

National Day Rally highlights

This year's speech focused more on principles than bumper policies, with firms being pushed to pay lower-wage workers more, and new laws to send signals on fair employment and racial harmony.

CHANGING ECONOMIC GEARS

- Singapore must move from economic survival to longer-term growth, by preserving its status as a business hub, attracting investments, and growing local firms.

LOWER-WAGE WORKERS

- In two years' time, the annual budget for the Workfare Income Supplement will be raised to S\$1.1 billion, allowing **higher payouts** and a **lower eligibility age** of 30, down from 35 now
- Progressive Wage Model (PWM) to be extended to **specific occupations** across all sectors, starting with administrative assistants and drivers
- Firms that want to hire foreign workers **must pay at least the Local Qualifying Salary** of S\$1,400 to all local employees
- **New Progressive Wage Mark**, with the public sector only buying from businesses with such accreditation
- **Transitional government support** for employers, though some additional wage costs will have to be passed on to consumers
- MOM is studying the issue of job protection and retirement adequacy for delivery workers on online platforms

WORK PASS HOLDERS

- Employment Pass, S Pass criteria will continue to be tightened over time
- **Fair employment guidelines** to be enshrined in law, with a new tribunal for workplace discrimination
- Singapore must remain open; being seen as hostile to foreigners would cost investments, jobs, and opportunities

RACE RELATIONS

- New **Maintenance of Racial Harmony Act** brings together existing government powers, adds softer approaches
- Public healthcare nurses will be allowed to wear the tudung from November