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Life Storeys

LIFE IN THE HEARTLANDS



LEADING THE SUSTAINABILITY CHARGE

HDB's smart and sustainable initiatives, including EV chargers for electric vehicles

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ISSUE 35 Jan 2023

Dear Readers,

Happy New Year! *Life Storeys* wishes you good health, happiness, success and prosperity in the Year of the Rabbit.

As you look forward to making the best of 2023, HDB continues to make every HDB town more sustainable and liveable through the Green Towns Programme. One of the initiatives in this programme is to support LTA to install more EV chargers in the HDB car parks by 2025. Read about it in **Talk of the Town**.

Besides the many dining establishments Geylang is known for, did you know that it is also home to several historic buildings and charming specialty shops? This issue's **Around the Block** shines a spotlight on some of them.

While the common spaces in HDB estates could help to encourage social interactions, some residents require further support. Find out how social prescribing improves the health of socially isolated residents in **Our Life Stories**. What do you do when you experience spalling concrete, leaky ceiling, and faulty windows? Another article in this section offers solutions. This section also profiles Fauzie Laily, a Bedok resident and all-round entertainer who can sing, act and host.

What else can you do to woo your loved one this Valentine's Day apart from chocolates, roses and a fancy dinner? **Livin' It Up** suggests some alternative heartland-based places and activities. Also in this section are tips on how you should react the next time you encounter wildlife.

We hope you enjoy the first issue of *Life Storeys* for 2023! Have a great year ahead.



The Editorial Team

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Life Storeys is a quarterly community publication by the Housing & Development Board, bringing you stories and happenings from your neighbourhood. Join us in creating a gracious and harmonious living environment for all! You can also access the electronic version at <https://go.gov.sg/hdb-lifestoreys> or scan the QR code below.



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CHARGING FORWARD

ELECTRIC VEHICLES ARE THE FUTURE, AND HDB HAS ALREADY LAID THE GROUNDWORK TO MAKE ITS CAR PARKS ACCOMMODATE THIS REALITY.

Climate change is real, and Singapore — being a tiny island — is especially vulnerable to it. Actions must be taken to build a sustainable future.

The Singapore Green Plan 2030, which was launched in February 2021, aims to ensure sustainable development in the Lion City, while also being aligned with our commitments to the worldwide community, such as the UN's 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. The Singapore Green Plan 2030 has several key targets, one of which is for all newly registered cars to be of cleaner-energy models from 2030.

An electric vehicle (EV) emits half the amount of carbon dioxide (CO₂) compared to a car propelled by an internal combustion engine (ICE); by switching to EVs, Singapore aims to develop a greener land transport sector and significantly reduce land transport emissions.

**>3,000
EV chargers**
in Singapore as at
end-August 2022

**12,000
EV chargers**
at HDB car parks
by end-2025

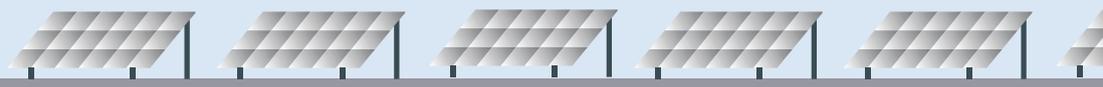
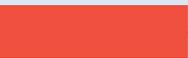
Creating the infrastructure

To encourage EV adoption, the Land Transport Authority (LTA) is progressively enhancing the EV chargers infrastructure. As of end-August 2022, more than 3,000 EV chargers have been installed across the island, including shopping malls and petrol stations. This means there are at least four public EV chargers for every square kilometre. Under a pilot tender, a total of 390 EV chargers will be installed in 130 HDB car parks, with more to be installed further in 75 other public car parks. All these chargers are expected to complete by early 2023.

HDB towns to be progressively 'charged'

HDB supports this initiative by providing car park spaces and ensuring that the required electrical infrastructure is ready for the deployment of EV chargers.

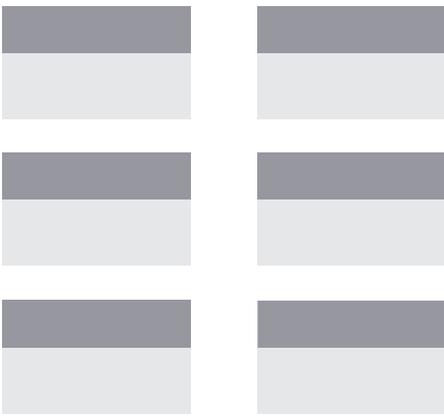
LTA has awarded a tender to five vendors for the deployment of EV chargers covering nearly 2,000 HDB car parks across Singapore. Under this tender, at least 12,000 EV chargers will be installed across all HDB car parks by the end of 2025, realising our target of making every HDB town EV-ready. With the vast majority of Singaporeans living in HDB towns, this will help boost the adoption of EVs further. With a relatively short distance between available chargers across and within towns, drivers can easily access them to maintain the charge of their EV batteries and allay any range anxiety. The EV chargers, which are mostly low-powered, will meet the needs of most car owners and minimise the load on the electrical grid.



Besides collaborating with the LTA to implement more EV chargers in its car parks, HDB has implemented sustainable initiatives under the HDB Green Towns Programme (GTP). GTP is a 10-year plan to make HDB towns more sustainable and liveable, with **five focus areas**:

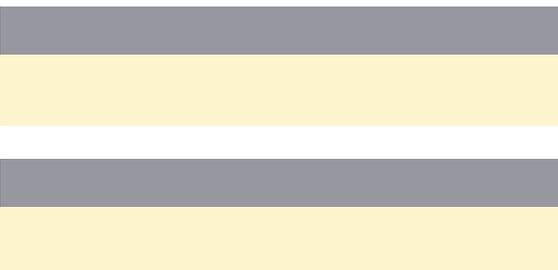
- Reducing Energy Consumption
- Recycling Rainwater
- Reducing Waste
- Promoting Green Commute
- Cooling HDB Towns

GTP aims to reduce energy consumption in HDB towns by 15% from 2020 levels by 2030. To achieve this target, GTP has introduced ongoing **initiatives**, such as Solar Panels, Smart LED Lighting, Greenery Intensification and Dual Bicycle Racks, to name a few, in existing HDB estates.

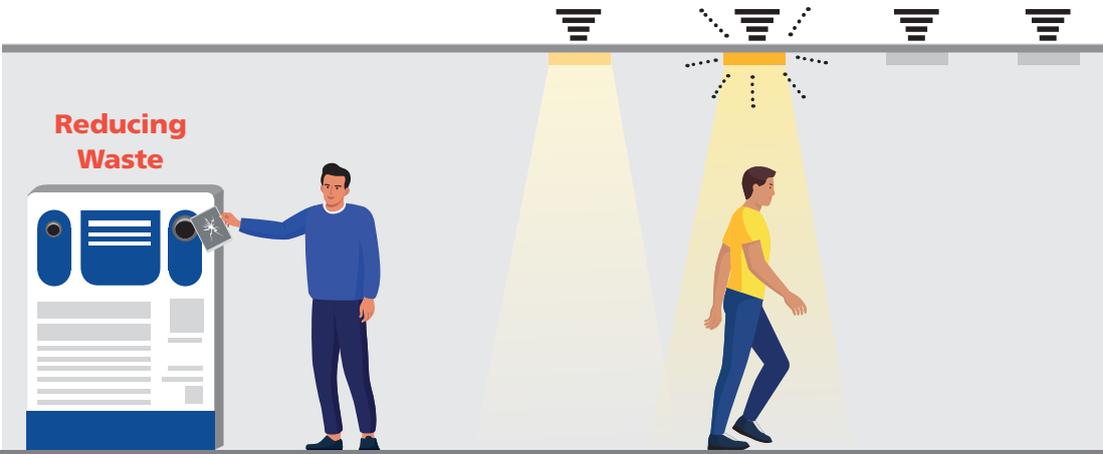


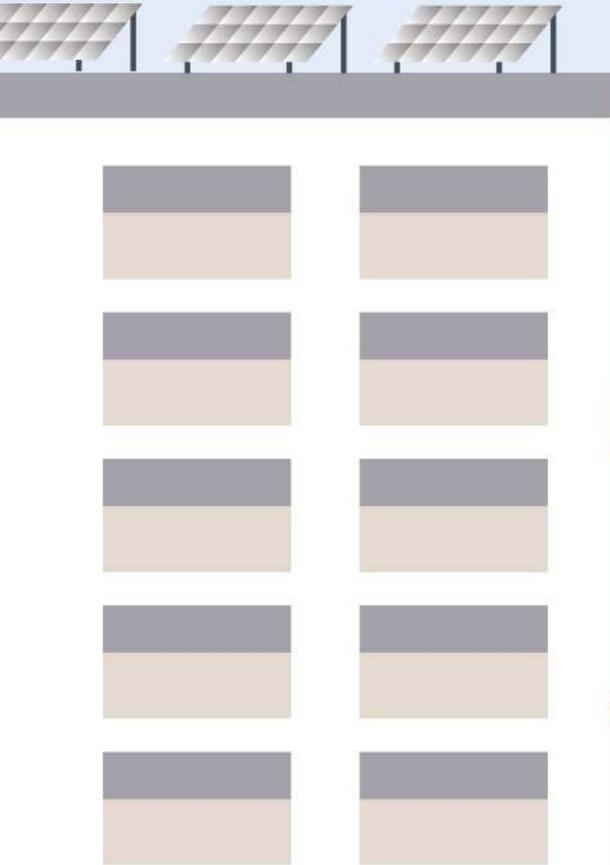
Reducing Energy Consumption

- **Solar Panels**
Solar panels will be installed on more HDB blocks to power common services with clean energy so as to achieve net-zero energy consumption in common areas during the day. HDB aims to stretch the solar target to achieve, by 2030, solar power generation of 540MWp, which is equivalent to the energy needed to power 135,000 four-room HDB flats in a year.



- **Smart LED Lighting**
Smart LED lighting will be installed in all HDB common areas, such as corridors and stairways. It incorporates motion sensors and smart analytics to reduce lighting in areas with low human and vehicular traffic, and turns on only upon detection of movement. These smart features further reduce energy consumption by up to 60% compared to conventional LED lighting.

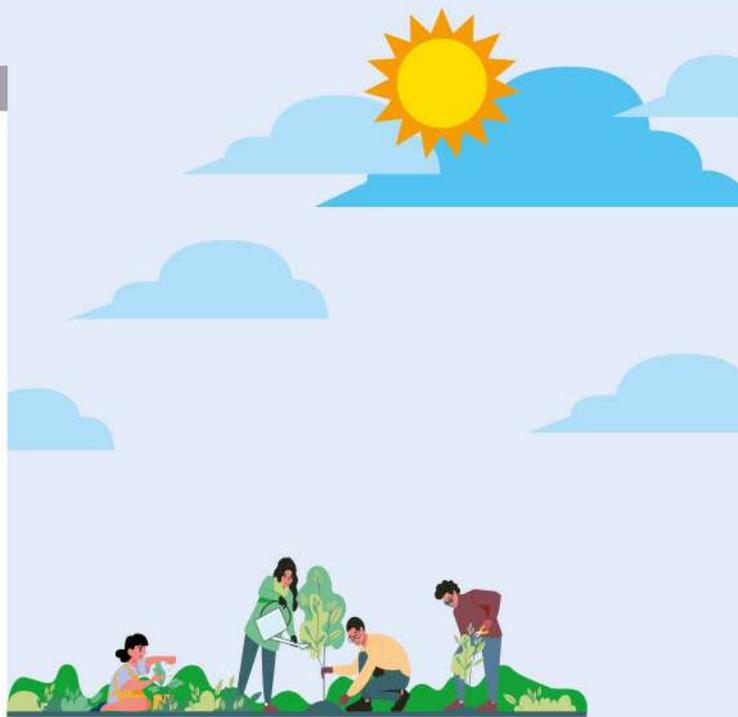
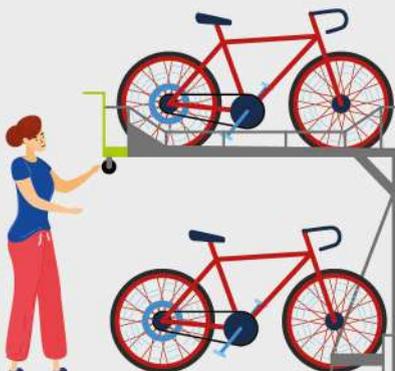




Promoting Green Commute

• Dual Bicycle Racks

Dual bicycle racks will be installed island-wide to encourage higher ownership of bicycles and to support cycling as a form of 'first mile and last mile' commute. Designed by HDB, the dual bicycle racks optimise space by holding two bicycles within the same area required by a typical rack, thus creating neater and safer corridors.



Cooling HDB Towns

• Greenery Intensification

Urban farms, extensive greenery, or community/allotment gardens will be introduced to the top decks of Multi-Storey Car Parks (MSCPs). The greenery offers visual and spatial relief, cools the environment, and enhances the liveability of the estates.



To find out more about GTP, you may visit HDB InfoWEB at <https://go.gov.sg/hdbgtp> or scan the QR code:





GEYLANG, Si Paku GEYLANG

THIS FAMILIAR MALAY FOLK SONG SPEAKS OF AN AREA IN SINGAPORE KNOWN AS GEYLANG. HERE ARE THREE FASCINATING PLACES IN THIS DISTRICT THAT ARE WORTH EXPLORING.

Geylang Serai Market & Food Centre 1 Geylang Serai, Singapore 402001

There has been a market located opposite Joo Chiat Road since the 1930s. The current two-storey building features architectural elements borrowed from Malay kampung houses. This is not surprising, as this market, due to its proximity to the now demolished Kampung Melayu (Malay Village), has long been viewed as a 'Malay' market. In fact, this area was home to one of Singapore's oldest Malay settlements.

As this is one of the biggest and busiest wet markets in Singapore, it is a vital social hub, especially on the second level, which features plenty of cooked food stalls specialising in Malay and Indian cuisines. Come here to get your fill of outstanding versions of *asam pedas stingray* (tangy and spicy stingray broth), *beef rendang* (beef braised in coconut milk and spices), and *goreng pisang* (banana fritters). The ground floor houses the wet market and sundry goods stalls.

Despite its reputation as a social hub for the Malays, the Geylang Serai Market & Food Centre is patronised by the wider community of multiracial and multicultural Singapore.

DID YOU KNOW?

A widely recognised folk song in Singapore, 'Geylang, Si Paku Geylang' is written in the traditional Malay *pantun* (poem) style. The song pays homage to a time when life was simpler.

Geylang Serai Heritage Gallery

Wisma Geylang Serai, 1 Engku Aman Turn, #01-05, Singapore 408528

Before delving into the individual places of interest that Geylang offers, start your exploration by visiting this gallery, which gives an overview of the area's history and heritage, from the 19th century to the present day, through the use of archival materials and historical objects. It is curated by the Malay Heritage Centre, with support from the Malay Heritage Foundation. The Gallery opening hours are 10am–6pm (last admission is at 5.30pm), Tuesdays–Sundays.

The gallery comprises three sections: The first section, 'Geylang Serai: At the Crossroads of History and Memory', presents the transformation of Geylang Serai from an area with plantations to a bustling centre of commerce as well as a residential suburb, and 'Living in Geylang Serai' traces the increase and improvement of public and recreational amenities to meet the needs of a growing suburban population. Finally, 'Our Geylang Serai: Community and Heritage' showcases artefacts that are important to the local community for social events such as weddings and cultural performances.



The former Geylang Fire Station

29 Paya Lebar Road, Singapore 409005

Geylang Fire Station opened in 1929 — making it the second-oldest fire station in Singapore — and shut operations in 2002. It served the eastern part of Singapore and, in its latter years, was renamed Paya Lebar Fire Station. While most people associate the station with the two-storey structure facing the main road, the address comprises a second three-storey building set further back from the road.

Built with Art Deco (a style noted for its geometric motifs, curvilinear forms, sharp outlines, and bold colours) flair, the station's rather plain front holds a protruding balcony

on the second storey decorated with a railing held up by closely spaced supports. The building also boasts adaptations — a big roof with extended eaves, louvred windows, tall ceilings — to provide shelter from sun and rain, dissipate heat, and enhance natural ventilation. It was awarded conservation status on 18 April 2007.

Located at the junction of Sims Avenue and Paya Lebar Road, and just a stone's throw from Paya Lebar MRT Station, the station's eye-catching bright-red doors and French windows still attract photography and architecture buffs. It is now a commercial and industrial office complex known as Paya Lebar Office Centre, but you can still drop by for a visit.





Little-known Delights IN GEYLANG

GEYLANG IS MORE THAN A DISTRICT FULL OF ASIAN GASTRONOMY. LET US INTRODUCE YOU TO TWO LOVELY RETAIL SHOPS AND A CAFÉ FROM THIS AREA THAT MAY NOT BE ON THE USUAL RECOMMENDED LISTS.

A wide range of sewing machines and threads

Ghim Soon Machinery Pte Ltd

Block 129, Geylang East Avenue 2, #01-104, Singapore 380129

This shop deals in quality sewing machines and accessories. Family-run since the 1940s, the business started as a sewing machine repair service, Ghim Soon Sewing Machine Co, and moved into the current premises in 2001. The business re-registered as Ghim Soon Machinery Pte Ltd in 2006, and started an online store, stitch4you, in 2021.

“We were previously located in Upper Boon Keng Road,” reveals Business Development Manager Alex Tan, part of the fourth generation of Tans running the shop. Alex says they relocated to an HDB estate to be where their customers are. “Business is so much better now, as customers — some of whom come from as far away as Boon Lay — can locate us easily. We are also close to the Paya Lebar MRT station.” The bulk of their clients are office ladies and women homemakers. “They are mostly mums who sew after their family has gone to sleep; they find sewing to be therapeutic,” shares Alex. Their male clients are usually into making bags and other leather goods.

The top-selling brands here are Janome (from Japan) and Singer (from USA). But Ghim Soon is more than a retailer. “We are a one-stop solution for our customers’ sewing-machine needs,” Alex advises. Besides also retailing high-quality threads and ergonomic sewing tables, Ghim Soon provides complimentary training for customers who purchase machines from them. “We demonstrate how to better use the sewing machine stitch patterns and the accessories that go with them. For embroidery machines, we share techniques, threads, needles and stabilisers to use, as well as troubleshooting tips,” explains Alex. This highly rated service enhances customer loyalty, which in turn drive up the sales.



Children's sewing lesson

Gim Hin Lee Pte Ltd

Block 10, Haig Road, #01-363/365, Singapore 430010

Don't be surprised when you are greeted with "Bake King" instead of the company's name when you phone up Gim Hin Lee. After all, that is its house brand of baking ingredients, made in its factory at Kampong Ampat. The company also distributes ingredients by other brands, including Billington's and Silver Spoon. In terms of equipment, it stocks the whole gamut, ranging from cake tins and icing tools to cake boxes and candles.

All this is housed in two adjoining HDB units, which the company moved into in 1976, reveals Manager Joseph Chia. With mosaic flooring and no-frills product displays, the store exudes a heavy retro vibe. Joseph shares that the top-four best-selling items here are vanilla essence, plain flour, pandan paste, and pineapple paste. "We have people coming from all parts of Singapore — even from the far west," he says, adding that the company serves a wide demographic of customers through different sales channels (online, in-store, business-to-business, exports, etc).

The company celebrated its 70th anniversary in 2022 with both in-store and online promotions. For customers who want to go deeper into the art of baking, Gim Hin Lee holds baking classes on the second level of its premises.



“We have people coming from all parts of Singapore - even from the far west, and we have a wide variety of sales channels from online, business-to-business to in-store.

— MR JOSEPH CHIA
MANAGER
GIM HIN LEE PTE LTD



Some of Wishes Café's menu items (from left): truffle egg mayo croissant, mala chicken wings, Lychee Rose and Brownie ice cream on a croffle

Wishes Café

Block 36, Circuit Road, #01-414, Singapore 370036

This modern and Instagrammable café stands out from the other businesses in this rather vintage HDB estate, thanks to its refreshing yet cosy décor. Through the glass-fronted entrance, passers-by would be entranced by the pink-and-white *sakura* hanging from the ceiling.

Café assistants Jing Yi and Candy share that the café was set up about four years ago, and survived the pandemic despite being patronised mainly by neighbourhood regulars. It is heartening to observe the warm interactions between them and their customers.

This establishment is — first and foremost — an ice cream parlour. The Brownie boasted a rich, chocolatey flavour that was not overly sweet, while the Lychee Rose provided a delicate contrast with its floral-citrus notes. Ask for your ice cream to be served on a croffle, a cross between a croissant and a waffle.

While having an egg mayo croissant may seem mundane in a café, what upgraded the version served here was just the right amount of truffle oil added to the filling. Providing an unexpected oriental twist to this place were the mala chicken wings, which provided a strong flavour profile of Szechuan peppers.

IT TAKES A

SOCIAL PRESCRIBING HELPS PEOPLE STAY ACTIVE AND ENGAGED BY ADDRESSING THEIR NEEDS HOLISTICALLY. HERE'S WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT IT.

Village!

Started in 2019 by SingHealth Community Hospitals (SCH), Social Prescribing is SCH's signature programme that aims to support patients and seniors beyond clinical care to address their social, environmental and behavioural needs.

After treatment of their immediate health needs, patients who need further support are evaluated systematically and are introduced to resources in their community that can continue to enhance their quality of life.

The social prescribing journey begins

When patients are hospitalised in SingHealth's Community Hospitals, they are assessed by Well-being Coordinators to understand their level of Social Determinants of Health (SDH). SDH are conditions in the places where people live, learn, work and play that affect health outcomes. Some SDH include home and family support, employment status, and social relationships with family, friends, neighbours and community groups.

Patients assessed to be at risk of social isolation are prescribed social care plans

The social prescribing journey continues after patients are discharged from the hospital. The Well-being Coordinators will help to connect them to community resources, such as community clubs or interest groups, that organise activities they are keen on.

Active Ageing Centres (AACs) are one of the many community resources featured in social prescribing

As social recreational centres, AACs support seniors living in the vicinity by not only providing them access to care, but also a place to build social connections and spend time on recreational activities.

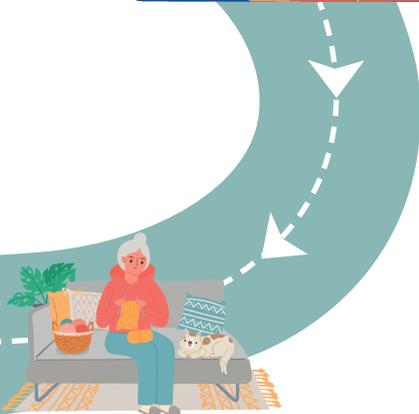


Additional self-care tips

Keep your time occupied and focus on what you do best. Being meaningfully occupied takes the mind away from idle thoughts.

Helping seniors get online is part of social prescribing

To help seniors navigate their way online, Well-being Coordinators also teach them to use smartphones! Seniors empowered with this knowledge can then use mobile applications to connect with their loved ones or to entertain and enrich themselves.



SELF-CARE TIPS BY SCH'S WELL-BEING COORDINATORS

Exercise at home

It's possible to exercise even in the comfort of your humble abode! Simple stretching exercises or leg lifts, for example, can be safely executed while being seated on the sofa.



Eat well, be well

A balanced diet is the foundation of a healthy lifestyle. Ensure that you are getting the recommended intake of fruits, vegetables and proteins, as well as carbohydrates and healthy fats.



Never too old to learn

There is no better time than now to take on a new pastime! From gardening to cooking, there are many workshops available in the community centres to kickstart your new hobby. Go with whatever your heart drives you to do. Leverage on your strengths. It can be useful to start within your comfort zone before slowly expanding your boundaries to achieve more!



Share your concerns

Experiencing some problems? Do not hesitate to seek help from your loved ones or from the community. Understand that it is okay not to be okay! Find opportunities to share concerns and challenges — the pair of listening ears may belong to a trusted professional instead of family members.



"Outside is free"

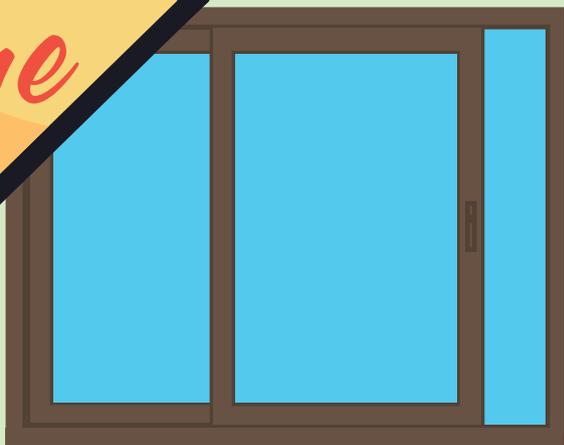
As the popular saying goes, "outside is free"! Make the best use of Singapore's many beautiful outdoor spaces and enjoy the fresh air while burning some calories.



KEEPING YOUR FLAT IN GOOD CONDITION ENSURES THE SAFETY OF YOUR FAMILY, YOUR VISITORS, AND YOUR NEIGHBOURS. HERE ARE TIPS TO FIX SOME COMMON HOUSEHOLD ISSUES AND KEEP THEM AT BAY.



SAFETY BEGINS AT Home



Sliding window

Window safety

It is every homeowner's responsibility to ensure that the flat's windows are properly maintained. If any is damaged, engage a Building and Construction Authority (BCA)-approved window contractor listed with HDB to repair it; at the same time, take immediate action to secure it.

What are the signs that my sliding windows require maintenance work?

- Safety stoppers are missing or worn out
- Missing angle strips

Check that the safety stoppers and angle strips are in their proper places

Clean the tracks and ensure that window panels can slide smoothly

Change worn-out safety stoppers and angle strips by engaging a BCA-approved window contractor listed with HDB

What are the signs that my casement windows require maintenance work?

- Fasteners are made of aluminium, and are rusty or loose
- Moving parts are deformed or stiff

Check that fasteners are not rusty or loose

Clean and oil joints or moving parts

Change all rivets from aluminium to stainless steel by engaging a BCA-approved window contractor listed with HDB

What are the signs that my louvred windows require maintenance work?

- Broken or cracked glass panes
- Jammed adjustable lever, if any



Spalling concrete

This issue is often found in damp areas of older flats (kitchen, toilet). This natural deterioration process causes concrete to bulge, crack or even dislodge — look out for these signs on your ceilings.

I think there is spalling concrete on my ceiling. What should I do?

- Engage a contractor to repair the area — it is the homeowner's responsibility to do so
- Cover your floor and furniture in the affected area with thick cardboard
- Remove loose spalling concrete as they may dislodge and cause injury
- Wear protective gloves
- Dispose loosened concrete at the centralised bin area of your estate

What do I do to prevent spalling concrete?

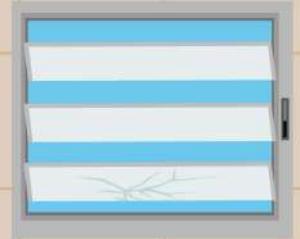
- Ventilate the damp areas of your flat (e.g. keep the windows and doors open)
- Paint ceilings regularly
- Treat cracked areas with sealant



Scan the QR code for more information or you may visit <https://go.gov.sg/hdb-home-care-guide> on how to maintain your HDB apartment such that it remains safe for the people inside as well as around it.



Casement window



Louvred window

Ceiling leaks

Ceiling leaks are common due to wear and tear.

What are the signs of a ceiling leak?

- Dampness or water droplets on ceilings, especially in damp areas (e.g. toilet)

How do I rectify ceiling leaks?

- Engage your upper-floor neighbour and hire a contractor to resolve the issue together while splitting the costs
- If you live on the highest floor of a block, contact your Town Council for assistance
- If you live directly above the void deck where ceiling leakage has occurred, your Town Council may approach you to arrange for repair and split the costs



IMPORTANT NOTE

Falling windows are a serious safety risk. Should windows fall due to a lack of maintenance, homeowners may face a fine of up to \$10,000 and/or a jail term of up to one year.

Fauzie Laily is an all-rounder: someone who can sing, act and host. He entered the scene in 2005 as the second-runner up of the Malay-language singing competition, *Anugerah*. That paved his way into acting, initially in Malay productions, and later in English-language shows. He started emceeing on something he was familiar with — the 2007 edition of *Anugerah*. His biggest hosting gig thus far is arguably NDP 2021.

When asked which of these three roles he prefers, Fauzie could not decide. “It’s impossible to choose one because I genuinely enjoy the process behind all three. It’s like asking me to pick a favourite child,” he tells *Life Storeys* when we caught up with him at the void deck of his Bedok apartment, which he shares with his wife, Nurul.

Speaking of Bedok, this multitalented personality shares that the area is a huge part of his life. “My childhood home is less than 100m from here. Even when I moved into another flat, it was still within Bedok,” he adds. Furthermore, Nurul lived one block away from him when they attended the same primary school!

You released ‘Tersebutlah Kisah’ in 2022. Tell us about it.

‘Tersebutlah Kisah’ is my latest single after I released my EP in 2018. Every time I release new music, I attempt to re-introduce Fauzie Laily, the musician, to the masses. This time, I wrote about my journey when I just started out in the industry, and also integrated a form of traditional Malay poem, *Syair*. I also decided to collaborate with a fresh young producer, and got a young team to come up with my music video. It always invigorates me when trying new things. On 1 October last year, I got to perform ‘Tersebutlah Kisah’ in front of our Prime Minister at Mendaki’s 40th Anniversary Celebration — that has been the highlight of this journey thus far.

What can your fans expect from you in 2023?

I’m already working on a new drama series for Suria that’s slated to be released in March 2023. I also have a few hosting gigs coming up, and have been pencilled in for a major project right after that. I will also be releasing more original music that has been in the oven for quite some time.

Why did you choose to live in HDB after marriage?

I love that my BTO estate is new, and it’s convenient to go anywhere from here. There’s a wet market just five minutes away, and lots of neighbourhood shops that my wife enjoys. When the opportunity came to apply for the BTO here, we took it. The main attraction of HDB living has got to be the neighbours; we’ve been fortunate to get good neighbours.

Share a heartwarming story about your interactions with your neighbours.

I once casually mentioned that I was craving for durian or some desserts. One of my neighbours from the lower floors must have overheard and privately messaged my wife on Instagram, saying that she has some extra durian *pengat* and would send it upstairs to satisfy my craving. I thought it was very sweet of her — that really brought back feelings of *gotong royong* (a Malay term that refers to members of a community chipping in to relieve a common burden)!

Is there a spot in Bedok where you and your wife go to relax, exercise or get inspired?

My wife and I love to walk to Bedok Reservoir Park, which is about 2.5km away. We often go there to exercise, relax our mind, and just talk about our day as we enjoy the sunset. It’s beautiful and peaceful, and I love to wind down my day there with her.

ALL-ROUNDER

AFTER THE HIGH OF PERFORMING HIS LATEST SINGLE IN FRONT OF THE PRIME MINISTER AT MENDAKI’S 40TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION, SINGER-ACTOR-HOST FAUZIE LAILY TELLS FANS TO EXPECT TO SEE A LOT MORE OF HIM IN 2023.

“

I love that my BTO estate is new, and it's convenient to go anywhere from here.

Paktor in the Heartlands



DATE NIGHT DOESN'T HAVE TO ALWAYS BE A FANCY DINNER FOLLOWED BY A MOVIE. THIS COMING VALENTINE'S DAY, DISCOVER ROMANTIC SPOTS AND COUPLE-WORTHY ACTIVITIES RIGHT IN THE HEART OF HDB ESTATES.

Love is in the air with Valentine's Day just around the corner. If you're looking to avoid the crowds at popular dining spots and cinemas in town, take this opportunity to make some beautiful memories with interesting experiences that can be found right in your own HDB estate.

From tranquil nature spots to fun adventures, there's a special *paktor* place for lovebirds in every heartland.



Walk the Heritage Trail at Balestier

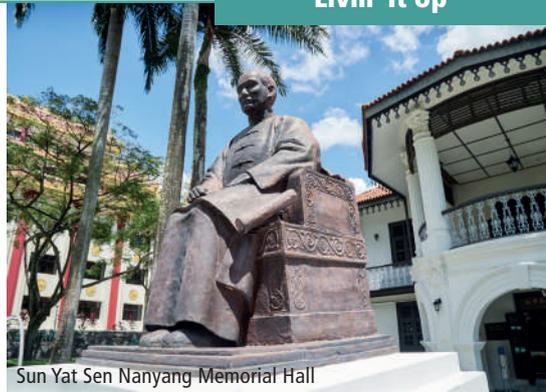
Home to good eats, historical landmarks, colourful shophouses, and clusters of HDB terrace houses, Balestier offers an eclectic mix of food, culture, heritage and unique architectural styles.

Spend the day together taking Instagram-worthy photos of the charming row of shophouses known as Sim Kwong Ho, with their distinctive fusion of traditional Asian motifs with European architectural style. Or pop into the grand colonial-style villa of Sun Yat Sen Nanyang Memorial Hall, which features larger-than-life sculptures of the revolutionary pioneer and a glimpse into his short stay in Singapore.

For food options, you'll be spoilt for choice with Balestier Market, Whampoa Food Centre, Zhongshan Mall, and the many other cafes and hole-in-the-wall shops that line the stretch of road.



The Rasa Istimewa Waterfront Restaurant



Sun Yat Sen Nanyang Memorial Hall



View Malaysia without a passport at Woodlands Waterfront

Woodlands Waterfront is a tranquil coastal park that is just a short walk away from a group of HDB flats in Marsiling Crescent and Marsiling Lane. From various spots — including Lookout Point — in this coastal park, one can enjoy panoramic views of the park as well as the Straits of Johor. If you come in the early morning, you may even spot monkeys and the occasional monitor lizard foraging for food.

In the evening, take a stroll along the jetty — the longest recreational one in Singapore — and let the gorgeous sunset view set the mood for some romantic couple time. The Rasa Istimewa Waterfront Restaurant, set atop the water on the jetty, offers views of Johor Bahru from its wide windows, making it akin to dining on a stationary ship. This *halal* diner serves a varied menu of seafood and western cuisine, along with some local fare.

Chill in Jurong

Jurong is home to gorgeous parks such as Jurong Lake Gardens, as well as large interconnected suburban malls. For couples looking to warm up to each other, it's also home to not one but two of Singapore's coldest recreational playgrounds.

Plan a cool date skating in Singapore's first and only Olympic-sized ice-skating rink at The Rink, located in JCube Mall. There are even adorable skating aids for beginners if you prefer something more secure than holding on to your date. The Rink hosts themed events, so do check its website for Valentine's Day-related promotions. Just make sure to wear comfortable pants and not shorts or dresses!

Snow City, located on Science Centre grounds, is regarded as the first indoor permanent snow centre in Singapore. Re-create romantic wintry scenes from K-dramas walking through the artificial snowfall, or grab on to each other while zooming down the 60m-long snow slide.

KEEPING Wildlife Encounters SAFE

WE SHARE SINGAPORE WITH A HOST OF CREATURES, SOME OF WHICH OCCASIONALLY VENTURE INTO OUR COMFORT ZONE. HOW SHOULD YOU BEHAVE TO HAVE SAFE AND RESPONSIBLE ENCOUNTERS WITH WILDLIFE?

Singapore is a modern metropolis — and also one of the world's greenest cities. It aims to be a 'City in Nature', which is not just the National Parks Board's vision for the country, but also a key pillar of the Singapore Green Plan 2030, a national movement for sustainable development. In tandem with expanding green spaces is the increase in wildlife

living in them. This means that Singapore residents may occasionally come across these creatures.

Be they cute and cuddly or something less adorable, our diverse wildlife is something to treasure. In honour of World Wildlife Day (3 March), here are three tips to keep in mind the next time you are face-to-face with wildlife.

Stay calm and don't provoke them

It's only natural that residents of urbanised Singapore are sometimes rattled by brushes with wildlife. But it's best that you remain calm, avoid making sudden moves, and gradually back away from them. Provoking wildlife is discouraged as they can become defensive when feeling threatened.

Wildlife is unpredictable, so never touch them, no matter how cute they are. This includes **otters**, which have gained quite a following here.



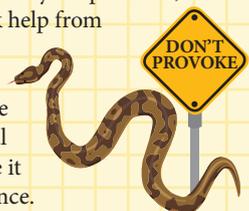
For **long-tailed macaques**, back away from them and avoid making eye contact with them.



Wild boars can weigh up to 100kg! Be especially alert if you see an adult with its young — mother boars tend to be defensive towards perceived threats.



If you come across a **snake**, refrain from trying to drive it away. If it's in a public area or in your premises, leave the area immediately, and seek help from either the National Parks Board (1800 476 1600) or ACRES Wildlife Rescue Centre (9783 7782). If it's in its natural habitat (e.g. up in a tree), leave it alone and maintain your distance.



2 Don't feed the wildlife



Feeding wildlife interferes with their ability to independently and capably forage for food — they may even lose that ability altogether!



If wildlife come to rely on handouts given by humans, they could

- end up spending more time in areas inhabited by humans, resulting in increased wildlife-human encounters
- become more aggressive towards humans



Feeding, coupled with a lack of natural predators in Singapore, can cause wildlife numbers to increase, resulting in increased wildlife-human encounters.

3 Keep food out of sight

Some long-tailed macaques, accustomed to being fed by humans, have been known to grab items — particularly food packages — carried by humans. So keep such items out of sight or dispose of them when approaching areas with possible animal activities.



Keep food out of view so that wildlife are not tempted to enter your flat. Long-tailed macaques have been captured on camera entering HDB homes — some have even learnt to open sliding windows! — and helping themselves to fruits and other goodies.



To prevent long-tailed macaques from rummaging through your garbage, double-knot your refuse bags before placing them into rubbish bins, then secure the bin covers with bungee cords.



In addition to the tips mentioned, a healthy dose of caution and respect will go a long way in ensuring that encounters between humans and members of the animal kingdom remain safe and even enjoyable. As a little city-state, Singapore residents have to learn to live alongside its wild neighbours harmoniously as we transform into a City in Nature.



Scan the QR code to learn the appropriate behaviour when encountering different species of wildlife.

Celebrating our kampung spirit

Nomination closes 31 January 2023

We are a diverse mix of races, religions and cultures.

Just like how every ingredient in a well-balanced rojak adds to its robust flavour, the sharing of our joys, festivals and friendships is what makes Singapore home.

Singapore's
**friendly
neighbourhood
Award 2023**

To celebrate our kampung spirit, we are proud to launch
Singapore's Friendly Neighbourhood Award 2023.

We want to acknowledge and celebrate the acts of wonderful neighbours so whether you live in public or private housing, this award is open to you.

Scan the QR code to submit your stories to us today!



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