

朱碧珍 (53岁，家庭主妇)
我的家庭收入每月少过1500元，接下来能用消费税补助券完全或部分抵消消费税，让我们这些低收入者在面对接下来可能发生的经济危机，承受的冲击和压力较小。



调高公积金缴交率

→新措施9月1日起生效。
→50到65岁员工的公积金缴交率将调高，介于0.5到2.5个百分点(见右表)。

2万元乐龄安居花红

→55岁或以上国人，大屋换小屋可得最多2万元，其中现款1万5000元，另5000元进公积金户头。
→卖掉现有组屋，需购买三房式或更小组屋单位。

把组屋卖回给政府得2万元

→改善屋契回购计划，把剩余组屋契卖回给政府，目前津贴是1万元，将增至2万元。
→其中现款1万5000元，另5000元进公积金户头。

→屋主需满62岁，只享受过一次购屋津贴，只限二房式和三房式屋宇。

每年高达450元保健储蓄填补

→在新推出的“消费税补助券”计划下，65岁以上者可得保健储蓄填补。
→65岁及以上，住屋年值不超过1万3000元，填补是250元至450元。

一次性保健储蓄填补

年龄	填补额
40岁及以下	50元
41-50岁	100元
51-60岁	200元
61-75岁	300元
76岁及以上	400元

今年9月起公积金缴交率 (%)

年龄	雇主	雇员	总计
50岁以下	16	20	36
50-55岁	14(+2)	18.5(+0.5)	32.5(+2.5)
55-60岁	10.5(+1.5)	13(+0.5)	23.5(+2)
60-65岁	7(+0.5)	7.5	14.5(+0.5)
65岁以上	6.5	5	11.5

→65岁及以上，住屋年值不超过2万元，填补是150元至350元。

购买健保双全填补达400元保健储蓄

→如果购买健保双全 (Medishield)，保健储蓄 (Medisave) 户头将获得填补。
→51至60岁填补200元，61至75岁是300元，76岁以上是400元。
→为老人增添安全配备，每户补贴约2000元。
→在家疗养护理，可获得补贴480至610元。
→需做长期医疗，可豁免消费税。
→健保双全的受保年龄顶限，从85岁延长到90岁。

收入扣税额元。

■奖励雇主
→雇主员工，可获得达240元。
→雇主 (Special E



6 (今年财政预算案的重点) 不是抗周期性经济衰退，而是正视新加坡的长远挑战并为我们的人民建构更美好的将来。

——尚达曼

记者观点

文 / 高健康

把措施落到实处

昨晚耗费不少时间，把财政部宣布的各项措施，整理成读者容易消化的内容。
尽管过去几年，我都参与报道财政预算案，但面对厚厚的财政预算案报告，我有时仍感到茫然，因为要消化起来确实不易。
都说今年的诸多措施都面向年长者、残疾人士和低收入家庭，他们往往极需救济，却因不了解措施内容或申请方法而找不到求助之门。
但愿接下来，政府相关机构与民间组织能够实地走访这些弱势群体，向他们解说，帮助符合条件者提出申请，把措施真正落实。



记者观点

文 / 王瑞珊

改善贫困者生活

每年这时，国人都希望财长多派“红包”给大家。
撇开长远的国家经济和社会利益不说，这次预算案对我这种未到中年、未婚、没车没房、和家人同住五房式组屋的受薪阶层，所获得的个人好处其实不多。
然而，再英明能干的政府，也无法同时照顾所有国人的需求。
相比年长国人、残疾人士和低收入家庭，我的日子确实不难过。把有限的资源重点放在生活困苦的人身上，逐步改善他们的生活，相信不只是政府，也是许多国人的愿望。



记者观点

‘有感激’

这次预算案，许多“有感激，没感动”至形容为“无感”预算案。
政府扶助老贫弱势群体努力大家都看得到，到根本问题没解决。
虽有各种补贴，但多年“加辛没加薪”百元补贴聊胜于无，连杯水车薪。
医疗津贴多了，老人级的贵，一些老人药。
巴士增加没人开，环境“缩短寿命”。
看来各方还须努力。

THIS WEEK'S TOPIC

Are we seeing a "new" Myanmar, and what does this tell us about its potential going forward?
What areas of mutual business opportunity do you see opening up between Myanmar and Singapore as well as its other Asean neighbours?

The promise of Myanmar

International Enterprise Singapore

WITH a population of 54 million, rich natural resources and occupying a strategic location where large markets such as India, China and the Mekong region are within reach, Myanmar offers opportunities not only within the country itself but also the possibility of being an important hub for the wider region. If the current liberalisation trajectory is maintained, there would be significant opportunities in sectors such as energy, infrastructure, manufacturing and trading.

There will of course be operational challenges too. To mitigate this, Singapore companies could get in early to enjoy first-mover advantage, secure a good partner and focus on the appropriate sectors.

Jeffrey Goh

CEO
NETS

MYANMAR has already signalled its desire to pursue democracy and is now ready to take the next step towards social and economic development. While businesses and investors are eager to get going, accelerating the investment in the infrastructure and communication network is critical.

As electronic payment is virtually non-existent, there is an urgency to establish an electronic payment infrastructure to facilitate local payment as well as cross-border exchanges, as this would be beneficial for trade and commerce. Singapore, being an established financial centre, has the necessary financial and

the decision-making has been top down; and building an efficient delivery system will be a challenge. Other challenges include the dual exchange system and lack of capacity in power generation.

Patrick Liew

CEO
HSR Property Group

AS Myanmar seeks to liberalise its economy, Singapore can position itself as a gateway and switching centre to help it to connect to the world. On a G2G level, we can help prepare its public administration system to be operationally ready for the global economy. Our private sector can capitalise on opportunities to modernise its infrastructure, including upgrading its transportation, communication and other vital services. We should exploit our advantages to train its civil servants and workers on different levels of the organisational hierarchy, and this will have a multiplier effect on our economy.

In the FY 2012 Budget, provisions should be made to help our entrepreneurs achieve first-mover advantage in emerging countries such as Myanmar.

Dora Hoan

Group CEO
Best World International Ltd

MYANMAR'S unprecedented transition to democracy is

who has no money. Myanmar is still one of the world's poorest countries. Also, I hope that investors do learn from the bitter lessons of venturing into China and Vietnam when they first opened up – many pioneers who ventured into these countries got all the arrows and lost money.

After so many years of isolation, Myanmar needs to set up and improve the much needed regulatory, infrastructural and banking framework. On the upside, Myanmar has rich natural resources – teak, oil, gold, gas, jade and gems as well as a large pool of low-cost and English-speaking labour. As a first step, foreign companies may want to set up representative offices in Myanmar to closely monitor and poise themselves for development before putting in huge investments.

Andrea Ross

Managing Director (Singapore & Malaysia)
Robert Walters Singapore

AFTER decades of military rule, Myanmar finally has a civilian government in place. As its priority still remains directed at maintaining peace and stability, it may take some time for economic growth to transpire. Additionally, a transition to its aspired state of a democracy will take some time. That said, the country offers great trading potential within the region.

Myanmar's recent announcement to offer tax breaks to foreign investors is yet another positive step in encouraging further economic growth – and allows the country to leverage on its position within Asean to attract more foreign investment. With the signing of the

need of investment.

The recent signing of the agreement between Myanmar and Singapore is an important initiative, with the latter set to provide training for reforms in the legal, banking and financial sectors in Myanmar. These are important sectors which hold much potential for investors. As the country opens up, it will need to develop its labour force fairly quickly. There is thus potential in areas such as human resource development, technical and vocational education, and information technology development.

David Leong

Managing Director
PeopleWorldwide Consulting Pte Ltd

SINGAPOREAN companies are likely to be more involved in the investment opportunities in Myanmar as the reclusive state embarks on political and economic reforms. PeopleWorldwide has set up training facilities in Myanmar since 2004 to train skilled workers for jobs in Singapore's shipyards and recruiting of nursing scholars for our public hospitals. There is a good source of labour in Myanmar suited for skills upgrading and work. The human capital resource in Myanmar is ripe for harvest.

Personally, I am bullishly optimistic about Myanmar's place within Indochina and Asia. Its location can also be leveraged to increase trade flow through its strategic gateway. For PeopleWorldwide, Myanmar has been our best bet for the last eight years, and will continue to be our main focus.