

# "thisweek

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# MOVING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

The Ministry of Manpower says the scene in the employment marketplace is looking up, with a growth in local hires and a dip in foreign workers growth. We bring you highlights from the Labour Market Report.

# Local Hires Up, Foreign Hires Dip

The Ministry of Manpower report says more locals, especially older residents and female residents, were employed and there was slower growth in the number of foreign workers last year.

By **Naseema Banu Maideen** and **Ramesh Subbaraman**

**N**TUC's calls for bettering workers' lives – through building up a Singaporean core and striving for higher productivity levels – are bringing in tangible results. This was clearly reflected in the Ministry of Manpower's (MOM) Statement on Labour Market Developments in 2013 which showed the scene in the employment marketplace looking up.

Released on 14 March 2014, the statement said that the Singapore labour market is expected to tighten further in 2014 as previously announced foreign workforce policy measures come into effect. This will place upward pressure on wages. Unemployment is likely to remain low, while local employment should continue to see growth this year.

**Here are some of the key findings on the workforce and businesses last year.**

## LOCAL HIRES GROWTH STRONGER

**1** Local employment growth was stronger at 4 per cent (82,900) in 2013, compared to 2.9 per cent (58,700) in 2012, as firms tried harder to bring economically inactive residents back into employment amidst curbs on foreign employment growth. This will however be difficult to sustain in the long run due to demographic constraints.

To help lure more economically inactive locals into the workforce, NTUC Assistant Secretary-General Cham Hui Fong said: "The Labour Movement will continue to work with our partners, unionised companies and relevant agencies to enhance the WorkPro scheme to attract more back-to-work women, and re-employ older workers.

"In addition, the Progressive Wage Model that we are embarking on will have better wage and career path to attract and retain new joiners."

(Also see box story on right: *Building A Singaporean Core*).

## HIGHER INCOME BUT SLOWER PRODUCTIVITY

**2** While incomes have grown at a healthy rate in the past five years, labour productivity growth has lagged slightly.

These two facts stress even further that firms will need to implement more manpower-lean methods of driving business growth in order to survive and thrive, especially in the construction sector and the more labour-intensive industries within the services sector. Singapore National Employers Federation (SNEF) Executive Director Koh Juan Kiat shared that it is actively reaching out to employers to explore ways to up their productivity drive.

"We brief and update our members on productivity initiatives and incentives on a regular basis. Apart from that, we conduct a range of 23 productivity-related training programmes for employers... Overall, close to 400 companies have benefitted from our programmes," he said.

Common concerns that these employers bring to the table include challenges on measuring productivity and cultivating a culture that enables continuous improvements in work processes.



Local employment growth was stronger in 2013 as firms tried harder to bring economically-inactive residents back into employment.



Growth in foreign employment slowed in 2012 and 2013 as foreign manpower tightening measures kicked in.

### **SLOWER GROWTH IN FOREIGN HIRES**

**3** Growth in foreign employment, excluding foreign domestic workers (FDWs), slowed for the second consecutive year to 4.6% (48,400) in 2013, down from 6.8% (67,100) in 2012, as previously announced foreign manpower tightening measures started to take effect.

In his Committee of Supply Speech in Parliament on 7 March 2014, Acting Minister for Manpower Tan Chuan-Jin said: "The foreign manpower tightening measures that were introduced over the past years are beginning to 'bite'."

About two-thirds of the demand was due to the construction sector, which is needed to improve public infrastructure.

"Nonetheless, we still have some way to go in reducing overall foreign manpower reliance. These efforts need to continue," he said.



#### **QUICK LOOK**

### **More Jobs To Come**

- The Construction sector is expected to see strong labour demand on account of ongoing infrastructure development with the construction of the Downtown and Thomson MRT lines, hospitals and nursing homes, as well as public and private sector housing projects.
- Labour demand in the manufacturing sector is expected to come mainly from the marine and general manufacturing industries.
- Labour demand from the retail trade, accommodation and food & beverage services industries will be driven by the opening of several hotels and shopping malls in 2014.

## **Building A Singaporean Core**

The Labour Movement has also been steadily building a core of Singaporean workers in the economy. NTUC's e2i (Employment and Employability Institute) has a number of initiatives and programmes in place for growing the local manpower talent pool in various industries.

These include providing up-skilling and retraining opportunities for workers to stay relevant and be recruited and retained in the workforce. Some of NTUC's e2i initiatives include:

**Employability Workshops** ⇨ The Executive Workshop is designed to equip Professionals, Managers and Executives (PMEs) with necessary skills to enhance their employability.

**Employability Camp Workshops** ⇨ Help rank-and-file workers sharpen their job search skills.

**Place-and-Train Programmes** ⇨ Offer programmes like the Tripartite Nautical Training Awards which is a place-and-train programme that enables Singaporeans and Singapore PRs to join the Maritime industry as CoC (Class 3) Deck Officers.

**Professional Development Programmes** ⇨ Incorporate programmes for many levels of workers across several industries.

**Helping SMEs create better jobs and better workers** ⇨ By engaging them to impart information on best practices on aspects such as improving productivity and flexible work arrangements.

**Administering the Inclusive Growth Programme** ⇨ A 50 per cent funding scheme for businesses that embark on productivity improvement projects and share gains with low-wage workers.

**Administering the WorkPro Grant with Singapore National Employers' Federation (SNEF)** ⇨ A scheme that augments local manpower, fosters progressive workplaces and strengthen the Singaporean core in our workforce.

# Snapshots

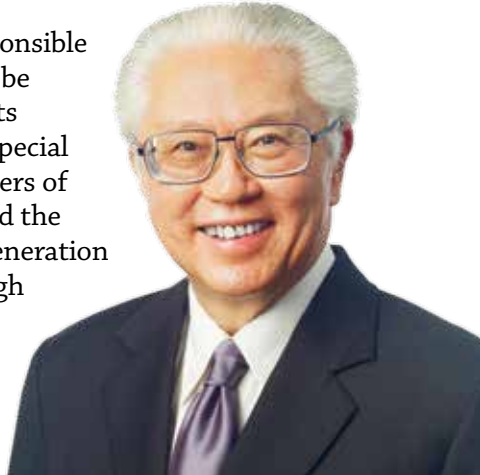
A quick round up of what went on in and around the Labour Movement recently.

By **NTUC This Week** team

## Singapore President Approves 2014 Budget

Singapore President Dr Tony Tan Keng Yam has given his assent to the Government's Budget for the financial year 2014-2015. This, on the basis that the Budget is unlikely to draw on the Government's past reserves. In a Facebook posting on 19 March 2014, he noted that at the end of the debate on 13 March 2014, Parliament passed the Supply Bill to authorise the Government expenditures proposed in the Budget and the Bill was submitted to him for assent as required under the Constitution.

"This is a prudent and responsible Budget. The Government will be setting aside \$8 billion from its current reserves to fund the special measures proposed for members of our pioneer generation beyond the next few years. The pioneer generation has stood by Singapore through the difficult early years of our independence, and it is only right that we take care of their healthcare needs in their old age," he added.



## MEMBER'S CORNER

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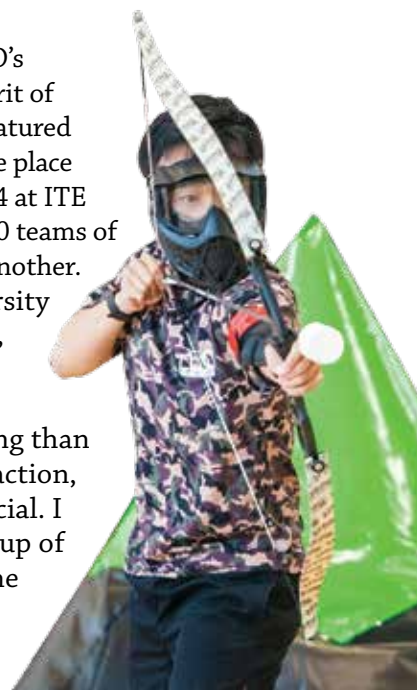
## NTUC Member Services Centre Under Renovation

The NTUC Member Services Centre at One Marina Boulevard, Basement 1 will be under renovation from 28 February to 31 March 2014 to serve members better. Services to members will continue as usual at the same building at Level 8. For enquiries, email: [membership@ntuc.org.sg](mailto:membership@ntuc.org.sg) or call: **6213 8008**.

## Hitting The Bullseye

The Quest 2014 -Battleground, nEbO's signature event to encourage the spirit of teamwork and learning in youths, featured the largest archery battle to ever take place in Singapore. Held on 15 March 2014 at ITE College Central, it saw more than 300 teams of four pitting their skills against one another.

Singapore Management University undergraduate Clarence Ngoh, 20, shared: "I am an ardent fan of the sci-fi movie 'The Hunger Games'! This year's Quest was more thrilling than last year's with plenty of archery action, and teamwork was even more crucial. I took part again with the same group of friends from nEbO, and went home with more fun moments to look back on."





The award ceremony saw 13 polytechnic and eight ITE graduands and students receiving the scholarships.

# Powering Up Scholars

Singapore Power plans to inject more talent into the industry with a new scholarship named after the late veteran unionist Nithiah Nandan.

By **Florina Oo**

**T**he Union of Power and Gas Employees (UPAGE) has warmly welcomed the news of a new scholarship named after the late Mr Nithiah Nandan, who was the union's former Executive Secretary.

The inaugural Singapore Power (SP) Nithiah Nandan Scholarship Award Ceremony was held on 18 March 2014 and saw 13 polytechnic and eight ITE graduands and students receiving the scholarship awards from NTUC Secretary-General Lim Swee Say.

The scholarship awards are part of the key recommendations made by the Power Sector Manpower Taskforce, which was set up in 2012 to build up and develop manpower capabilities for Singapore's power sector. UPAGE is a member of the taskforce.

Scholars can look forward to SP's support in their pursuit of higher qualifications. This is also in line with SP's Progressive Wage Model, which provides a structured pathway for staff to upgrade their skills and move up the career ladder.

## HONOURING A VETERAN

The scholarship was named after the late unionist Mr Nithiah Nandan to honour his contributions to Singapore's power sector and dedication to improving the lives of workers. In his address, SG Lim called Mr Nandan a "source of inspiration" who had

led a fruitful life of caring for others. He also shared Mr Nandan's belief in skills upgrading, as it is important to the job and to achieve income stability.

## ATTRACTING WORKERS

UPAGE General Secretary Nachiappan RK Sinniah also emphasised that training and re-training will remain a win-win situation for employers and employees. He added that the power sector has to remain

appealing to attract school-leavers to join, and awarding a scholarship is one of the approaches.

Fittingly, Mrs Vimalla Nandan, Mr Nandan's widow, was also present at the ceremony to see the students receive the awards.

She said the scholarship certainly translated her late husband's wishes to continue seeing workers, young and old, upgrade and better themselves.

## The Recipients Speak

**“I want to demonstrate that I can do what the boys do, or even better than them. This scholarship serves as a motivation for me to excel in the power sector.”**

*20-year-old Nurfadilah Mustaffa is one of the few female students studying Electrical Engineering in ITE College East.*



**“My internship experience, together with this scholarship, has become the stepping stone for me to enter into the power sector. I'm hoping to read Electrical and Electronic Engineering when I join the university.”**

*19-year-old Kwek Jia Chen*

# Beyond A Support Function

Agencies are working together to professionalise the Property Asset Management and Facilities Maintenance industry to ensure better jobs and better workers.

By **Joshua Joseph**

**T**he Property Asset Management and Facilities Maintenance (PAM & FM) industry continues to see a strong demand for manpower, with employers requiring a talent pool to manage a large portfolio of properties. However, the industry is also facing a mismatch between required and existing skills and low productivity, particularly in maintenance and repair work and janitorial services.

To address the manpower issue, NTUC Secretary-General Lim Swee Say said it will not be a short-term challenge and that a stronger focus should be placed on improving productivity and innovation.

He was speaking at a Master Class session for the industry, organised by NTUC's e2i (Employment and Employability Institute) and the Real Estate & Construction Centre (RECC) and held on 28 February 2014.

The aim of the Master Class session was to provide stimulus and show the way for parties with an invested interest in Property Asset to re-engineer work processes, re-examine outsourcing methods, re-design jobs and invest in extending and deep-skilling the workforce to meet the industry's multi-facet service demands.

The session drew some 180



Jobs in the Property Asset Management and Facilities Maintenance industry should be professionalised to ensure better jobs and better workers.

employers and employees who learned about the emerging dynamics and paradigm shifts in the PAM & FM industry, and industrial best practices at local and international levels.

## TRANSFORMING THE INDUSTRY

SG Lim shared how other sectors in Singapore have worked with tripartite partners to address challenges by implementing NTUC's Progressive Wage Model (PWM) to make the jobs of workers Easier, Smarter and Safer (ESS).

"Moving forward, we can

work together as tripartite partners. Let us professionalise various jobs in the Property Asset Management and Facilities Maintenance industry. Let us work together to make every job a better job, make every worker a better worker and together make every building a better building," he added.

Also speaking at the event, RECC Industry Development and Corporate Training Director Ken Chew said: "Since 2002, RECC has collaborated with NTUC and e2i in skills re-development and job re-creation for the industry.

"This lifelong learning road map developed by our centre was helpful in charting out a path of career progression in the industry and in most cases, progressive wages were also achieved."

He cited how the Property Officer and Property Executive Career Progression Programmes have helped to create good jobs for Singaporeans and Permanent Residents willing to make a career switch. The programmes have also contributed to upgrading the skills and knowledge of existing workers.

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ANDROID

# Getting It Right

The Education Services Union is doing more to raise the professionalism and image of Early Childhood Educators.

By **Nicholas Lee**

All this while, the Education Services Union (ESU) has been engaging Childcare Operators, Early Childhood Educators and various agencies to push for a more supportive environment for educators to pursue continuous professional development (CPD).

But more must be done to enhance their image, improve their skills and knowledge, and help them attain key competencies and gain experience. These were the key goals stressed by the ESU at the “Getting It Right For Young Ones” event on 15 March.

Jointly organised with the Pre-school Teachers’ Network (PTNS), the event drew some 800 Early Childhood Educators to pledge their passion and dedication to the profession.

## STRESS MANAGEMENT

ESU Executive Secretary and NTUC Assistant Secretary-General (ASG) Ang Hin Kee shared that the focus for the year will be on helping teachers better deal with stress. This will include teaching them “how to identify when you are undergoing certain stresses, how to engage your operator, your principal and your colleagues on what you are experiencing,” he said.

## IMPROVING IMAGE

While Early Childhood Educators possess the passion and ability to nurture the young generation, they require the support from parents and society alike, to be able to give their best at work.

“Early childhood education is about co-sharing the responsibility and not



Participants taking part and having fun at the interactive carnival booths at the event.

outsourcing the responsibility,” ASG Ang pointed out.

In light of this, ESU will also work with stakeholders to step up efforts to improve parents’ perception of educators as professionals as well as enhance their understanding and appreciation of the work of educators.

PTNS founder Philip Koh pointed out that it is important for educators to have access to professional development and a better image.

“They need professional development, really raising the quality of teachers... at the same time, there is a need for more social recognition... a little bit more publicity to raise our social status would be good,” he said.

## QUICK LOOK

### About The Pre-school Teachers Network Singapore

The Pre-school Teachers Network Singapore (PTNS) was formed on 23 July 2012 with the primary objective of creating a platform for pre-school teachers’ voices to be heard. As members in the network engage in active discussions on early childhood issues, PTNS aims to improve the quality of preschool education in Singapore by sharing and using the data collected from the discussions for research and development.

# “We Are Nothing Without Our Staff”

National Transport Workers’ Union and SBS Transit inks new Collective Agreement which incorporates the Labour Movement’s Progressive Wage Model.

SBS Transit and National Transport Workers’ Union (NTWU) signed their Collective Agreement (CA) for the period of 2014 to 2016 on 14 February, marking an important milestone in their strong labour-management relations.

SBS Transit has heeded the call by the Labour Movement to hire workers beyond the re-employment age of 65 to 67, and raised their re-employment age to 67.

As part of the ComfortDelGro group of companies, it has shown strong support for older workers to continue working.

The CA also includes improvements in allowances for bus captains, training workers and support staff. More importantly, the CA formalises the management’s commitment to implement the Labour Movement’s Progressive Wage Model company-wide.

Commenting on the new CA, SBS Transit Chief Executive Officer Gan Jui Kiat pointed out that the company values its staff.

“We are nothing without our staff and we have always held firm to the belief that we must offer them a fair and competitive package for all that they do. We hope that this will help build staff morale and instill a sense of belonging to the Group,” he said.

In response, the union welcomed the new changes.

“We face challenging times ahead as the Public Transport sector changes to adapt, and we are likely to see reforms in the sector. The need to retain and motivate workers is critical. We are glad that the management at SBS Transit recognises the commitment by its workers,” said NTWU Executive Secretary Ong Chin Ang.



NTWU and SBS Transit representatives celebrate the inking of the new CA.



Joining members at the Beach Clean-Up event was Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Law K Shanmugam (fourth from left)..

# More Funds For Daily-Rated Workers

AUPDRW fund-raising efforts for its members bring in about \$140,000.

By **Naseema Banu Maideen**

Life can be tough for a daily-rated worker, and the hopes are always that his or her next generation lives a better life.

There are close to 700 daily-rated workers in Singapore's public sector, and they are represented by the Amalgamated Union of Public Daily Rated Workers (AUPDRW).

There was some good news for them recently – on 19 March 2014, the union unveiled that it had raised funds of about \$140,000 for these members' and their families' welfare.

It celebrated these fund-raising efforts through a Beach Clean-Up event at East Coast Park, together with its tripartite partners.

## OPPORTUNITIES TO PROGRESS

Mr Aiyasamy Kalimuttu, 51, is one of the members who will benefit from these fundraising efforts.

For 32 years, he has worked at the National Environment Agency (NEA)'s Tuas Incineration Plant's electrical department. His current role is that of a Senior Foreman, and his basic wage is \$1,200.

With extra hours ploughed in, he can make slightly more to care for his family of six – with four children. Three of them are still pursuing their education.



Throughout his years as a union member, Mr Aiyasamy has had an opportunity to upgrade himself to learn new skills on his job; his children have also received bursary awards from the union to cope with their school expenses.

The funds raised by AUPDRW this time will support its continuous welfare efforts for its members.

## BETTER JOBS FOR ALL

Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Law K Shanmugam, who is also the union's Advisor, was the Guest-of-Honour

“AUPDRW has been trying hard to increase the assistance provided to our members. Most union members are at the lowest end of the wage scale and are the people that need the most help in life. We want to do more for our members and will channel the fund for these purposes. We thank everyone who has contributed to this cause.”

*AUPDRW General Secretary  
G Muthukumarasamy*

at this event. He noted that the Union's recruitment number is falling, and that half of these workers are part of the Pioneer Generation.

This, he added, is the outcome of “a multifaceted approach to push them up... society has moved on, people have progressed and they have better jobs.”

He also said that this is a reflection of the progress of Singapore, as well as the progress of the union.

# A Lifeline For The Stranded

Help comes fast from Singapore shores for a group of foreign seafarers stuck out at sea on board an 'arrested' vessel, with no news of going home anytime soon.

By **Florina Oo**

It was in October 2013 when the 22-men crew on board bulk carrier Sea Urchin received grim news that their vessel had been 'arrested', that is detained by a judicial process in order to secure a maritime claim. Adding onto the frustration, the crew had not been paid their wages for up to three months.

At their wits' end and anxious to return home, they decided to make a distress phone call to the International Workers' Transport Federation on 10 December 2013.

Soon after making the call, the crew was put in contact with the Singapore Maritime Officers' Union (SMOU), the Singapore Organisation of Seamen (SOS) and the International Lutheran Seafarers' Mission. With SMOU's assistance, the crew recovered wages up till the end of February 2014 which amounted to a total of US\$143,315 (S\$181,708).

As the event occurred during the year-end festive period last year, SMOU decided to lift the stranded crew's spirits with



An SMOU representative speaks to the seafarers and gets a better understanding of their situation.

a little warm surprise – on 18 December, its Lighthouse Bistro whipped up a festive spread, and representatives from SMOU delivered it to the vessel.

Expressing his thanks to SMOU, 3rd Officer Dennis Gonzales said: "When SMOU representatives went on board to reassure the crew, they felt very happy and assured that something will be done for them... Our crew enjoyed the meal with them which really made their day and lightened up their spirits. Most importantly, their questions regarding unpaid wages had been answered."

SMOU continues to make regular visits to the vessel to ensure that the crew's welfare

is being cared for. Lawyers are also facilitating the sale of the ship to another prospective buyer so that the crew can return home safely.

## QUICK LOOK

### Global Ties

As a professional global tripartite maritime union, the Singapore Maritime Officers' Union (SMOU) is affiliated to the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF). SMOU and ITF work closely as global partners to ensure that seafarers are provided with industrial protection, the appropriate terms and conditions of employment, and the basic welfare that they are so rightly entitled to.



## Wage Credit Payouts

The Wage Credit Scheme kicks off at the end of March this year to help businesses.

By **Ramesh Subbaraman**

Singapore's Finance Ministry has announced that over 74,000 employers will receive about \$800 million in the first tranche of Wage Credit Scheme (WCS) payouts by the end of March 2014.

Small and medium enterprises will receive around three-quarters of the sum disbursed.

The Government introduced the WCS to help businesses which may face rising wage costs in a tight labour market.

The Wage Credit Scheme payouts will allow businesses to free up resources to make investments in productivity and to share the productivity gains with their employees.

Over the period 2013 to 2015, the Government will co-fund 40% of wage increases given to Singaporean employees earning a gross monthly wage of \$4,000 and below.

The WCS was introduced in 2013 as part of the 3-Year Transition Support Package.

In 2013, lower income Singaporeans in the bottom 20% received a median wage increase of 10% compared to 8% among all employees covered by the WCS.



A spread of festive fare by Lighthouse Bistro helped to lift the stranded crew's spirits



NTUC Care and Share Deputy Director Phyllis Lim (right) speaking with Madam Anne while DSSU General Secretary Noorazman looks on (left).

## Gift Of Relief

Nothing can replace the loss of a loved one, but the NTUC Gift insurance plan can offer affected members some financial relief.

By **Nicholas Lee**

Union membership is about protecting the worker at the workplace. It also ensures that union members are protected in the form of a group insurance known as the NTUC Gift which covers Death and Total & Permanent Disability due to natural causes and accidents.

When her husband passed away in an accident, Madam Anne (not her real name) had to fend for her children and herself, and remain strong for them.

Her late husband was a member of the dnata Singapore Staff Union (DSSU). When the union found out about Madam Anne's plight, they informed her about NTUC Gift and helped her to apply for it. On 11 March 2014, she was presented with the NTUC Gift cheque for \$30,000.

"I am very happy to be given this gift. It can help to lighten the burden of my household expenses and help with my children's future. I'm very grateful to the Union as they have been very helpful to me since my husband's passing," she said.

DSSU General Secretary Noorazman Kamad shared that it is their responsibility to inform deceased union members' next-of-kin about NTUC Gift.

# Strength Beyond Borders

In conjunction with International Women's Day, *NTUC This Week* highlights the power women in the Labour Movement and finds out how they shine at work. Migrant Workers' Centre Specialist Kavitha Sundram Rajoo shares how she stays cool in troubling times.

By **Florina Oo**

"My friends are surprised by what I do, and the first question on their lips is 'do I ever feel intimidated?'," confessed 37-year-old Kavitha Sundram Rajoo.

The cheerful Migrant Workers' Centre Specialist admits that her job of providing advice and case advocacy services to migrant workers places her in a male-dominated environment. She also has to visit migrant workers' dormitories on special occasions or when a potential strike is about to occur.

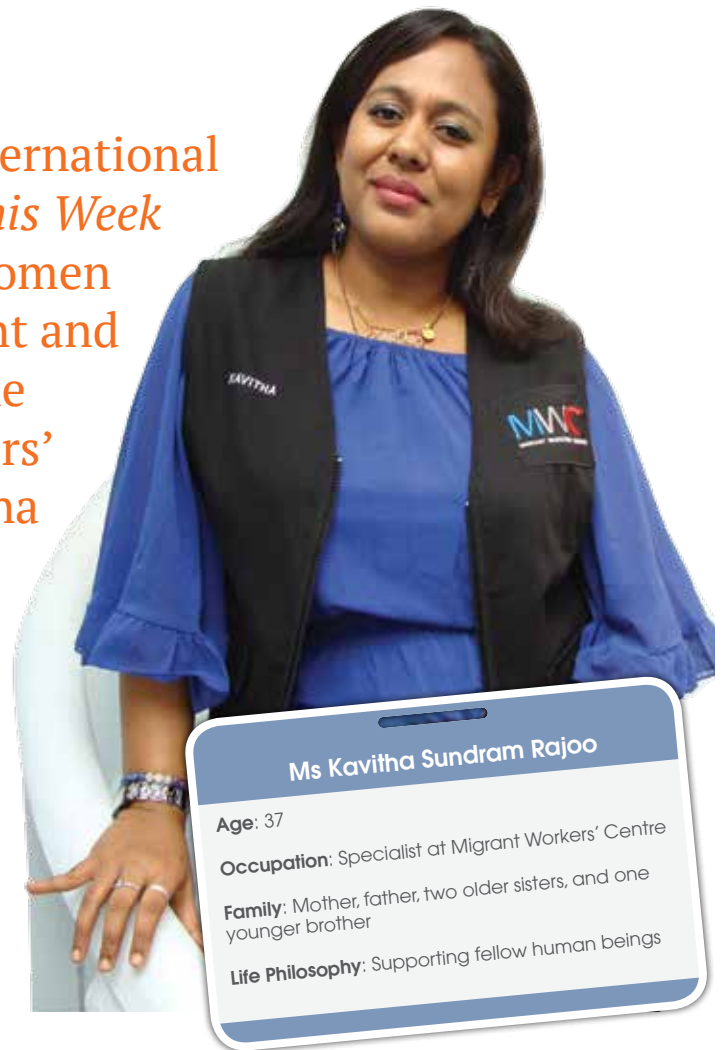
However, you will find no trace of insecurity in Ms Kavitha when it comes to dealing with such situations.

Her ethos: supporting fellow human beings. She feels that foreign workers are part of the social fabric and it is thus important to instill a mindset of fair treatment and employment, especially when they are miles away from home.

### BREAKING BARRIERS

Besides keeping up with changing foreign manpower regulations, Ms Kavitha also has to ease migrant workers' fears of lodging a report. This is when her Specialist Diploma in Applied Psychology comes in handy. Speaking in Tamil, her native tongue, Ms Kavitha is able to break down the barriers between her and the workers. This gives the workers the confidence to share their problems with her comfortably.

Ms Kavitha also reminds herself not to get too emotionally involved in their problems.



Ms Kavitha Sundram Rajoo

Age: 37

Occupation: Specialist at Migrant Workers' Centre

Family: Mother, father, two older sisters, and one younger brother

Life Philosophy: Supporting fellow human beings

"The moment I'm feeling sentimental about a case, I'll talk it out with my colleagues. The occasional retail therapy also helps," she mused.

### LESSONS FROM A CRISIS

Nevertheless, one case did take its toll on Kavitha. This was when she spoke to the mother of the deceased victim of the Little India riot, Sakthivel Kumaravelu.

"It was a phenomenal loss for the family; Sakthivel's sister had just passed away and his younger brother was ill. She was crying in agony and in disbelief that she was losing her children, one after another in a short period of time."

This incident changed her perspective on life.

"It touched me deeply and made me reflect on all the dimensions of being a woman, a daughter, a sister and a mother," she said.

To bring herself back on track, she attended spiritual and motivational talks.

Today, Ms Kavitha remains upbeat about life and sticks to her daily regime of switching to her 'social life mode' the moment she leaves the office.

"Life has to go on and you have to move on to discover the magic of life."

# Extending Protection

NTUC Income takes Singaporeans' educational and health concerns to heart by launching two new schemes.

By **Ramesh Subbaraman**

In the field of education, Singapore's leading insurance provider NTUC Income is partnering with the Ministry of Education (MOE) to extend its free micro-insurance to cover more low-income families with young children.

The tie-up with MOE will widen coverage to over 30,000 families, offering payouts in the event of a breadwinner's death or disability.

Under the new arrangement, all children in primary schools who are recipients of MOE's Financial Assistance Scheme will automatically be covered under the micro-insurance scheme.



## HELP FOR THE FAMILY

IFMIS or Income Family Micro-Insurance Scheme is a free insurance policy that pays out \$5,000 in the event the main caregiver of low-income families with young children passes away or becomes totally and permanently disabled.

It was launched in April 2010 to cover some 13,000 families already registered under the ComCare GROW schemes administered by the five Community Development Councils.

## COMPREHENSIVE HEALTHCARE COVERAGE

In the area of healthcare, NTUC Income has expanded coverage of its early critical illness plan to cover more than 100 medical conditions, which makes the plan called VivoCare 100 the most comprehensive of its kind in Singapore.

In addition, VivoCare 100 covers 10 juvenile benefits for those under the age of 18.

VivoCare 100 builds on VivoCare, which was launched in 2010 to take care of early and intermediate stages of critical illnesses.

The objective was to relieve a person's financial burden at a time when he or she is diagnosed with a critical illness.

Mr Esmond Chan, Vice President, Life Insurance, NTUC Income said: "Critical illnesses can strike anyone, anytime. Early treatment significantly improves the chances of survival and recovery. VivoCare 100 provides policyholders financial support that allows them to seek treatment at the onset of the illness."

Following a successful inaugural launch in 2013, **Best Companies for Mums Contest** is back again in 2014.



Do you have supportive supervisors and colleagues?

Mummies, is your company supportive towards your roles at work and at home?

Daddies, does your company support you in sharing the parenting role with your wife?

**Nominate them now!**  
Share your story with us. Shortlisted nominations receive \$50 worth of shopping vouchers each. Winning nominations get \$300 worth of shopping vouchers each.

**Hurry!**  
**Contest closes on 8 May 2014.**

## Contest Categories

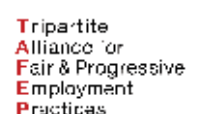
- Best Companies for Mums
- Most Supportive Supervisors
- Most Supportive Colleagues - **New!**  
(Nominated by working Mums)
- Most Enabling Companies for Dads - **New!**  
(Nominated by working Dads whose wives are working)

For more information or to download nomination forms, please visit [www.ntucwds.org.sg/bestcompanies2014](http://www.ntucwds.org.sg/bestcompanies2014)

Organised By:



In Partnership With:



# What's Happening, Where

## 1 U Fame 2014

The most anticipated singing competition of the year is back and welcomes all union talents – young and old – to take to the stage for a voice-off to the grand finals! Over \$20,000 worth of cash and prizes to be won! (Photo from last year's contest).

Heats 1	12 Apr (Sat)
Heats 2	13 Apr (Sun)
Elimination Round 1	26 Apr (Sat)
Elimination Round 2	27 Apr (Sun)
Semi-Finals	15 June (Sun)
<b>GRAND FINALS</b>	<b>10 Oct (Fri)</b>

For registration, log on to [www.ufame.com.sg](http://www.ufame.com.sg) or any NTUC Club clubhouse or [ihelp@ntuc.org.sg](mailto:ihelp@ntuc.org.sg) counter at Downtown East or NTUC Member Services Centre at One Marina Boulevard, NTUC Centre. Registration closes 31 Mar.



## 2 Orchid Zumba

Here's your chance to break a sweat and dance your way into shape with exciting red-hot moves and groovy beats!

**Instructor Patrick:** Wednesdays, 1pm-2pm or Sundays, 2.30pm-3.30pm, Gym Studio, Orchid Country Club, 1 Orchid Club Road, \$96 for eight lessons (OCC Member), \$100 (NTUC Member), \$108 (Guest).

**Instructor Hisham:** Thursdays, 7.30pm-8.30pm or 8.30pm-9.30pm, Gym Studio, Orchid Country Club, 1 Orchid Club Road, \$90 for eight lessons (OCC Member), \$95 (NTUC Member), \$100 (Guest). For registration and enquiries, please call **6750 2199** or [email sports@orchidclub.com](mailto:sports@orchidclub.com).



## 3 Business Etiquette For Professional Excellence

Do you make frequent overseas business visits? Then this session may prove useful – pick up business etiquette tips from experienced trainer Megan Harris to avoid making cultural or social faux pas when dealing with international clients.

28 Mar, 2pm-6pm, Event room #01-04 & #01-05, e2i (Employment and Employability Institute), 80 Jurong East St 21. To register, log on to [e2i.com.sg](http://e2i.com.sg) and look under "Upcoming Events".

28 Mar, 2pm-6pm, Event room #01-04 & #01-05, e2i (Employment and Employability Institute), 80 Jurong East St 21. To register, log on to [e2i.com.sg](http://e2i.com.sg) and look under "Upcoming Events".



## 4 WorkPro Job Fair @ Woodlands

Are you a mature worker or back-to-work local looking to get back into the work scene? Head on down to this job fair at Woodlands to see what's in store. Participating companies include the Han's Group, Singapore Pools and KFC/Pizza Hut.

2 Apr, 10am – 4pm, Woodlands Galaxy Community Club, 31 Woodlands Avenue 6. To register, log on to [e2i.com.sg](http://e2i.com.sg) and look under "Upcoming Events".

## 5 PSLE Seminar 2014 By Adam Khoo Learning Technologies

Is your child taking PSLE this year or the next? Don't miss the chance to equip him or her with both content and process skills in preparation for that all-important exam. Over 4,500 students have benefited from this seminar in the last seven years. This year's session will be further enhanced with resident curriculum specialists joining forces with award-winning Science content specialists to deliver even more power-packed skills and strategies. NTUC members will receive a complimentary Maths Diagnostic Assessment and a limited edition of 'Keys to English Mastery™' booklet by Dr Cheah Yin Mee, best-selling writer of English assessment books.

14-16 June, 8.30am-5.30pm, Auditorium, Singapore Polytechnic, 500 Dover Road, \$150 (NTUC Members before 15 Apr), \$200 (Public). To register, drop by Adam Khoo's branches at: • Square 2: 10 Sinaran Drive, #04-27, Tel: **6765 5516**  
• Century Square: 2 Tampines Central 5, #04-09, Tel: **6783 2093**  
• West Coast Plaza: 154 West Coast Road, #01-75, Tel: **6777 2128** • Sembawang Shopping Centre: 604 Sembawang Road, #03-08, Tel: **6556 1826**



Want to list your upcoming event? Drop us an email at [LMNewsroom@ntuc.org.sg](mailto:LMNewsroom@ntuc.org.sg).

**Ad**

# This Week In History



**NTUC This Week turns 50 this year. It was first published in November 1964 as a monthly titled *Perjuangan NTUC*. *Perjuangan* means struggle in Malay, and the title captured the spirit of the times.**

**From our 3 January 2014 issue onwards, *NTUC This Week* will pull out excerpts of main stories from past issues, starting with the very first until the present. This week, we look at February/March, April/May and June 1969.**

By Marcus Lin

## Unequal partners -why, and how to change it

*Trade unions are to blame; they have not modernised like the Govt. and employers - writes Devan*

**February/March 1969:** What should be the role and function of a dynamic trade union movement in the life of a modern and progressive society like Singapore? My own humble analysis of this problem is, briefly, as follows:

An industrial revolution is taking place in Singapore today. This industrial revolution is destined to change the face of the Republic and to make Singapore into a highly modernised technological society.

It is said that Singapore's industrial revolution is based on a social partnership between the Government, the employers and the workers. Such a social partnership is highly desirable in principle.

Unfortunately, it is not yet an equal partnership at least where trade unions are concerned. For this fact, the trade unions have nobody to blame but themselves. Why has this situation developed? The reasons are simple and straightforward.

The Government of Singapore is made up of a political leadership which is highly modern in its outlook and orientation. Management techniques as well as employers' organisations are also becoming increasingly modernised and sophisticated.

Unfortunately, trade unions have not been able to modernise themselves in structure, organisation and functions to the same degree as the Government and the employers. The result is that trade unions have been left behind in the process of modernisation, which we see taking place everywhere in Singapore.

## NTUC Celebrates Two Anniversaries

**April/May 1969:** Then Minister for Foreign Affairs and Labour Mr S Rajaratnam said that it will be meaningless for employers to exhort workers to work hard to increase productivity if they are not entitled to a share of the fruits of their labour.

He was speaking at a dinner and dance organised by the NTUC to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the founding of modern Singapore and the 50th anniversary of the International Labour Organisation.

He said: "There are some short-sighted employers who only think in terms of the short-term gains but not of the long-term interests. I do not see any reason why workers must work extra hard if in the end they do not benefit by it but only the employers."

On the Employment Act, he said it was necessary though unpleasant. He stated that the Employment Act has curbed some of the activities of the trade unions. He added: "If you ask me what a popular Government is, I will say that it is the one doing the right things and not popular things. The Government could easily



*Mr. S. Rajaratnam, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Labour, speaking at the Dinner.*

grant a 100 per cent wage increase for everybody, but you will know what will happen in two years' time."

On investment, he said: "Let's be quite brutal about this, capitalists do not come because they love Singapore. They will want to know what are the inducements the Government would offer before investing here." He said that capitalists either come here to make profits or there will be no jobs for Singaporeans.

Mr Rajaratnam said that the Government and NTUC do not see eye-to-eye on many issues. He praised the NTUC leadership for their correct stand on the Employment Act though they vehemently opposed some of the provisions which were subsequently amended. This, he said, had made the NTUC leadership unpopular among its members. Because of this, he added, the opportunists have exploited the situation. But, he said, as a result of the Employment Act, thousands have obtained jobs.

## Prepare for fast changes

**June 1969:** It is the responsibility of trade unions not only to get better conditions for their members but also to educate and prepare them to live at a time and in a society which is going to change very fast and in novel ways in the years ahead.

Then Minister for Foreign Affairs and Labour Mr S Rajaratnam said this in a May

Day speech to workers at the National Theatre. "A trade union built on the single idea of just fighting the boss mainly for the same old cake will not have much of a future.

"As trade unionists, I know that there are some aspects of our recent Labour Legislations you don't like. Your leaders have made this plain to the Government. I know that in making these criticisms they are not unmindful of the interests of Singapore. Some of these criticisms have been helpful and we have tried to accommodate the unions.

"It may also be the case that some employers have taken advantage of these Labour Laws to unjustly squeeze the workers. I know that there will always be stupid, short-sighted employers who will jeopardise their long-term interests in order to make a fast buck. Such employers have contributed in no small measure towards economic chaos and political violence in many parts of Asia."

He added that on the whole the new Labour Laws had done more good than harm and was a factor in Singapore's accelerated pace of economic development.

# 表扬杰出女性

为配合国际三八妇女节，本报采访了职工运动的杰出女性，其中之一是外籍客工中心专员卡维达。她在访谈中分享了自己如何在困境中保持冷静，沉着应对各种挑战。

卡维达（37岁）的工作包括为客工提供咨询和进行个案调查，有时候她也得造访客工宿舍了解情况。虽然身边的一些朋友担心她的工作安全，但卡维达总能从容应对。她不但通晓淡米尔语，而且修读过应用心理学专业文凭课程，能很好地与客工沟通。

卡维达指出，客工其实也是社会的一分子，他们为了谋生而离乡背井，因此最重要的是让他们安心，并确保他们在职场上获得公平待遇。

在卡维达的工作生涯中，最令她难忘的是安慰小印度骚乱事件中的死者萨蒂威尔的母亲。她说：“萨蒂威尔的家里发生了一连串的不幸事件，妹妹不久前刚过世，弟弟又患上重病。他的母亲悲痛万分，不敢相信自己的孩子相继离世。”

这件事也让卡维达重新省思自己的人生，尤其是为人母、为人女和手足之间的责任。

她认为不管遇到什么困难，都应该乐观面对。她说：“无论如何你都得继续走下去，这样才能发现生活的美好。”



# 新捷运与全国交通工友联合会 签署劳资集体协议



新捷运与全国交通工友联合会在2014年2月14日签署为期两年的劳资集体协议，为双方牢固的劳资关系划下重要的里程碑。

新捷运也响应职总的号召，支持年长工友继续就业，公司不但聘用超过65岁的年长员工，而且还将重新雇佣年长员工的年龄顶限从65岁提高至67岁。

新集体协议的内容包括改善巴士车长的津贴，以及为员工提供培训和援助。最重要的是，管理层采纳了全国职工总会主导的渐进式薪金制，并将它纳入集体协议之中。

新捷运总裁颜睿杰表示，公司非常珍惜员工。他说：“若没有员工的努力与付出，我们无法取得任何成果。我们坚信必须给予员工公平合理及具有竞争力的薪酬配套，希望借此提高员工的士气，加强他们对公司的归属感。”

全国交通工友联合会执行秘书王振安说：“前方充满挑战，公共交通业须不断改变以因应时代的需求，因此要如何保留和激励员工变得十分重要。我们很高兴新捷运的管理层对员工的付出给予肯定和认可。”

# 尼迪雅奖学金 为能源领域栽培更多人才

新加坡能源公司首次颁发奖学金给工艺教育学院与理工学院学生，为能源领域吸引与栽培更多人才。奖学金以已故工运领袖尼迪雅命名，以肯定他对新加坡能源领域与工运作出的贡献。电力与煤气业雇员联合会对此表示欢迎，尼迪雅曾担任该会的执行秘书。

在2014年3月18日举行的首届尼迪雅奖学金颁奖仪式上，八名工教院学生与13名理工学院学生从职总秘书长林瑞生手中接获奖学金。

林瑞生在致辞时追述尼迪雅善于激励工友，并对每个人关怀备至。尼迪雅也坚信工友必须不断提升技能，因为这是获取工作和收入稳定的关键。

尼迪雅的妻子维玛拉也出席了颁奖仪式。她认为此举表达了丈夫的愿望，即工友不论老少都要积极自我提升，才能迈向更美好的生活。

工艺教育东区学院学生诺法迪拉（20岁）是其中一名尼迪雅奖学金得主，也是少数修读电子工程学的女生。她说：“男生能做到的，女生也能做到，甚至做得更好。这份奖学金激励了我在能源领域争取杰出表现。”

另一名奖学金得主Kwek Jia Chen（19岁）则说：“我希望之前的实习经验，加上这份奖学金，能成为我踏入能源领域的踏脚石。”

▼ 尼迪雅奖学金得主诺法迪拉（左）与Kwek Jia Chen。



## 本地居民的就业率 今年将继续取得增长

人力部发表文告说，去年本地居民的就业人数增多，尤其是年长和女性居民，而外籍员工的人数增幅则比前年来得小。

**职总呼吁**通过建立新加坡核心团队和提高生产力以改善工友的生活已见成效。根据人力部在2014年3月14日发表的文告，本地对劳动力的需求依然强劲，这将为国人带来更多就业机会。

此外，随着外籍员工政策持续收紧，本地劳动市场今年预计持续紧缩，使工资面对上涨压力。人力部预计今年本地居民的就业率将可继续取得增长，而失业率将保持在低水平。

去年本地劳动市场的主要情况如下：

### 一、本地居民的就业率取得强劲增长

2013年本地居民的就业增长率达4%（8万2900人），比前年的2.9%高（5万8700人）。这是因为随着外籍员工政策持续收紧，许多公司转而聘用更多本地员工如年长和女性居民。不过，有鉴于我国人口老龄化，长期而言恐怕难以持续。

职总助理秘书长詹惠凤说：“职总将继续与我们的伙伴、设有工会的公司及相关机构合作，加强优化职场计划（WorkPro scheme），以吸引更多年长和女性居民重返职场。”

“此外，职总主导的渐进式薪金制可帮助工友争取更好的工资和事业发展规划，有助于吸引和留住员工。”

### 二、工资虽有所增长，但生产力未显著改善

尽管过去五年员工的工资稳健增长，但生产力增长尚未取得显著进步。有鉴于此，企业必须推行更多减低人力的方案，从而推动业务持续蓬勃增长，这对建筑业和服务业中需要大量人力的行业尤其重要。全国雇主联合会执行理事长高元杰表示，该会正积极与雇主探讨提高生产力的各种举措。

他说：“我们会定期向会员汇报有关生产力的计划和津贴。除此之外，我们还为雇主提供了23项与生产力相关的培训计划……整体而言，大约400家公司已从这些计划中受惠。”

他透露，雇主面对的其他挑战还包括如何测定生产力，以及灌输员工不断进取的职场文化等。

### 三、外籍员工的增长渐趋放缓

随着外籍员工政策收紧的措施生效，去年我国的外籍员工（不包括女佣）就业增长率连续两年放缓，达4.6%（4万8400人），比2012年的6.8%（6万7100人）来得低。

人力部代部长陈川仁于3月7日在国会拨款委员会辩论人力部开支预算时说：“过去几年政府收紧引进外籍员工的政策已持续奏效。”

在外籍员工当中，有三分之二来自建筑业，我国需要这些外籍劳工以改善公共基础设施。

他说：“虽然如此，我们还得做出多方面的努力，以降低对外籍员工的依赖。”

