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Build-A-Playground @ Canberra

About 1,800 Canberra residents collaborated with the HDB to build their very own community playground. Read more about their efforts here.

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Enhancement Plans for Fort Canning Park

Minister Lawrence Wong recently unveiled enhancement plans to Fort Canning Park and its surroundings, which will bring the hill’s historical features back to life!

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Greater Community Participation at I Light Marina Bay 2018

I Light Marina Bay returns this month with 22 enthralling light art installations and a myriad of activities to light up Marina Bay. Find out about the sustainable light installations being featured in this year’s edition.

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More than 130 Scholarships and Sponsorships Awarded to ITE Students

20-year-old Ajit Kumar, an ITE graduate, was awarded the BCA-Chevalier Scholarship, along with 133 other graduates!

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SG Farmers’ Market

Local farmers who took part in the SG Farmers’ Market activity reported good sales as shoppers stocked up on fresh produce for their Chinese New Year reunion dinners!

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Six Steps to Engaging a Property Agent

Engaging a property agent to buy, sell or rent a property is not a complicated matter, as long as you follow this six-step guide by CEA.

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Strengthening Regional Operations Networks for Better Municipal Service Delivery

Regional Operations Network (RON) sessions help forge closer partnerships amongst agencies for effective delivery of municipal services.

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Build-A-Playground @ Canberra

Playgrounds have always been an iconic feature of our heartlands. Just think of the famous Toa Payoh dragon playground, and the Tampines Watermelon playground. But for residents of Canberra estate, a brand new “kelong-themed” playground holds even more special meaning. It is a playground which they conceptualised, designed, and built together as a community.

1,800 residents participated in this collaborative project, which took about two years to complete. They actively contributed to design workshops and roadshows organised by HDB to dream up their ideal playground.
On 7 January, they gathered to put the finishing touches to their “Adventure Playground” and completed Singapore’s first community-built playground. The
focus of the project was not just to build another playground, but to develop residents’ sense of community ownership and strengthen the bonds that they share with one another.

Canberra residents enjoying their new playground, which they worked on for two years.

The playground’s kelong (fishing jetties) theme was born out of residents’ desire to honour Sembawang’s history. The hammocks, which look like fishing nets, are reminiscent of a time when Sembawang was dotted with fishing villages.
The enthusiastic response from residents during this pilot run of HDB’s “Build-A-Playground” initiative has fuelled the expansion of the programme to four other towns: Toa Payoh, Pasir Ris, Woodlands, and Choa Chu Kang. Five existing playgrounds in these towns will be rejuvenated, and residents will get a chance to be involved.

**Enhancement Plans for Fort Canning Park**

On 3 February, Minister for National Development Mr Lawrence Wong announced upcoming enhancements to Fort Canning Park and its surroundings. These enhancements will include the re-creation of three historical gardens on Fort Canning Hill and the vicinity: Jubilee Park, the Royal Garden, and the First Botanic Garden.
Mr Lawrence Wong, Minister for National Development and Second Minister for Finance, and Mr Desmond Lee, Minister for Social and Family Development and Second Minister for National Development, separately being briefed by NParks officers and CEO/NParks Mr Kenneth Er on the enhancements to be carried out within Fort Canning Park.

These gardens, which make up the heritage landscapes of Fort Canning Hill, will be restored as part of sensitive enhancements to Fort Canning Park, bringing the hill’s historical features back to life. They will be accompanied by more education and outreach programmes, as well as enhanced accessibility infrastructure for the park, including covered escalators.

In addition, Fort Canning Centre will be repurposed as a gallery for visitors to learn more about the history of the hill and its surroundings. Fort Canning Centre will also host the Singapore Bicentennial exhibition in 2019.

A public exhibition was held from 3 to 11 February to seek feedback on features visitors would like to see at the new Jubilee Park, elements they enjoy most about Fort Canning Park, and possible volunteer activities to participate in.

The event was held in conjunction with Festival at the Fort, which also featured the Rockestra concert that same evening. Close to 4,000 visitors partied to retro hits from the 1960s to 1990s, performed by Jack & Rai, Shagies, and other local bands.
Greater Community Participation at i Light Marina Bay 2018

i Light Marina Bay has returned since 9 March 2018, with 22 enthralling light art installations and a myriad of activities to light up Marina Bay. This year’s edition of the festival also involves greater participation from the community in the creation of sustainable artworks.

Organised by the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) as part of place-making efforts in Marina Bay, the sixth edition of the sustainable light art festival features installations created by artists from Singapore and around the world. Designed with energy-saving lighting and recycled or environmentally-friendly materials, the light art installations reinforce Marina Bay’s position as a sustainable precinct and encourages festival goers and the public to adopt sustainable habits in their daily lives.

“Dancing Grass” by Yuree Hong and Siyoung Kim (South Korea).

Three of the installations were created using used bottles and containers contributed by the community and corporate partners. One of the artworks, Transistable Plastic by Luzinterruptus from Spain, is a large-scale installation created using multiple panels encased with plastic waste. The artwork aims to raise awareness about the amount of waste we generate in our lives. About 20,000 PET (polyethylene terephthalate) bottles contributed by the public and
corporate organisations, including those taken from a plastic bottle collection drive held at The URA Centre in February 2018 were used.

The artists of two other installations have also sourced used bottles from local companies and cafes to be repurposed in their artworks. *Milk Bottle Cows*, by Singapore-based artist BP Loh, aims to encourage recycling and upcycling through a showcase of life-sized ‘cows’ created from some 2,000 plastic milk bottles. Meanwhile, *Chandelier of Spirits* by Living Spirits from Thailand is a display of suspended glass and plastic coffee bottles, inspired by the morning beverage habits of office workers and symbolising a gathering of Singapore’s workforce.

![“Milk Bottle Cows” by BP Loh (Singapore).](image)

The festival line-up also features six artworks by students from local institutions, including Nanyang Polytechnic, Nanyang Technological University, Raffles College of Higher Education, the School of the Arts, and LASALLE College of the Arts.

Complementing the showcase of sustainable light art installations is *i Light Sustainability*, an umbrella of initiatives to encourage festival goers to adopt sustainable habits in their daily lives. For instance, visitors can explore and learn more about the topic of sustainability through a series of talks and workshops. The signature *Switch Off, Turn Up* campaign, held in conjunction with the festival, continues to see corporate organisations around Marina Bay and beyond switch off non-essential lighting and turn up their air-conditioning temperatures to save energy.
i Light Marina Bay’s sustainability focus will also fit in with the Earth Hour initiative on 24 March, when the light art installations will be switched off for an hour during the annual islandwide lights-out event.

To be held from 9 March to 1 April 2018, i Light Marina Bay is open from 7.30 pm to 11.00 pm daily, with extended hours to 12.00 midnight on Fridays and Saturdays, around the Marina Bay waterfront and Esplanade Park. Admission is free. For more information, visit www.ilightmarinabay.sg.

More than 130 Scholarships and Sponsorships Awarded to ITE Students

Ajit Kumar has always wanted to learn more about how electrical wiring and systems work. So after completing his N-Level examinations, he naturally went on to enrol in the Nitec in Facility Technology (Mechanical and Electrical Services) course at the Institute of Technical Education (ITE).
Determined to do well in his studies, Ajit maintained good grades every semester. This is despite having to balance his studies with part-time jobs to make extra income for his family.

Today, 20-year-old Ajit is a proud recipient of the BCA-Chevalier Built Environment ITE Scholarship, awarded by Chevalier Singapore Holdings Pte Ltd. A total of 134 students were awarded the BCA-Industry Built Environment ITE scholarships and sponsorships at an awards ceremony held on 29 January.

The scholarship has not only eased Ajit’s financial burden but also spurred him to work harder to build his career with Chevalier as a Technical Supervisor. He is intrigued by the challenging job scope in the lifts and escalators sector.
With an increasing need for lift technicians in Singapore, Ajit believes there will be ample learning and career advancement opportunities in this sector. He hopes to progress in this sector through part-time learning opportunities provided by his scholarship. Ajit wishes to also prove to his peers that careers in lift maintenance are important and fulfilling. He looks forward to joining Chevalier in March this year.

As part of industry transformation efforts, the BCA-Industry Built Environment ITE scholarships and sponsorships will help strengthen the quality of Singapore’s workforce. This will help attract more Singaporeans into the sector, while also offering opportunities for continuing education and training (CET).
AVA, in collaboration with the Singapore Agro-Food Enterprises Federation (SAFEF), held a Chinese New Year (CNY) edition of the SG Farmers’ Market on 10 and 11 February at Singapore Turf Club, Carpark B.

Members of the public came to buy local produce such as eggs, fish, vegetables, and mushrooms directly from Singapore’s farms — just in time to stock up on fresh produce for their CNY reunion dinners!

Enthusiastic shoppers buying vegetables from local vegetable farmers at the SG Farmers’ Market.
Mediacorp Radio LOVE 97.2FM’s deejays Violet Fenying and Bukoh Mary injected fun into the event with their cooking demonstrations and games for the public. The daily cooking demonstrations saw celebrity chef Daniel Koh whip up three home-cooked festive dishes using fresh local produce, while chef Marc Wee from Arbite Restaurant showed how to cook two local fish dishes in partnership with The Fish Farmer, a local fish farm.

Other highlights included a photo opportunity with Singapore Turf Club’s two ponies, lively lion and dragon dance performances, a roving God of Fortune, and a kids’ colouring activity.
This edition of SG Farmers Market gave the local farmers the opportunity to share more about the various types of locally-grown produce with visitors. Ms Shirleen He from VertiVegies said that many people were receptive to local produce and hydroponics. Mr Frank Tan from Marine Life Aquaculture sold out his threadfin fishes on both days before the end of each day. One satisfied customer even returned to the Market the following day to buy more! Mr Malcolm Ong from The Fish Farmer also reported good sales, and added that the atmosphere at the SG Farmers’ Market was very fun.

The Farmers’ Market will be brought to the heartlands from August 2018. Do look out for it!

Senior Minister of State for National Development and Trade & Industry Dr Koh Poh Koon was at the event to show his support for local farmers.
Buying, selling, or renting a property is complicated enough; engaging a property agent shouldn’t be. Here are six steps you should take when engaging a property agent:

1. **Decide if you need a property agent**

   It is not compulsory to engage a property agent for your property transactions. If you are familiar with property transactions, you may choose to handle it on your own. However, if you are unsure about the procedures and regulations, you may wish to engage a registered property agent to help you.

2. **Check that the agent is registered with the Council for Estate Agencies (CEA) via its Public Register**

   It is an offence for any individual to carry out estate agency work without a valid registration. CEA’s Public Register allows you to search for the particulars of registered property agents or licensed property agencies.
If you are unable to find an agent or agency in the Public Register, they could be unlicensed or unregistered, or they could have been **suspended or have had their licenses or registrations revoked**.

3. **Negotiate your agent’s commission before he starts work**

   Commission rates are not fixed, nor are there “standard market rates”. You are free to negotiate the amount and components of the fees and expenses as well as the terms with the agent **before** your agent starts work. After your transaction has been completed, you should pay the commission to the property agency, not directly to the agent.

4. **Use CEA’s prescribed estate agency agreements**

   An estate agency agreement is a binding contract between you and the property agency to protect the interests of both parties. It covers the agent’s duties, the agreed commission rate, and any conflict of interest the agent might have.

5. **There should be no dual representation**

   Your agent can represent you only in a property transaction. He also cannot collect commission from you and a co-broke fee from the other party’s property agent in a co-broke transaction.

6. **Handle your own money**

   It is best to handle the money related to your property transaction yourself, as it is illegal for your agent to handle certain monies. Don’t pass any cash through your agent to the payee; use verifiable payment modes such as crossed cheques and bank transfers to pay the payee directly.

For more information about engaging a property agent, visit [www.cea.gov.sg/happyconsumer](http://www.cea.gov.sg/happyconsumer).

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**Strengthening Regional Operations Networks for Better Municipal Service Delivery**

The Municipal Services Office (MSO) has initiated Regional Operations Network (RON) sessions to develop and strengthen Singapore’s regional networks for municipal service delivery.

These sessions bring together officers from 11 partner agencies to help them build closer partnerships to effectively deliver municipal services with a OneService mindset.
Since November 2017, nearly 100 officers from the Central and Northeast regions have attended the RON sessions. They learned more about protocols and tools that would help them deliver better municipal services to their residents. In addition, they had the opportunity to understand other agencies’ roles and functions, as well as to discuss cross-cutting municipal cases. Senior officers of partner agencies also shared their insights and perspectives on cross-agency collaboration to further enrich the participants’ learning.

The sessions garnered much positive feedback from the participants. In particular, they found the sharings by MSO and the agencies to be beneficial and insightful for their day-to-day work.
MSO has also kick-started platforms (such as a Workplace* group and a dedicated e-newsletter) to further engage and sustain the RON community. This helps connect the officers better and allows them to keep abreast of developments in the municipal sector.

To date, the Workplace group has a total of 116 members. MSO will continue to scale the sessions so more officers from other regions can take part. With these RON sessions, Singapore can look forward towards building a stronger and more cohesive OneService network!

*Workplace is a collaborative platform offering social networks features in a corporate environment.