

ROUND-UP
OF VIEWSONE-HOUR WAIT FOR
PACKED SBS SERVICE 502

ON SUNDAY, I waited for SBS Transit's bus service 502 for an hour, yet I could not board it when it arrived.

I was at bus stop 28459, opposite Parc Oasis condominium, at 12.10pm. The estimated arrival times shown at the bus stop were 12.09pm, 12.24pm, 12.40pm, 12.55pm and 1.11pm.

There was no sign of service 502 at 12.24pm, 12.40pm or 12.55pm.

After waiting for an hour, SBS8767U arrived at 1.09pm, but it was packed.

While I was waiting for the bus, I saw four service 502 buses on the other side of the road. Some of those waiting for the bus with me hailed taxis eventually.

Meanwhile, at least 28 bus service 99 buses whizzed past. Perhaps SBS Transit could transfer some of these buses (which were largely empty) to ply service 502's route.

Although the frequency of express buses is lower compared to that of normal buses, an hour's wait is too long.

I hope that SBS Transit can look into the matter, and prevent this from happening again.

MISS EMILYN PENG

INSPECT MACRITCHIE PARK
STRUCTURES FOR SAFETY

MACRITCHIE Reservoir Park underwent the first phase of its makeover last year, with a sheltered carpark among some of the new facilities built.

The second phase was scheduled to commence in the second half of last year, but there do not seem to be more upgrading works in the rest of the park.

The only improvements were:

- ◆ Shelters built along trails
- ◆ Map signage
- ◆ Directional signage at the foot of the hill pointing to Lim Bo Seng's memorial grave site.

It is important that regular inspections and maintenance work are carried out at the park, to ensure the safety and convenience of park users.

For example, there were several loose panels in a wooden bridge at the park. When I walked on it, there were clacking sounds and it seemed that some screws and nails were loose.

Maintenance staff should be more pro-active in their regular inspection of equipment and structures.

MR CHIN KEE THOU

More can be done
to narrow income gap

I REFER to the Parliament report, "Grow economy, cut inequality" (*my paper*, March 5).

I applaud Non-Constituency MP Sylvia Lim's comments regarding income inequality in Singapore.

She has brought to the fore an issue **pertinent** to our future.

From the time Singapore gained independence, the administration has adhered to ensuring growth for the nation, to provide benefits for Singaporeans.

This is perfectly understandable, given the inherent disadvantages facing the Republic, and threats and competition from abroad – exacerbated by globalisation.

However, the benefits of this economic growth has not been spread equally throughout the decades.

There are different rationales that could explain the household-income **disparity**, and prolonged and pronounced income inequality can bring about unde-

sirable consequences.

In a study of household-income trends, the results of which were released on Sunday, the Singapore Department of Statistics found that Singapore's Gini coefficient – which measures income inequality – dropped from 0.481 in 2008 to 0.478 last year.

The smaller the figure, the narrower the income gap.

While the Government has introduced initiatives such as the Workfare Income Supplement to help individuals in the lower-income **bracket**, more can be done to narrow the gap between the rich and the poor.

Last Friday, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao announced in his annual address to the Chinese Parliament that his government was pledging to close the country's nagging poverty gap.

He said: "We will not only make the 'pie' of social wealth bigger by developing the economy, but also distribute it well on the basis of a rational income-

distribution system."

Likewise, Singapore must continue to take action to address this issue.

Social organisations must continue raising awareness of people in the lower-income bracket, and allow citizens to provide aid to fellow citizens whenever possible.

The greatest shame would be for Singaporeans to be aware of this socio-economic problem, but lack the **willpower** to address it.

MR KWAN JIN YAO

HELPDESK 我的字典

Pertinent: 切题的 qiè tí de

Disparity: 差异 chā yì

Bracket: 类别 lèi bié

Willpower: 意志力 yì zhì lì

MRT train
rides are hot
and stuffy

I TAKE the MRT to and from my workplace on a 30-40 minute ride between Choa Chu Kang and Redhill station daily.

For the past few weeks, the air in the trains I travel in has been hot and stuffy, and I noticed that the cool air from the air-conditioning vents in the trains is being released intermittently.

With hotter weather here, such train rides are very uncomfortable, especially during peak hours.

As more people are encouraged to use public-transport services, the authorities need to ensure that train rides are comfortable.

MR L. A. SHAHUL HAMEED

WRITE TO US AT MY PAPER.

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Please include your full name, address and a telephone contact number. We reserve the right to edit letters for clarity and length.

No shortcut
to mastering
languages

LEARNING a language is not easy but there are no languages that cannot be mastered, as long as you have determination and the right attitude.

I am 62 years old and speak eight languages – Tamil (my mother tongue), Malay, Mandarin, English, Japanese, Hindi, Malayalam and Urdu.

In 1974, I started learning Japanese, and being able to converse fluently in it has helped me in my career. I have worked for Japanese companies and, today, I run a company that provides a wide range of services to a Japanese clientele.

Five years ago, I started attending Chinese-language classes regularly to brush up my knowledge of the written language.

Age is not a barrier to learning. If one has a passion for languages, he will find his own techniques for memorising words and phrases, in order to master them.

Singapore is the best place to learn the four local languages.

People who want to learn languages should read the book *Keeping My Mandarin Alive: Lee Kuan Yew's Language Learning Experience* – written to highlight the Mandarin-learning experience of Minister Mentor Lee Kuan Yew.

One important tip for language learners is to never worry about making mistakes. After all, 失败是成功之母 (literally, failure is the mother of success). People learn from mistakes made.

MR MUTHALAGU MEYYAPPAN

eastern
perspectives
western
VIEWS
see the world
from different
angles

The best of both worlds
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