

FOURTEENTH PARLIAMENT OF SINGAPORE
(SECOND SESSION)

REVISED ORDER PAPER
FRIDAY, 21 APRIL 2023

No. 101

11.00 am

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QUESTIONS FOR ORAL ANSWER*

- *1. **Mr Darryl David:** To ask the Minister for Education (a) what is the current percentage of primary school children who have limited or no access to digital devices and wifi for learning and education; and (b) what are the available schemes at the Ministry to ensure that these children have access to such digital devices and wifi so that their learning and education are not compromised.
- *2. **Ms Mariam Jaafar:** To ask the Minister for Health (a) whether insurers offering massive additional coverage for cancer treatment through their riders is a cause for concern for the Ministry; and (b) whether such riders undermine efforts to contain cancer drug costs.
- *3. **Mr Yip Hon Weng:** To ask the Minister for Health (a) in the past year, what is the proportion of cancer patients who have exceeded the annual claim limits of \$1,200 from MediShield Life and \$600 from MediSave for their cancer treatment; (b) what assistance is available for such patients; and (c) whether the Ministry will consider creating a separate claim category for the coverage of elective cancer drug services to avoid exceeding the claim limits for essential cancer drug services.
- *4. **Mr Yip Hon Weng:** To ask the Minister for Health (a) how will the implementation of enhanced riders offered by Integrated Shield Plan (IP) insurers to offset limits on oncological treatment coverage affect the Ministry's efforts to curb rising costs of cancer treatments in Singapore; (b) whether MediSave will be permitted to pay for premiums of these riders and, if so, whether this will contradict the Ministry's intent to impose limits on cancer treatment coverage; and (c) whether policyholders who opt for these enhanced riders will be required to have a minimum co-payment of their medical bills subject to a cap each year.
- *5. **Dr Lim Wee Kiak:** To ask the Minister for Home Affairs in light of the immigration clearance disruption due to a computer glitch at ICA checkpoints on 31 March 2023 (a) whether there is a backup system to automatically take over the operations under such circumstances; (b) what is the standard procedure for any work carried out on major IT systems to anticipate any glitches; (c) why is upgrading work not done during off-peak hours; and (d) how many travellers have missed their flights and whether they are compensated.
- *6. **Mr Ang Wei Neng:** To ask the Minister for Home Affairs (a) what are the main causes behind the major disruption to the immigration system at the ICA checkpoints on 31 March 2023; (b) how many people are affected by the disruption; and (c) what lessons can be learned from the disruption to prevent a future occurrence.

- *7. **Mr Murali Pillai:** To ask the Minister for Home Affairs (a) what is the estimated number of people who were affected by the 5-hour system disruption at the land and air checkpoints on 31 March 2023 arising from a scheduled system upgrade that caused a system overload; (b) why was the problem hitherto unanticipated; (c) what is the Ministry's assessment of the contingency plan activated to deal with the disruption; and (d) what steps will be taken to strengthen the plan.
- *8. **Mr Alex Yam Ziming:** To ask the Minister for Home Affairs (a) whether the Ministry is satisfied with how ICA handled the recent service outage on 31 March 2023; and (b) how future outages can be prevented.
- *9. **Mr Dennis Tan Lip Fong:** To ask the Minister for Home Affairs (a) what was the cause of the system breakdown which led to the long delays in clearance across all immigration checkpoints in Singapore on 31 March 2023; (b) how many people were affected by the delay; (c) whether the ICA has worked out a solution which will prevent similar breakdowns in the future or, if not, at least to ensure that the system will be restored in a much shorter time.
- *10. **Mr Yip Hon Weng:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance with regard to the 99-to-1 arrangement for stamp duty payment for property purchases (a) how does IRAS differentiate between wilful avoidance and honest mistakes in such arrangements; (b) what criteria does IRAS use to determine an honest mistake; (c) under what circumstances will IRAS audit cases involving the 99-to-1 arrangement for stamp duty payment; and (d) how will IRAS work with the Council for Estate Agencies to identify and penalise property agents who promote such arrangements.
- *11. **Mr Chua Kheng Wee Louis:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance (a) what is the assessed number of cases in each year over the last five years where first-time buyers of private residential properties have signed fresh agreements to sell one per cent of the same property shortly after exercising the purchase options; (b) how many audit letters have been sent by IRAS questioning such transactions in 2023; and (c) what is the impact of such transactions on the residential and mortgage markets in Singapore.
- *12. **Ms Mariam Jaafar:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance in light of the probe by the Inland Revenue Authority of Singapore (IRAS) on property purchases structured in a "99-to-1" manner for the purpose of avoiding the Additional Buyer's Stamp Duty (ABSD), what are steps that the Government is considering to hold agents and other marketers of such potential tax avoidance schemes accountable.
- *13. **Mr Don Wee:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance regarding IRAS' investigation into cases of property purchases structured in a 99-to-1 manner to avoid the Additional Buyer's Stamp Duty (ABSD) (a) how many cases have been uncovered so far; (b) what are the three most common relationships between the property owners; and (c) why has it taken IRAS more than a decade to start investigations as the ABSD was introduced in 2011.
- *14. **Mr Murali Pillai:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance (a) how many cases suspected to be structured in a 99-to-1 manner to avoid Additional Buyer's Stamp Duty (ABSD) are being investigated by IRAS; (b) what is the estimated aggregate amount of ABSD that is avoided as a result of these suspected transactions; and (c) whether IRAS also investigates the role of facilitators to the purchase transactions with a view to establishing whether they have abetted the buyers to avoid ABSD.

- *15. **Mr Gerald Giam Yean Song:** To ask the Minister for Health (a) what is the range of consequences that public healthcare institutions (PHIs) can impose on patients who abuse or harass healthcare workers; (b) how are these specific consequences made known to patients, apart from general notices that abuse of staff is not tolerated; (c) in each of the last three years, how many times have patients been prematurely discharged due to such behaviour; and (d) how do PHIs ensure the well-being of such patients.
- *16. **Mr Alex Yam Ziming:** To ask the Minister for Defence (a) what is the assessment of the purported leak of top secret security documents in the US; (b) whether any of the information relates to Singapore; and (c) how does the Government reduce the risk that sensitive discussions or information is leaked or spied upon.
- *17. **Mr Gerald Giam Yean Song:** To ask the Minister for Defence (a) whether any of the apparently classified US military and intelligence documents that appeared online addresses Singapore; (b) how does the Government ensure that information and intelligence that it shares with other countries is not compromised by those countries; and (c) in the event of a leak of information, whether the Ministry has damage assessment and mitigation protocols in place to protect related sources, information and intelligence.
- *18. **Ms Yeo Wan Ling:** To ask the Minister for Manpower for companies implementing the Progressive Wage Model (PWM) and effecting the higher wage rungs, what assistance and interventions from the Ministry are available for such companies facing difficulties renegotiating ongoing multi-year contracts that have been signed before the PWM wage rungs are set.
- *19. **Ms He Ting Ru:** To ask the Minister for Communications and Information in view of the proposed regulatory frameworks for artificial intelligence (AI) governance in the European Union and China (a) whether the current approach to AI regulation in Singapore is being reviewed; (b) whether there are any areas in the field that are currently being prioritised for regulation; and (c) what is the anticipated timeline for the introduction of any regulation.
- *20. **Mr Louis Ng Kok Kwang:** To ask the Minister for Home Affairs (a) in each year for the past five years for cases involving offenders with mental disabilities or young suspects, how many instances have there been where an Appropriate Adult was not present during law enforcement interviews; (b) how many more volunteers are necessary to ensure that all eligible cases will have at least an Appropriate Adult present; and (c) what will be done to increase the recruitment of volunteers for the Appropriate Adult Schemes for Young Suspects and for Persons with Mental Disabilities.
- *21. **Mr Muhamad Faisal Abdul Manap:** To ask the Minister for Culture, Community and Youth how does the People's Association ensure that stall rentals at trade fairs and bazaars that it manages remain affordable to stallholders.
- *22. **Mr Leon Perera:** To ask the Minister for Sustainability and the Environment what is the rationale for Singapore being a potential claimant from the Loss and Damage Fund set up in COP27, in view that many other potential claimant countries from this fund have much lower levels of GDP per capita and income than Singapore does.

- *23. **Ms Joan Pereira:** To ask the Minister for Health whether polyclinics can scale up their capacity to accommodate more walk-in patients with urgent medical conditions, such as those experiencing acute or severe pain, and to avoid turning away senior citizens.
- *24. **Mr Don Wee:** To ask the Prime Minister (a) with the maximum coverage of up to S\$75,000 per depositor per bank under the Deposit Insurance Scheme, what is the current percentage of non-bank depositors covered by the scheme; and (b) whether the Ministry will consider a review of the coverage cap.
- *25. **Mr Chua Kheng Wee Louis:** To ask the Minister for Manpower with regard to the 5-year employment pass for experienced tech professionals with skills that are in shortage, how does the Ministry (i) assess the level of tech capabilities and competencies of the applicant and (ii) verify whether the actual job scope for the applicant is in line with the job specifications for the respective tech occupations on the COMPASS Shortage Occupation List.
- *26. **Mr Dennis Tan Lip Fong:** To ask the Minister for Transport (a) whether he will elaborate on the plans to upgrade the Changi Airfreight Centre; and (b) whether further development plans for the expansion of the Centre will be resumed or stepped up in light of the full resumption of construction of Changi Airport Terminal 5.
- *27. **Mr Patrick Tay Teck Guan:** To ask the Minister for Health since the declaration of war on diabetes in 2016, how successful has the fight against diabetes been in managing and reducing the number of diabetics in Singapore.
- *28. **Ms Mariam Jaafar:** To ask the Minister for National Development in comparison to HDB's BTO flats that were completed prior to the COVID-19 pandemic (a) whether there is an increase in the (i) defect rates and (ii) time taken for the resolution of defects; and (b) if so, what are they.
- *29. **Assoc Prof Jamus Jerome Lim:** To ask the Minister for Manpower (a) whether the Ministry monitors the inclusion of restraint of trade clauses in labour contracts, especially for middle-management and low-wage positions; and (b) whether the Ministry condones the inclusion of such clauses for non-top management positions.
- *30. **Mr Darryl David:** To ask the Minister for Home Affairs (a) under what circumstances will the ICA waive the replacement fees of identity cards and passports; and (b) how many of such waivers have been given over the last three years.
- *31. **Mr Chua Kheng Wee Louis:** To ask the Minister for Manpower what is the recourse for retrenched unionised and non-unionised employees who are eligible for retrenchment benefits but are paid less than the prevailing norm of between two weeks to one month of salary, per year of service.
- *32. **Ms Joan Pereira:** To ask the Minister for National Development in each of the last five years (a) how many households have paid for the purchase of their HDB BTO flats without using any cash payments; and (b) what are the types of flat which these households bought.
- *33. **Ms He Ting Ru:** To ask the Minister for Sustainability and the Environment (a) in view of the report by the Singapore Meteorological Service on 23 March 2023 which found evidence for the urban heat island effect in Singapore, what is the assessment on whether further mitigation factors are necessary to address this; and (b) what is the progress of the inter-agency work group, which was set up in 2019, in tackling the urban heat island effect.

- *34. **Mr Ang Wei Neng:** To ask the Prime Minister (a) how many major banking disruptions in the last five years have lasted more than one hour; (b) how many banks have been involved in such disruptions in the last five years; and (c) what are the lessons learned from these disruptions.
- *35. **Ms Yeo Wan Ling:** To ask the Minister for Transport what is the number of fatalities and injuries from falls onto LRT tracks in the past ten years.
- *36. **Mr Dennis Tan Lip Fong:** To ask the Minister for Home Affairs regarding the accident at Tuas Checkpoint on 24 March 2023 where an auxiliary policeman was hit by a car and sustained a severe head injury (a) whether ICA will review its operations as well as the design of the approaches to the checkpoint to see whether the risks of a similar accident can be avoided or minimised in the interest of the safety of work personnel and members of the public; and (b) what are the lessons learned.
- *37. **Mr Alex Yam Ziming:** To ask the Minister for Health (a) whether the recent spike in COVID-19 cases at the end of March 2023 are of concern; (b) whether any new variants have been picked up; and (c) what can the public do to continue to be vigilant against a resurgence of infections.
- *38. **Mr Leon Perera:** To ask the Minister for National Development why are the companies involved in the construction of an illegal floor at The Alexcier building not charged, but issued stern warnings "in lieu of prosecution" instead.
- *39. **Assoc Prof Jamus Jerome Lim:** To ask the Minister for Defence (a) whether respect for existing quiet hours from 10.30 pm until 7.00 am applies to SAF overflights; and (b) if so, whether the overflights will respect the extended quiet hours from 10.00 pm until 8.00 am recommended by the Community Advisory Panel on Neighbourhood Noise.
- *40. **Mr Louis Ng Kok Kwang:** To ask the Minister for Manpower whether the Ministry is concerned that limiting the proposed legislation against workplace discrimination to five characteristics may create unequal protection and tolerance within Government and society towards other forms of discrimination.
- *41. **Mr Leon Perera:** To ask the Minister for Social and Family Development in view of the Ministry's announcement that social service staff salaries are expected to see increases between 4% and 15% from April 2023, why have the reference point salary for Care Staff fallen to \$2,280 and the starting and reference point salaries for Senior Care Staff fallen to \$2,330 and \$2,910 respectively in the National Council of Social Service salary guidelines for the social service sector in FY2023.
- *42. **Ms Joan Pereira:** To ask the Minister for Transport whether the Ministry will consider mandating the installation of daytime running lights in cars for the safety of motorists and pedestrians in places with less lighting in the daytime such as multi-storey carparks.
- *43. **Ms He Ting Ru:** To ask the Minister for Culture, Community and Youth (a) what are the regulations or guidelines governing interactions between grassroots, People's Association, and Government agency outreach efforts involving politicians and community groups, and the publicity relating to such interactions; and (b) how are political events and Government agency outreach efforts distinguished from grassroots and state events.
- *44. **Mr Darryl David:** To ask the Minister for Health (a) what is the rate of myopia among primary school children over the last five years; and (b) whether there are any programmes or plans to address this issue.

- *45. **Mr Louis Ng Kok Kwang:** To ask the Minister for Manpower in each year of the past five years (a) how many dormitory operators have been investigated for allowing packed food for migrant workers to be left unattended in the open; and (b) how many of these companies have been issued (i) warning letters (ii) compound fines and (iii) prosecuted in court, respectively.
- *46. **Assoc Prof Jamus Jerome Lim:** To ask the Minister for Home Affairs how does the SPF deal with persistent noise violators in HDB blocks who have been issued prior warnings and who are distinct from residents involved in bilateral neighbour noise disputes.
- *47. **Mr Gerald Giam Yean Song:** To ask the Minister for Sustainability and the Environment (a) what are the contents of the milky white discharge found in an outlet drain along Hougang Avenue 10 on 27 March 2023; (b) where is the exact source of the discharge; (c) what has caused the discharge to enter the waterways; and (d) what enforcement action has been or will be taken against the entity responsible for the discharge.
- *48. **Mr Murali Pillai:** To ask the Minister for National Development (a) how does HDB proactively monitor the maintenance standards at its HDB carparks; (b) how does HDB track the performance of parties contracted to maintain its carparks; and (c) whether the flat fee payment arrangement under the current contracts between HDB and Town Councils for maintenance of HDB carparks may be reviewed to promote the timely maintenance of HDB carparks.
- *49. **Ms Yeo Wan Ling:** To ask the Minister for Home Affairs (a) whether the number of home rental scams using online platforms has increased in the past 12 months; and (b) whether the Ministry will consider introducing further safeguards to protect homeowners whose homes have been used in such scams from liabilities.

* Members may postpone their Questions to a later sitting day if their Questions are not reached by the end of Question Time (QT). For such Questions, Members may email to parl_cop@parl.gov.sg in advance a postponement notice that will be effected after QT. Members must submit their notices to the Clerk within one hour after the end of QT (SO 22(3)). Questions will be given a written answer if no such notices are received by the Clerk within the stipulated time.

ORDER OF THE DAY

1. PRESIDENT'S SPEECH (ADDRESS OF THANKS): *Resumption of Debate on Question (17 April 2023) (5th Allotted Day)*, 'That the following Address in reply to the Speech of the President be agreed to:-

"We, the Parliament of the Republic of Singapore, express our thanks to the President for the Speech which she delivered on behalf of the Government at the Opening of the Second Session of this Parliament." – (Mr Murali Pillai).

QUESTIONS FOR WRITTEN ANSWER

1. **Mr Leon Perera:** To ask the Prime Minister of the officers in the Administrative Service as at end-2022 (a) what percentage of them are (i) state scholarship recipients versus non-scholars (ii) mid-career entrants from the public sector and (iii) mid-career entrants from outside the public sector; and (b) how has this breakdown changed from 10 years ago.
2. **Mr Louis Ng Kok Kwang:** To ask the Minister for Foreign Affairs for each year in the past five years (a) how much has Singapore contributed to the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Centre) to help Rohingya refugees; and (b) how much has the AHA Centre spent in helping Rohingya refugees.
3. **Ms Joan Pereira:** To ask the Minister for Home Affairs with regard to the live video stream function on the Emergency Video System which allows "999" or "995" callers to provide real-time location and visual information of the emergency incident, how will it be ensured that there are officers who can communicate with callers who can only speak in dialects or other languages.
4. **Mr Murali Pillai:** To ask the Minister for Home Affairs whether there are regulatory requirements on owners of shopping malls and other public buildings which regularly attract large numbers of people to ensure that a sufficient robust security system is in place to handle any potential security or emergency situation that may arise and take proactive steps to prevent overcrowding at these locations.
5. **Assoc Prof Jamus Jerome Lim:** To ask the Minister for Home Affairs how is the Ministry resolving technical issues surrounding biometric identification for automated clearance of babies and children passing through immigration checkpoints.
6. **Mr Don Wee:** To ask the Minister for Transport in view of international research findings showing that dark-coloured cars are at higher risks of getting into accidents (a) whether this is so in Singapore; and (b) if so, whether the Government will consider introducing measures such as imposing higher taxes to reduce the number of dark-coloured cars in Singapore.
7. **Ms Mariam Jaafar:** To ask the Minister for Transport whether the Adult Monthly Travel Card can be made cheaper to encourage more people to switch to public transport as their default mode of transportation.
8. **Mr Yip Hon Weng:** To ask the Minister for Sustainability and the Environment (a) whether any studies have been conducted on microplastics contamination in our reservoirs and water sources from foreign countries; and (b) whether there are any independent studies or data available locally on the intake of microplastics in Singapore and the potential health risks associated with it.
9. **Dr Tan Yia Swam:** To ask the Minister for Sustainability and the Environment whether there can be consideration to allow hawkers who are above the age of 60 to hire one foreign worker to (i) help them with tasks such as food preparation and (ii) train them the preparation of such dishes to help preserve some of the hawker culture.
10. **Ms He Ting Ru:** To ask the Minister for Social and Family Development in each of the last five years (a) how many reports have been made in relation to abuse and harassment directed towards social workers; (b) how many of such reports are referred to external law enforcement agencies for further investigations; and (c) how many of such reports have resulted in convictions in court.

11. **Mr Patrick Tay Teck Guan:** To ask the Minister for Health in each of the past five years, what is the number of CPF account holders who passed away before 85 years old and had monies of (i) between \$5,000 and \$10,000 (ii) between \$10,000 and \$20,000 (iii) between \$20,000 and \$30,000 (iv) between \$30,000 and \$40,000 and (v) more than \$40,000 in their CPF MediSave accounts respectively.
12. **Mr Yip Hon Weng:** To ask the Minister for Health with the withdrawal of the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine in Australia due to concerns of thrombosis (a) whether there have been such issues with the same vaccine in use here; and (b) whether the AstraZeneca vaccine is still available in our private clinics and hospitals.
13. **Mr Gerald Giam Yean Song:** To ask the Minister for Health (a) when will the standardised zero-tolerance policy against the abuse and harassment of healthcare workers be formulated; (b) what protections will it include; and (c) whether it will be passed into law.
14. **Mr Dennis Tan Lip Fong:** To ask the Minister for Health (a) what are the career options and prospects for trained Singaporean oral health therapists who have diplomas or degrees in oral health therapy; and (b) whether the Government will consider creating different career pathways for such graduates like their counterparts in other countries such as Australia.
15. **Mr Dennis Tan Lip Fong:** To ask the Minister for Health beyond the current efforts under the Health Promotion Board's Healthier Dining Programme (HDP), whether the Ministry will consider how it can better encourage all hawkers, including those who are not currently part of the HDP, to adopt healthier cooking methods and practices all round.
16. **Mr Leon Perera:** To ask the Minister for Health (a) what percentage of our healthcare system's carbon footprint is due to anaesthetics; (b) what proportion of our anaesthetics usage is accounted for by desflurane; and (c) whether there are plans to reduce, or even phase out desflurane use in medical contexts where it is substitutable by other types of anaesthetics, in view of its extremely high carbon footprint.
17. **Ms He Ting Ru:** To ask the Minister for Health in each of the last five years (a) how many speech and language therapists are registered to practise in Singapore; and (b) what is the average waiting time to get a first appointment with a speech and language therapist through the public healthcare system.
18. **Mr Patrick Tay Teck Guan:** To ask the Minister for National Development whether the measures recently announced to facilitate home ownership for first-timers who are married with or without children can be rolled out sooner to take effect from the May 2023 BTO application.
19. **Mr Gerald Giam Yean Song:** To ask the Minister for National Development (a) whether rewilding efforts by NParks have resulted in wild boars recolonising more green spaces in Singapore or whether the current trajectory of their population growth indicates they soon will; (b) whether wild boars pose risks to park and park connector users even if not deliberately provoked; and (c) how is NParks mitigating the risks posed by human-wild boar encounters.
20. **Mr Murali Pillai:** To ask the Minister for National Development whether he can provide details of the time-limited special funding support for Town Councils announced on 2 March 2023 to deal with the higher cost of maintenance and external factors such as the spike in energy prices.
21. **Assoc Prof Jamus Jerome Lim:** To ask the Minister for National Development what accommodation options does HDB provide for persons with disabilities in (i) public rental housing and (ii) new BTO developments, including flexi apartments.

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22. **Ms Joan Pereira:** To ask the Minister for Culture, Community and Youth whether the Ministry will (i) support freelancing exercise professionals to obtain the certifications to register on the National Registry of Exercise Professionals (NREP) and (ii) work with industry stakeholders, such as registered fitness coaching businesses and gyms, to better understand how to utilise the NREP appropriately as the registration of exercise professional in the NREP is not mandatory.
23. **Mr Chua Kheng Wee Louis:** To ask the Minister for Manpower what is the assessed quantity and nature of labour shortage for each of the 27 occupations under the Shortage Occupation List (SOL) respectively.
24. **Mr Louis Ng Kok Kwang:** To ask the Minister for Manpower for each year in the past five years, how many companies have adopted the Tripartite Standard on Unpaid Leave for Unexpected Care Needs.
25. **Mr Chua Kheng Wee Louis:** To ask the Minister for Manpower over the last five years, what is the median and average retrenchment benefit per year of service for each retrenched worker as broken down respectively by (i) industry and (ii) unionised and non-unionised companies.
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