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## ■ IMMUNITY SHOULD ONLY GO SO FAR

I refer to the commentary "The principle of diplomatic immunity is sound" (May 14).

I do not dispute the necessity of diplomatic immunity per se but it should not cover universally and obviously heinous crimes. Ambiguous legal practices or local laws in different countries may of course contribute to fear of imprisonment or retribution.

However, it would be ludicrous to suggest that diplomats need immunity from even atrocities such as rape or causing death in order to do their job well.

The rules should be amended to push diplomats to also fulfil their duty of reciprocating respect, rather than just letting immunity take precedence unconditionally.

LETTER FROM TERENCE LIM EU SENG

## ■ 'DISTANCE FARES' A MISLEADING TERM

"Distance Fares" seems a misleading term. Many think that come July 3, they will be able to travel from Point A to Point B in whichever mode they prefer and pay the same price. But this is not the case. Commuters will be charged a fare according to total distance travelled, not total distance between destinations.

The name should be changed to more accurately reflect its form, and dispel public misconceptions. LETTER FROM WAYSON MA

# They're just pawns

## Prosecuting drug mules has no impact on kingpins

Letter from Kwan Jin Yao

I HAVE been following Mr Yong Vui Kong's case with tremendous disappointment and empathy; and Teo Xuanwei's report "Convict's last chance to escape death" (May 15) seemed like the final nail to the coffin.

Singapore has constantly been in the spotlight for its unforgiving stance towards drug traffickers. The subject of capital punishment – as a moral issue – will always draw its fair share of proponents and opponents. Supporters assert the need for strong deterrence and reprisals, pointing to Singapore's security, while others decry the inhumanity of the sentence and propose more viable alternatives.

Yet, one must be cognisant that public opinion on capital punishment is often generalised, without taking into account the individual offences that have death prescribed as the punishment. For instance, most are in favour of the death penalty for extremely serious offences under the Penal Code, such as murder.

However, when it comes to the Misuse

of Drugs Act, many do not see how the execution of a drug runner or mule is a sustainable option to stem the flow of drug trafficking. Youth from impoverished backgrounds have been taken advantage of by drug barons. Essentially, the execution of a pawn has little significance in addressing the larger drug trafficking issues; conversely, it has disproportionate emotional ramifications on the individual's family and friends.

No one is denying the consequences of allowing the unabated distribution of drugs. Nonetheless, efforts should be targeted at working to get to the root of the drug problem, rather than dealing with peripheral distractions.

Looking beyond, Singaporeans should emerge from their indifference towards the issue and not be afraid of establishing their moral compasses and perspectives. Emerging sentiments from the ground would provide the much-needed impetus for the administration to rethink aspects of capital punishment, and inject greater flexibility to the judicial system.

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