

Closer look needed on training of foreign hires

IN AN accident in Bedok North Road last Friday, a 5m-long crane mounted on a flatbed lorry smashed through the left side of the upper deck of a bus.

A Bangladeshi believed to be the crane operator was arrested for negligence.

A 50-year-old commuter, Mr Ahmad Lispa, died in the accident.

This case and two other incidents I encountered make me question whether foreign hires are trained properly.

I live in a Housing Board flat and the last painting exercise was carried out by foreign workers.

After the painting, I found my home's windows sealed shut by paint.

When I forced open the windows, the rubber tubing surrounding the window panes was torn out.

The paintwork also blocked the drainage outlets along window ledges.

Another incident took place two weeks ago outside AMK Hub.

I drove out of the mall's carpark and was caught in a jam caused by a tree-pruning exercise.

A lorry operating a crane that allowed workers to prune trees outside the mall was blocking the road.

Without thinking of other road users, the foreign workers blocked three roads, creating a massive jam.

I honked the car horn to signal that I was in a rush, and that it was not right for them to hold up traffic.

I hope the authorities will take action before more serious incidents occur.

Foreign hires may be cheaper, but they need training. Beyond that, they need to use common sense when performing their duties.

MS CHUA KIM CHOO

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Expose students here to diversity of faiths



By **KWAN JIN YAO**

I READ with interest the report, "Speak up against extremists: SM Goh" (*my paper*, July 15), especially in the light of faith-based controversies here.

Such issues have always been **sensitive**, and many Singaporeans expressed disappointment when certain religious leaders made irresponsible remarks about other religions.

The proliferation of extremist ideas have stirred up worry and fear, particularly because of their influence on vulnerable minds and their role in supporting **misguided** notions of various races and religions.

Rising religious fervour can increase the occurrences of inter-faith tension, while technolo-

gy and the Internet have helped to spread unjustified accusations or assertions.

To address misperceptions, we should not merely seek to tolerate others' views, but we should also be comfortable with sharing our perspectives and beliefs.

Thanks to swift damage-control measures, such controversies have not been blown out of proportion in Singapore.

In a way, integration efforts have been less than satisfactory.

We have become accustomed to defining boundaries, instead of highlighting **common ground**.

For instance, we are so focused on labelling ourselves as Chinese, Malay, Indian or Others, that we have almost forgotten our identity as Singaporeans.

We are insulated from one another's religion, and are not informed enough about the differences. We are not prepared to sit down and learn more.

Inter-faith dialogues are a good step forward. Beyond outreach to religious leaders and

grassroots volunteers, we must expose young people to a variety of beliefs.

Instead of superficial racial-harmony programmes, teachers must work more closely with parents to **enlighten** their kids about the diversity of faiths and help them acquire an open mindset.

We should never end the process of active exchange and dialogue, which can help to reduce future incidents of racial or religious insensitivity.

◆ *The writer is a full-time national serviceman who blogs about current affairs at <http://guanyjinmiao.wordpress.com>*

HELPDESK 我的字典

Sensitive: 敏感的 mǐn gǎn de

Misguided: 被误导的 bèi wù dǎo de

Common ground: 共同点 gòng tóng diǎn

Enlighten: 授与知识 shòu yǔ zhī shi

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