

MEDAL OF COMMENDATION

Cheng Siak Kian

Managing Director/Group CEO, ComfortDelGro Corporation Limited
Deputy Chairman, SBS Transit Ltd

Nominated by the National Transport Workers' Union

Keeping Singapore moving every day without fail with a fleet of more than 3,000 buses and some 200 trains is no mean feat, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. As the then CEO of SBS Transit, Cheng Siak Kian recognised that it is the employees who have worked hard to make this possible; even putting their lives on the line to deliver essential public transportation services. With people as the organisation's greatest asset, he collaborated closely with the National Transport Workers' Union (NTWU) to ensure that SBS Transit's employees were fairly compensated, competently trained and their needs well looked after.

Despite COVID-19's impact since early 2020, Brother Siak Kian ensured that all workers received modest annual increments and bonuses to recognise their efforts and sacrifices. When the pandemic improved in 2022, he took in NTWU's proposal and made significant adjustments to workers' basic salaries. Encouraging innovation and productivity at the workplace, he also introduced a policy to share 50 per cent of productivity savings with staff. In 2022, he took the unprecedented step to distribute 100 per cent of the savings to help workers cope with the rising cost of living.

Even as the pandemic raged on, training did not stop as SBS Transit worked with NTWU and institutes of higher learning to develop online learning and modular-sized courses to enable workers to continue with their training. Workplace learning, leading to diploma, degree and chartership programmes were also introduced to couple workers' work experiences with classroom learning.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, staff morale remained high as he frequently walked the ground to cheer on workers, provided weekly fruits and care packages and instituted measures to keep workers and the community safe. From physical to mental well-being, Brother Siak Kian was unequivocal in his commitment to workers. Those who were abused by commuters could also count on SBS Transit's support to underwrite their legal fees should they wish to pursue civil actions.