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Bringing the Spark Back

FROM COMBATIVE TO COLLABORATIVE, FIND OUT HOW MUCH LABOUR MANAGEMENT RELATIONS HAS BRIGHTENED THE WAY FOR WORKERS IN SINGAPORE

Strengthening trust between NEU and NatSteel Holdings

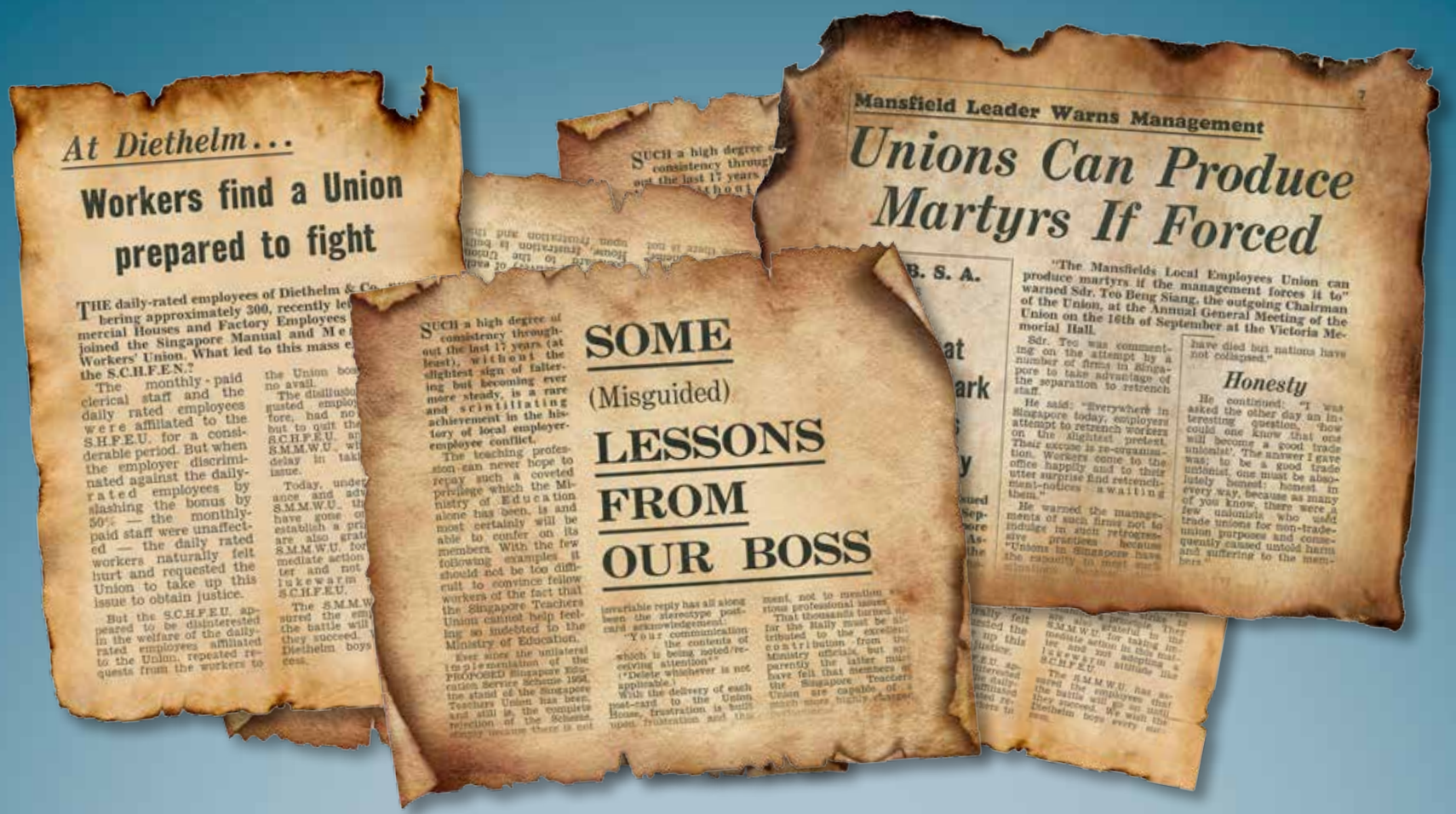
Capitaland and SISEU's **strong partnership** reaps benefits for PMEs

New initiative by HSEU and U Associate to raise awareness on mental wellness for healthcare workers

Turning the Tide

Strikes and table-thumping during negotiations were commonplace in the 1960s. So how did relations between employers and workers become collaborative today?

By **Fawwaz Baktee**



Arrogant. Insincere. Sinister. Disillusioned. Disinterested. Corrupted.

Flip the pages of *Perjuangan N.T.U.C – NTUC This Week*'s predecessor – and words like these were common when it came to unions describing employers in the 1960s.

Back then, employers were seen as the enemies and workers believed that the only way for them to be heard was by antagonising their employers with strikes and industrial action.

Strikes against their "imperialist" employers were the go-to modus operandi for unions in the 1950s and 1960s, resulting in millions of man-days lost. Some 410,900 man-days were lost in 1961 alone.

Although the number of strikes gradually decreased as the years went on, the combative approach of the unions persisted, and this was detrimental to young Singapore's economy.

TURNING POINT

At the Labour Movement Modernisation Seminar on 17 November 1969, then-Singapore Labour Minister S Rajaratnam urged unionists do away with the combative mentality and replace it with civil negotiations and collaboration.

He stressed that safeguarding national interests "is the responsibility of all of us because if they are not preserved, then sectional interests go down with them."

Mr Rajaratnam added: "I make this point to counter the tendency among some old-fashioned unionists to present every conflict with employers as a life and death struggle between saintly workers and wicked employers. What I am suggesting is that union leaders should get out of the habit of treating every move by the employer as a hostile move to do workers in. The new union leader should have confidence in himself to be able to negotiate with his employer on the basis of skill, argument and intelligent tactics."

Then-NTUC Secretary-General Devan Nair echoed this belief in his 1972 New Year message to workers and union leaders. The 1970s marked the decade of rapid industrialisation.

He said: "We in the NTUC accept the ILO [International Labour Organization] doctrine that the interest of workers, employers and the Government can and must be reconciled on the basis of sincere and common commitment to the spread of social well-being founded on social justice.

"The NTUC undertakes to play its part in strengthening the foundations of tripartite understanding and co-operation in Singapore."

And strengthen the foundation for collaboration between union and management he did.

COMMON GOOD

Fifty years on, the peaceful industrial environment today is a stark contrast to the hostile, militant days of the 1960s.

Speaking to *NTUC This Week*, NTUC Assistant Secretary-General (ASG) Cham Hui Fong said: "Today we believe in the shared objectives of the company to do well, which will allow our workers to grow. So the common denominator today is there must be a shared goal to benefit all parties."

She added that good labour-management relations (LMR) today are as important as ever, given the turning point the economy is at with technology and disruption.

"Both unions and employers must collaborate to prepare workers and companies to embrace changes and be future ready. In order to sustain good LMR, companies must be open with information to their employees. If companies have trust, openness and transparency, I don't think it will be difficult to ride this wave of change."

ASG Cham added that unions hope to build better relations with employers, stressing that good LMR should not be taken for granted.

"Don't assume that since we have industrial peace, things will always be this way. Today we have good LMR because NTUC has been providing enough information to our members on why some things such as restructuring are unavoidable. However, this is something employers cannot take for granted.

"Similarly, we have told unions that when employers are prepared to be open with them, don't betray their trust. It is an ongoing effort. The future may require both unions and companies to work even closer together," she said.

LMR: Views from the Labour Movement

We ask unionists and management partners to share their thoughts on what good labour-management relations (LMR) means to them. Here is what they had to say.

Compiled by ***NTUC This Week team***

"Labour-management relations is more than just attending to the basic issues in the workplace; it is about becoming more proactive in nurturing this relationship between the union and its management partners. We've always been reactive in the past, but increasingly, we are more proactive, identifying potential problems and devising strategies together to overcome them."

Healthcare Services Employees' Union (HSEU) President K Thanaletchimi

"Union leaders have constantly come up with collaborative initiatives and programmes to take care of the well-being of our staff. These ongoing efforts protect and safeguard their interests, making it a win-win situation for both NUH and HSEU. Some examples include productivity projects, corporate social responsibility programmes, pro-mature employees' practices, staff welfare and skills upgrading initiatives. We look forward to the continuous partnership to improve the quality of life for our employees and their families. We are glad that our employees are working in a healthy, safe and happy working environment."

National University Hospital Chief Human Resource Officer Clara Wee

"The objectives of good LMR should be based on unbiased and non-discriminatory grounds. This will make room for both parties to bargain in good faith and achieve a mutually beneficial situation. We should embrace the partnership to ensure the employability of our workers in the long run, upskilling and upgrading them to keep up with the technology changes in the industry, as well as safeguard their interests from time to time."

Union of Telecoms Employees of Singapore (UTES) General Secretary Thuvinder Singh

"What is really very healthy is that we do not have a hidden agenda. We operate on a very open and transparent relationship, and that helps. There's no second guessing. I think we go for sustainability of the performance and the organisation. The union (UTES) and management take the same position. Together, we build something that is win-win, constructive and harmonious."

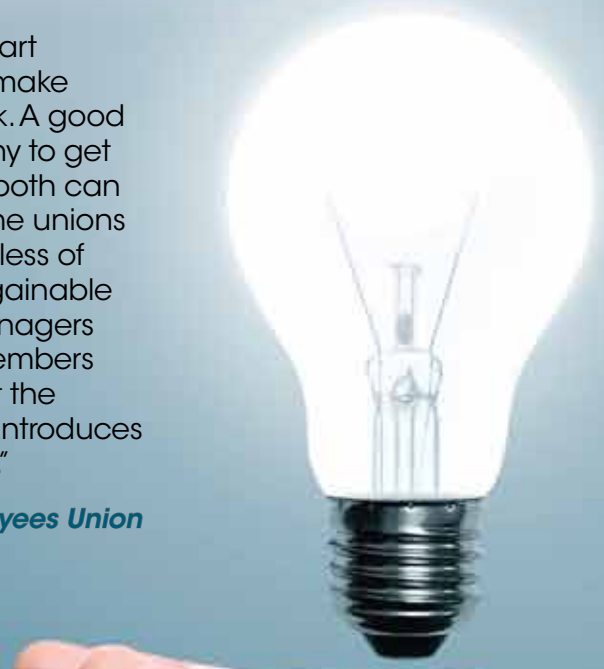
Singtel Group Chief Human Resources Officer Aileen Tan

"We need to trust each other. My job is to rally the people while the management runs the business. If I help to gather support for their initiatives, they must also reward the workers when they are making money. Trust takes a long time to build but once it's broken, it's like a piece of glass with a crack – very hard to amend. We have to make sure the relationship is always intact."

Food, Drinks and Allied Workers Union General Secretary Tan Hock Soon

"I always say that a smart company will always make use of its union to do its work. A good union will utilise the company to get to where they want to be. If both can continue to work together, the unions will become relevant regardless of whether they represent bargainable workers or professionals, managers and executives (PMEs). If members have your trust, they will trust the programmes the company introduces when the union is on board."

ExxonMobil Singapore Employees Union President Chew Boon Jin



"Both parties must have clarity on the objectives and be prepared to find a common ground regardless of the situation. We must also recognise that we represent different interests. It's a push-pull relationship. If you have a one-sided view of things, the end result is usually quite mediocre. But when you have someone opposing and challenging the status quo, it will improve. These practices capture the value and attitude of good LMR."

Singapore Insurance Employees' Union General Secretary Luke Hee

CapitaLand Limited HR Head Ho Seng Chee (right) with former SISEU Industrial Relations Officer Michael Lim.

A Better Deal for PMEs

Being able to collectively represent PME workers is one of the many positive results of the strong labour-management relations between SISEU and CapitaLand Limited.

By **Fawwaz Baktee**

Ever since CapitaLand became a branch of the Singapore Industrial and Services Employees' Union (SISEU) 17 years ago, the relationship has been strong.

"This did not happen overnight. It was built over some years. The union representatives have also been working with the company for quite some time now. There is a sense of familiarity between us.

"We don't make contact with the union only when there is an issue to solve. Even when there are no issues, the management and union will touch base with each other to talk about things happening in the company, or even just to have a cup of coffee. This is to continue building our friendship. That is how we have always worked," said CapitaLand Limited Group Human Resource Head Ho Seng Chee.

He added that the management must have the right mindset and not be suspicious of the union as a good relationship can be beneficial for both company and workers.

PME REPRESENTATION

One positive outcome of good labour-management relations (LMR) was the representation of professionals, managers and executives (PMEs).

It is because of the trust that CapitaLand has with SISEU that it agreed to have junior PMEs from all three branches of the company to be collectively represented by the union in 2015. The Industrial Relations Act was amended in the same year to allow PMEs to be collectively represented by rank-and-file unions.

"We don't want to distinguish those in the PME and non-PME grade. We also see the value in engaging the union on PME issues because these employees form a large part of the organisation.

"It comes back to the point of trust. I don't think that if we put PMEs in the same bucket as the union, all of a sudden all the PMEs would turn on the company. It wouldn't happen that way," said Mr Ho.

PMEs in the company now have easy access to Labour Movement resources such as training.

> "Even though we must protect our members, we are also reasonable and understand the management's point of view. To keep a good relationship, we strike a balance between the needs of our members and management."
>
> *Geraldine Loe, branch chair of CapitaLand Singapore and SISEU executive committee member*

Collaborating on Teacher Wellness

Improving bipartite ties between STU and educational institutions will see them work towards the collective well-being of their members.

By **Ramesh Subbaraman**

When the Ministry of Education (MOE) announced the merger of some junior colleges (JC) in April this year, the Singapore Teachers' Union (STU) swung into action to look into the area of teacher wellness.

In June, STU conducted a talk on "Managing the Change, Preparing for Transition" for the affected JC teachers to help them prepare for the changes ahead.

STU General Secretary Mike Thiruman pointed out that this was only possible due to the close ties the union has with MOE which runs the public schools in Singapore.

TEACHER WELLNESS OUTREACH

"Teacher wellness is critical for the creation of a positive teaching and learning climate and culture in the classroom. We cannot overlook or underestimate the impact of teacher well-being on student well-being. Teacher well-being is student well-being and essential for student success," emphasised Mr Thiruman.

Teacher wellness is a major focus for STU in the coming year and it will work with MOE and the schools to champion more initiatives in this area.

STRENGTHENING LABOUR-MANAGEMENT RELATIONS

Mr Thiruman said progress has been made in strengthening labour-management relations in recent years with MOE and the schools.

From 2015, the Schools Division has been represented at MOE's Quarterly Dialogues with the various teachers' unions including STU and the Singapore Chinese Teachers' Union, Singapore Malay Teachers' Union and Singapore Tamil Teachers' Union. In the past, only the ministry's HR representatives were present at such meetings.

"The presence of the Schools Division representatives allows STU to understand issues that school leaders face, and at the same time provides the Schools Division with the feedback from the union members' perspective," added Mr Thiruman.

STU has also been inviting ministry officials to sit in its "Teacher and the Law" school talks for teachers, where they are given advice on topics like social media policies and law issues.

Keeping a Good Thing Going

Trust, integrity and objectivity are central to the good relationship between NatSteel Holdings and NatSteel Employees' Union (NEU).

Story and Photo by **Jonathan Tan**

"The relationship that NatSteel executives and management enjoy with NEU is something that I am really proud of," said NatSteel Holdings President and CEO Ashish Anupam.

Lauding the union's support during the current challenging times brought about by fluctuating business conditions, Mr Ashish added: "What is impressive is that they understand the problems the company is facing and they come together with the resolve to solve the problems in a very cohesive and participative manner. While they take definitive interest of the workers, they also think about the future of the company. This is what is helping the organisation tide over these difficult times."

He said that while business is improving, the company is still not out of the woods, and he is looking forward to continue working together with the union.

BUILDING TRUST

NEU President Chew Chee Leong explained that trust is at the heart of the good labour-management relationship (LMR) between NatSteel and NEU.

"Engaging each other through regular meetings lets us discuss matters such as productivity, health and safety. We also get to know about any upcoming changes and plan how we can communicate this to our workers. We will also get to know more about the performance of the company, and as we can understand the challenges they face, better support the company in its decisions," he shared.

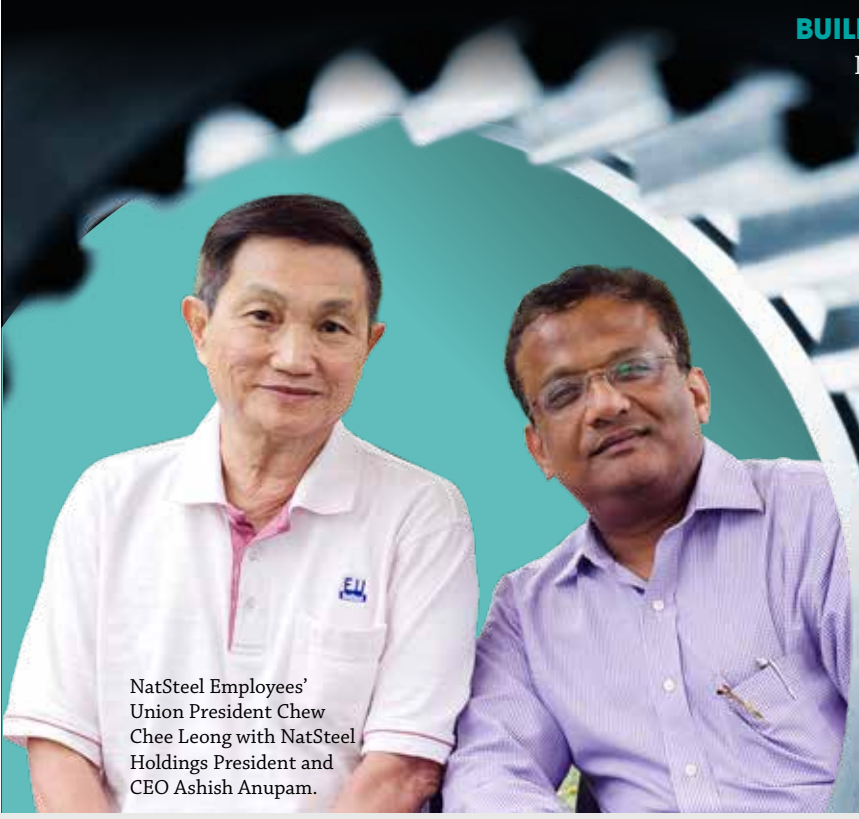
While working together enables the union and management to build up that trust, integrity and objectivity help to maintain it, added Mr Chew.

"While the management is supportive of our union work with the provision of union leave, we must also understand the operational needs of the company and not abuse this trust. We must be selective in the types of meetings and events we attend as the plant is short-handed."

POSITIVE OUTCOMES

As a direct result of this good relationship, Mr Ashish said that staff have been able to benefit from training and development with new skills and capabilities to take on new roles and stay relevant.

Another key outcome is the development of a health charter in 2017 which saw the company pledge to look after workers' health.



NatSteel Employees' Union President Chew Chee Leong with NatSteel Holdings President and CEO Ashish Anupam.

Forging Ahead

Strong labour-management relations are also the focus of NEU's 11th Quadrennial Delegates' Conference (QDC).

The NatSteel Employees' Union (NEU) held its 11th QDC on 27 September 2017 to elect its executive council for the next four-year term. It was attended by some 25 delegates and management partners.

There was no change to key appointment holders.

WORKING THROUGH CHALLENGES

Acknowledging the challenging business conditions faced by the company during the 2013–2017 term, NEU President Chew Chee Leong said: "We still need to take care of our workers. But in doing so, we must understand the company's situation. We need to support the company to make sure that our jobs are secure, instead of demanding for more [benefits]. If our jobs are not secure, how could we even think about benefits?

"We must work together with the company to first overcome the challenges. Only then can welfare and benefits improve accordingly. The company must also remember in good times how the union had helped them through the bad times."

NatSteel Holdings President and CEO Ashish Anupam holds his union colleagues in high regard. He said that while times are difficult for the company, it is through such times that the bonds between management and NEU have become much stronger, and more highly valued.

Guest-of-honour NTUC Deputy Secretary-General (DSG) Heng Chee How added: "To cope with the stark reality, both company and union leadership had to think hard and dig deep into their wits and relationship not only to pull through, but to emerge fitter. The transformation of the company in its use of technology and opening of new markets owes no small part to the labour-management ties forged over the years."

The NatSteel Employees' Union's executive council following its Quadrennial Delegates' Conference.

Doing More Together

A new initiative between HSEU and the Association of Psychotherapists and Counsellors (Singapore) aims to raise awareness of mental wellness and enhance support for mental health professionals.

Story and Photos by **Jonathan Tan**

"The work in the hospital can be very busy and stressful. The talks helped me learn tips and techniques to cope with stress at work, and having such talks regularly will be very useful," says Mastan Nachiyal, 54, a patient services assistant supervisor at Tan Tock Seng Hospital.

Anyone who has had to take care of an elderly or a loved one who is ill will know that the caregiver role can be challenging. Doing so as a career, over long hours each day, can take its toll, both physically and mentally.

To proactively help union members cope with the stresses and strains of demanding careers in healthcare, the Healthcare Services Employees' Union (HSEU) has been working together with the Association of Psychotherapists and Counsellors (Singapore) or APACS, an NTUC U Associate, on various initiatives.

Since 2016, regular lunchtime talks and one-to-one counselling sessions for members in need have helped bridge an underserved gap in the sector: looking after the mental well-being of healthcare workers.

WORKING MORE CLOSELY

To this end, the parties announced the HSEU-APACS Alliance on 26 September 2017 at the union's office at National University Hospital.

The initiative will see both parties work together to create greater awareness of mental wellness, dispel stigmas as well as boost the recognition of professionals such as counsellors and psychotherapists.

"More needs to be done for healthcare workers and the union decided to step in to address concerns about mental wellness. With the huge network we have, we can potentially create good advocacy and promote the recognition and growth of these professionals," said HSEU President K Thanaletchimi (*pictured, right*).

APACS President Abigail Lee (*pictured, centre*) said: "The collaboration between HSEU and APACS through efforts such as lunchtime talks, allows us to jointly create an awareness and understanding of the importance of mental and emotional well-being to the individuals within the healthcare sector."

Gearing Up For ODC

Unions are holding engagement sessions to identify challenges to be discussed at the upcoming NTUC Ordinary Delegates' Conference in November.

By **Ramesh Subbaraman**

The Labour Movement (LM) will be holding its Ordinary Delegates' Conference (ODC) on 15 November 2017.

Ahead of this, several unions have been holding their own retreats to identify challenges both within their unions and at the national level for flagging out at ODC.

On 27 and 28 August 2017, the Food, Drinks and Allied Workers Union (FDAWU) and the Attractions, Resorts & Entertainment Union (AREU) discussed a variety of issues at a joint retreat.

DIFFERENT CHALLENGES FOR AREU

A spokesperson for AREU said attractions and country clubs are facing different sets of challenges.

In the case of attractions, they are expanding and need workers with digital and technology skills to meet the expectations of visitors. Country clubs on the other hand are being affected by land acquisition, with workers facing retrenchment.

AREU emphasised that the challenge for workers is to stay relevant and the union's focus would be to help enhance the employability of its members so that they are equipped with the right skills.

FDAWU'S AREAS OF FOCUS

Training and upskilling in a rapidly changing environment is also a key focus for FDAWU. Its leaders observed that workers still perceived that their current skills are still relevant in the future which may lure them into a state of complacency. As such, union leaders were urged to take the lead and mobilise workers for continuous upgrading.

Another focus area for FDAWU is increasing its outreach. The union felt it can further increase its presence in food manufacturing, hotels and serviced apartments, and supermarket retail.

Making Good Progress

Dedication and perseverance see the National Private Hire Vehicles Association achieve a membership milestone in about 15 months.

By **Fawwaz Baktee**

It may have had only 23 members when it was first registered with NTUC in May 2016, but the National Private Hire Vehicles Association (NPHVA) today boasts a membership of 3,240. The figure surpassed the association's initial target of 2,000 members.

NPHVA Executive Secretary Mohamed Randy announced the milestone figure at the association's inaugural branch general meeting on 19 September 2017 at the Devan Nair Institute for Employment and Employability.

"We are very fortunate to have drivers who stuck with us to convince fellow drivers to join the association and spread the message of how we could help better their lives.

"After some initial increase in membership numbers, it started to stagnate. It was when we signed a partnership with Grab in October 2016 that we found a new avenue for membership growth," said Mr Randy.

The association plans to reach a membership of 5,000 by the end of the year.

IMPORTANCE OF VISIBILITY

NPHVA has also "parked" itself at the premises of the Singapore Transport Association and Land Transport Authority to raise awareness among private vehicle drivers on the work it does.

"When drivers pick up their PDVL [Private Driver Vehicle Licence], we take the opportunity to engage them and inform them about us. We will look at how we can continue to become more visible," added Mr Randy.

He also urged the members present at the event to continue to inform their fellow drivers about NPHVA.

SETTING UP OF BRANCHES

Today, NPHVA has three branches representing limousine, combi-bus and app drivers. All the branches saw individuals step forward to join their respective branch committees at the general meeting – two each from the limousine and combi-bus branches, and nine from the app drivers branch.

Eight individuals will be elected from these representatives to take over the association's pro tem executive committee when NPHVA holds its inaugural General Convention of Delegates on 4 October 2017.

Looking Out for Injured Workers

The Labour Movement is upping efforts to mitigate the rising number of workplace accidents resulting in amputations.

By **Shukry Rashid**

On 19 September 2017, NTUC WSH (Workplace Safety and Health) Committee Secretary Melvin Yong wrote a blog post on *labourbeat.org* expressing his concerns on the number of workers in Singapore who have suffered from amputations because of workplace accidents.

In 2016, there were over 140 cases in Singapore, an increase from the 117 in 2015.

"Many workers who have suffered such injuries have related their experiences on how their lives, both at home and at the workplace, have been significantly affected after the accident," said Mr Yong.

EFFORTS BY THE LABOUR MOVEMENT

Mr Yong said the NTUC WSH Secretariat intensified outreach and engagement efforts with companies and workers in the past year, especially in the metalworking and construction sectors.

It is also developing a guidebook titled *Prevention of Caught In-Between Objects Hazards*, which will provide practical solutions to safeguard workers against the moving parts of machinery.

RETURN-TO-WORK FRAMEWORK

Mr Yong said Singapore lacks an occupational rehabilitation and work injury management framework to aid workers in the process of returning to work after a workplace accident.

To this end, the Labour Movement has been advocating for the adoption of return-to-work (RTW) practices.

He explained: "We want to support and help our injured workers to recover quickly and return to work. We have seen in some countries that a customised case management approach by RTW coordinators can help injured workers recover faster through structured rehabilitation. This includes helping employers adjust their workplaces or redesign the jobs to facilitate the injured worker's return to work."

Mr Yong added that the Labour Movement is working closely with tripartite partners to establish a comprehensive RTW framework.

To read the full blog post, "SAW Singapore edition: Not for the faint-hearted", visit ***www.labourbeat.org***.

Protecting Workplaces Against Terrorism

The Government urges employers to look into risk management, business continuity and emergency response plans in the face of rising terror threats globally.

Story and Photo by **Avelyn Ng**

At the National Security Conference 2017 on 26 September 2017, Deputy Prime Minister Teo Chee Hean announced that the Government will scale up efforts to enhance readiness of workplaces against terror threats through the SGSecure at Workplaces Programme.

Led by the Ministry of Manpower (MOM), the programme identified five priority sectors – food and beverage, retail, entertainment, hotels, and transport – with the tendency to have a high concentration of people and therefore a higher likelihood of being targeted.

NTUC Deputy Secretary-General Heng Chee How *(pictured third from right)*, who was present at the event, said: "Terrorism exploits the weakest points in the social fabric and defence arrangements. Unpreparedness, complacency and poorly coordinated responses will undermine resilience, sap morale and amplify helplessness in the face of attacks."

GUIDE FOR WORKPLACES

The event also unveiled the SGSecure Guide for Workplaces which is jointly developed by MOM, NTUC, and other tripartite partners in consultation with employers and subject matter experts. The guide, which lays out concrete steps

on what companies can do, will be disseminated progressively to some 151,000 active companies in Singapore from October 2017.

The public service sector will take the lead by training officers on first aid and the use of automated external defibrillators.

LAYER OF SECURITY

Effective immediately, MOM, Ministry of Home Affairs, SkillsFuture Singapore and Workplace Safety and Health (WSH) Council have incorporated SGSecure elements into the first three levels of the bizSAFE certification framework. bizSAFE is a five-step programme that assists companies to build up their WSH capabilities.

The Government is targeting to have the 27,000 companies meet the enhanced requirements by 2020 with the help of the trade associations and chambers.

"A lot of our companies are aware, but not many are ready with the capability to deal with eventual attacks by terrorist groups. For companies which want to send their workers for SGSecure training under the bizSAFE level two programme, MOM funds up to 90 per cent of the training cost or a cap of $500 per worker, so there is adequate financial and technical support," said Minister of State for Manpower Sam Tan.

GOOD TO KNOW

Companies, here are four easy steps to start:

- Register a SGSecure representative with MOM at **www.mom.gov/sgsecure** to be the point-of-contact during crises.
- Encourage employees to download the SGSecure mobile application on iOS or Android to receive important alerts.
- Brief employees on the emergency escape routes and places to hide at the workplace.
- Download the "Run, Hide, Tell" and "Press, Tie, Tell" advisories from **www.sgsecure.sg/resources** and display them at the workplace to educate employees on how to respond to contingencies.

Congratulations

Sister Halimah Yacob

on becoming

eighth President of the Republic of Singapore

新加坡华文教师总会衷心祝贺
哈莉玛女士当选新加坡共和国第八任总统!

From:

SCTU

Singapore Chinese Teachers' Union

Skills Boost for Logistics Sector

With the launch of a new skills framework, the Labour Movement will be reaching out to workers to urge them to upskill for future jobs.

By **Ramesh Subbaraman**

The Government's push to accelerate the transformation of the logistics sector in Singapore got a boost with the launch of the Skills Framework for Logistics on 22 September 2017. It was announced by Prime Minister (PM) Lee Hsien Loong at the opening of the YCH group's Supply Chain City at Bulim Avenue.

The skills framework supports the Logistics Industry Transformation Map which was launched in November 2016, and identifies job roles, career pathways, and existing and emerging skills required for the sector.

"By 2020, the logistics industry should achieve a value-add of $8.3 billion and create 2,000 new professional, managerial, executive and technician (PMET) jobs.

"The Government will play its part to attract, nurture and retain a strong Singaporean core of talent for the logistics industry. We will train people ahead of demand, through our universities, our polytechnics, and through the ITEs. We will support mid-career professional conversion programmes to augment the talent pipeline," said PM Lee.

LABOUR MOVEMENT PLAYS ITS PART

Under the skills framework, six career pathways have been identified. They include warehouse management and operations, freight forwarding and operations, sales and customer service, logistics solutioning and programme management.

The Labour Movement's Logistics Cluster was one of the partners involved in developing the skills framework, said NTUC Assistant Secretary-General (ASG) Patrick Tay.

Writing on his Facebook page, ASG Tay, who is also director of NTUC's Future Jobs, Skills and Training (FJST) Department, added that the framework complements efforts in strengthening the Singaporean core and ensures a continuous pipeline of skilled manpower for the jobs of the industry.

He added that the cluster will be engaging workers and management on rolling out the framework and emphasise the importance of upskilling for the future.

BEING FUTURE-READY

The Supply Chain City aims to support Singapore's growth as a globally leading logistics hub with a fully ramped up warehouse, inventory counting drones and advanced robotics.

Sharing his thoughts on Facebook, National Transport Workers' Union (NTWU) Executive Secretary Melvin Yong said the union is glad that YCH will test new technologies and allow for a more hands-on approach for new entrants to the logistics sector.

"We will continue to work with YCH and other industry partners to help our logistics workers upskill quickly and be future-ready for new jobs in this evolving industry," said Mr Yong.

Optimising Technology at ExxonMobil

Continuous learning for workers at all levels plays a key part in keeping workers up to date with better productivity outcomes.

By **Ramesh Subbaraman**

SG Chan views a plant simulation exercise at ExxonMobil's control centre.

Leveraging technology for a more manpower-optimised and safer workplace is what ExxonMobil Asia Pacific Pte Ltd's integrated refining and petrochemical complex is doing.

NTUC Secretary-General (SG) Chan Chun Sing visited the plant at Pioneer Road on 25 September 2017 to meet up with management and get a glimpse into its efforts to keep pace with global developments.

He was accompanied by Gan Seow Kee, chairman and managing director of ExxonMobil Asia Pacific and Refinery Manager of the Singapore plant Brian Ablett.

DIGITAL MANUFACTURING

At the visit, SG Chan was briefed on the role digital manufacturing plays in maximising workplace productivity.

One such technology is digital visualisation where ExxonMobil staff carry a mobile device hooked onto their uniforms. This allows real-time access to critical operational information to monitor the various units around the complex. If an incident were to occur, the mobile device gets activated and alerts the control room immediately for remedial action.

Writing on his Facebook page, SG Chan said: "Employees are also given opportunities to work on different projects and take on different roles as part of their career development."

ENGAGING WORKERS

ExxonMobil Asia Pacific's senior management added that engaging workers for their feedback at all levels of the company is an ongoing process in the company.

This helps in identifying their skills upgrading and continuous learning needs, something that has benefited 65-year-old Ng Chin Leong, a digital manufacturing process lead.

"Due to the nature of my job, I have to update myself to ensure that I can deploy the latest technology at my workplace for operations and be the operator of the future for the different processes. At ExxonMobil, we have continuous learning courses," said Mr Ng, who has been with the company for 44 years.

SG Chan also had a chance to meet union leaders from the ExxonMobil Singapore Employees Union which has some 3,000 members.

Future Outlook:
Start Imagining Today!

Contact lenses that takes pictures and videos, a car that understands your needs and emotions, and a robot food delivery service … We're excited to see how these new inventions will shape our world.
Look out for more in this regular column.

By **Fawwaz Baktee**

Smart Contacts

This may sound like something out of a spy movie, but we promise it's true.

Tech giants Sony, Google and Samsung are racing to develop smart contact lenses that take photos, record video and even display information! The images and recordings will then be stored wirelessly on your smartphones.

The lenses could also give you information about surrounding objects just by "looking" at them. We want a pair, like, now!

Source: ***computerworld.com***

Robot Delivery

One robot is helping to deliver food all over San Francisco autonomously. A collaboration with tech company Marble and multinational company Yelp, the robot is the world's first of its kind.

Users simply order food through Yelp's Eat-24 app, and the metal delivery guy will send your food right to your doorstep. In fact, it is able to navigate its surroundings using GPS and hi-res 3D maps, so we're sure it can never lose its way. Hello local food app delivery services? Any chance you will consider hiring them soon?

Source: ***www.marble.io***

Car Buddy

If your car isn't your BFF yet, this might just be the one you've been waiting for. Toyota's Concept-I car features an advanced digital assistant named Yui that uses artificial intelligence to get to know you.

In fact, the artificial intelligence is so intuitive that it recognises your needs and emotions and monitors your intentions just by the way you drive. The assistant then chooses settings such as autonomous or manual driving, depending on what it sees fit. Now if only Yui could also turn on the right music to suit your mood, especially if you've had a bad day at work!

Source: ***www.toyota.com***

Snapshots

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

Compiled by ***NTUC This Week*** **Team**

Gift from the Heart 2017

Almost 2,000 union members benefited from the Gift from the Heart event on 23 September 2017, jointly organised by the Food, Drinks and Allied Workers Union (FDAWU) and Chemical Industries Employees' Union (CIEU). Into its 13th year, the initiative aims to help lower-income union members and their families with daily necessities. Sponsors for products and cash came from 31 FDAWU and CIEU branches. Through a ground-up initiative, attendees and the public also showed their support through the signing of pledge cards. Fairprice Foundation donated $10 for each pledge card signed, and over $40,000 was raised.

Building a Better Singapore

On 24 September 2017, President Halimah Yacob hosted several union leaders from the Labour Movement to a brunch at the Istana.

Writing on her Facebook page, Mdm Halimah noted that having been with the Labour Movement for more than three decades, she is aware of how dedicated union leaders are in working with employers and the Government. Working together facilitates harmonious labour-management relations while ensuring Singapore's economic competitiveness and overall growth progress, added Mdm Halimah.

"We also discussed upcoming strategies to promote skills building in our people. The next stage of Singapore's economic development will rely heavily on how well our workers equip themselves with relevant skills. I look forward to continue working with the Labour Movement in this area in the coming years. Together, we can build a better Singapore," she said.

UTES 35th Anniversary

The Union of Telecoms Employees of Singapore (UTES) held a dinner for close to 800 guests on 22 September 2017 in celebration of its 35th anniversary.

In his opening address, UTES First Assistant General Treasurer and Organising Committee Chairman Mohd Emran Hamid shared the union's key milestones. Going forward, UTES will be negotiating with more companies for representation of professionals, managers and executives, and SkillsFuture leave benefits for employees.

Guest-of-honour NTUC Secretary-General Chan Chun Sing, meanwhile, hailed the importance of staying relevant amid technological disruptions.

He said: "The enemy is out there – it's called competition. To make sure that in five years' time, our companies still have good products to sell, our workers still have good jobs to do with good pay to take care of themselves and their families, we need to get ready to upgrade our skills ahead of time."

In appreciation of strong labour-management relations, UTES presented awards to branches from Singtel, NCS, SingPost, Netlink Trust, Huawei International and Radiance Communications.

Congratulations

Sister Halimah Yacob

on being elected

The eighth President of the Republic of Singapore

From:

SINGAPORE ORGANISATION OF SEAMEN

Singapore Organisation of Seamen

seAcAre

Seacare Co-operative Ltd &
its Group of Companies

What's Happening Where

Compiled by **Jonathan Tan**

Oktoberfest Fiesta

It's that time of the year to say *prost* and make merry with friends and family. Orchid Country Club will be hosting its annual Oktoberfest celebration on 7 October 2017 with a Golf Challenge followed by a hearty German buffet spread complete with live band, games and lucky draws.

*7 Oct 2017, Orchid Country Club. Buffet dinner: $58 nett for adults with a complimentary mug of beer, $24 nett for children aged 5 to 12. For enquiries and registration, call **6750 2111** or email **golfregistration@orchidclub.com**.*

Future Ready Series

With new technology being introduced ever so often, it can be confusing just keeping up with the changes today, much less knowing how it will help you in the workplace tomorrow. As part of the Young NTUC-NTU IIC Future Ready Series 2017, "Advances Today and its Impact Tomorrow" is an evening dialogue where leading industry professionals in technology will share insights on navigating flux and identifying the potential of change.

4 Oct 2017, 6.30pm to 9.30pm, NTUC Centre. Registrations available at the door.

Halloween Specials

Spooky Good Time for Kids

Here's a Halloween party for kids with all the fun but none of the nightmares. Taking place at two different venues, eXplorerkid @ Downtown East and AMK Hub, this year's Spooktacular party promises hours of fun with opportunities for dressing up, trick-or-treats and festive games.

*21 and 29 Oct 2017, 2pm to 5pm, eXplorerkid @ Downtown East and AMK Hub, from $35 for NTUC members and $45 for general public. For more information and registration, visit **www.explorerkid.com/activities_events/halloween_spooktakular_party_2017**.*

A Wet and Wild Affair

Celebration and superstition come together for some good old scary fun! To let you cool off in this hot and balmy weather, the second instalment of the Singapore Halloween Festival will be taking place at Wild Wild Wet.

*4–5 Nov 2017, Downtown East. For more information and registration, visit **www.downtowneast.com.sg/events/Singapore_Halloween_Festival_2017**.*

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ANDROID

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