

# They couldn't be more proud

The eight flagbearers chosen come from diverse backgrounds and are inspirational role models

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SINGAPORE — Their job is to flash megawatt smiles and to walk smartly with national flag in hand on the Marina Bay floating platform at the Youth Olympic Games opening ceremony.

Six of the eight Singaporean flagbearers do not come from sports backgrounds; they were chosen for their achievements across diverse fields and for being “inspirational role models for young people”, a National Youth Council (NYC) spokesperson said.

The eight — who were informed about three weeks ago and whose identities have been kept secret thus far — are national athletes Koh Seng Leong and Valerie Teo, violinist Lee Huei Min, youth leader Lina Chong Lin Lin, entrepreneurs Leonard Tan and Clinton Ang, former Nomi-

nated Member of Parliament Eunice Olsen and scientist Dr Tong Joo Chuan. All are winners of the Singapore Youth Award, the nation's highest accolade for youths.

The eight will be “holding and parading the Singapore Flag before the National Anthem”, decked in specially designed white tracksuits with the national flag emblazoned in front and the YOG logo at the back, said the NYC spokesperson.

MediaCorp spoke to four flagbearers, all bursting with pride at the “great honour”.

Ms Chong, 32, has been listening daily to the song they will be marching to, “so that I can get into the rhythm and gear myself up mentally”, said the Nanyang Polytechnic assistant manager.

For Mr Ang, 37, whose wine company has pasted YOG decals on its vans, the opening ceremony allows him to live the

YOG dream in some way.

“I wish I could turn back the clock ... to be at (the athletes’) age and have the ability to participate in a great event like the YOG,” said the national junior badminton player in the '80s.

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**National Youth Council (NYC) spokesperson**

The Games are a step in the right direction for Singapore to host “bigger and better things”, he added.

Ms Lee, 27, a keen table-tennis player, said she was surprised to be picked. The

classical musician, added that she has always been proud of being a Singaporean violinist and feels like she is flying the nation's flag each time she performs.

While the flagbearers have yet to attend rehearsals, they are ready to “put on a good show for the rest of the world”, as national sailor Koh, 26, put it.

He has been training and competing in Europe for the past five weeks and has just returned home. While in the small Belgian town of Nieuwpoort two weeks ago, the Olympian had to scramble for a measuring tape to inform the YOG organisers of his body measurements.

“There weren't any tape measures in the supermarket but, luckily, the landlord was a carpenter. I managed to borrow one and got my coach to do the measurements,” he recounted.

## Bus services affected during YOG

SINGAPORE — Nineteen SBS Transit bus services will be affected by bus stop closures while the operating hours of train services on the North East Line will be extended during the Youth Olympic Games (YOG) Preview on Saturday and the Opening Ceremony on Aug 14.

Several of SMRT's bus services will also be affected during the YOG.

During the preview, the operating hours for the North East Line train services will be extended with the last North-bound train leaving Dhoby Ghaut station at 12.20am, said SBS Transit.

However, there will be no change in operating hours for the last South-bound train leaving Dhoby Ghaut Station at 11.50pm.

For the Sengkang and Punggol LRT, the last train will be timed to depart only when the last North-bound train arrives at the respective train stations.

During the Opening Ceremony, 72

additional train trips will be added to the schedule of the North-East Line.

For SBS Transit's bus services, 17 bus stops will be closed in phases on the days of the preview and opening ceremony, from 9am to 2am of the following day, due to road closures along Raffles Avenue, Bayfront Avenue and Esplanade Drive.

For SMRT, bus service numbers such as 75, 77, 106, 167, 171, 700A, 857, 960 and 961 will be diverted at various times on Aug 7, 14, 21, 22 and 26 due to road closures in the Bras Basah-Marina Bay-Shenton Way area.

Meanwhile, on Monday, SBS Transit will operate 48 more trips on the North East Line from noon, while SMRT will add 165 train trips.

But some bus services are expected to experience delays along the routes of the National Day Parade mobile columns.



A banner showing a dream that appeals to one's sense of humour was spotted in the vicinity of the Padang, where this year's National Day Parade will be held on Monday. Tying in with this year's NDP theme “Live Our Dreams, Flag Our Flag”, banners and posters of 60 different slogans of dreams contributed by Singaporeans were put up at various locations around the island. The organisers hope Singaporeans can reflect upon the nation's achievements within a short span of 45 years and be inspired to work towards their own dreams. PHOTO BY OOI BOON KEONG

## 'Remember the past, be ready'

SINGAPORE — Remember the successful lessons of the past and be ready to adapt to the challenges and opportunities of the future — that was the message government leaders have for Singaporeans at various National Day observance ceremonies on Friday.

Joining the staff at the Istana were President SR Nathan, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong and Senior Minister Goh Chok Tong.

At the Treasury Building, Deputy Prime Minister Teo Chee Hean and several ministers were joined by private sector representatives who were asked to reflect on the lessons from the recent downturn.

Finance Minister Tharman Shanmugaratnam said: “We are a formidable team in Singapore when we come together, regardless of race, language and religion to pursue common objectives for ourselves and our families.”

Acting Minister for Communication, Information and the Arts Lui Tuck Yew looked back further, to the strides Singapore made since “the '50s and '60s”.

Noting Singaporeans' pride in the country's achievements — including economic development — he said: “But we also need to ask ourselves if we are as proud of Singapore in areas like kindness and graciousness?”

### ■ SECURITY BOOST IN AUG AND SEPT

Security measures will be stepped up island-wide in August and September.

A police spokesman said this is in view of the high-profile events taking place such as National Day, the Youth Olympic Games (YOG) and the Formula One Grand Prix.

Both the National Day Parade and the YOG have been gazetted as a special event under the Public Order Act.

The public can expect to see high-visibility police patrols and checks at checkpoints, tourist and shopping belts, financial districts, key installations and MRT trains and stations.

Access controls and security checks will also be implemented at the event venues.

The police urge everyone to remain vigilant during this period.

### ■ MOM IDENTIFIES 3 AREAS TO FOCUS ON

Raising the quality of the workforce. Leveraging on the ageing workforce. Enabling progressive workplace practices.

These are the three key areas that need to be focused on to prepare the nation for the future, said Manpower Minister Gan Kim Yong at his ministry's National Day Observance Ceremony on Friday.

To enable workers to acquire specialist skills and competencies, the Ministry of Manpower (MOM) will work towards deepening the continuing education and training system.

On the ageing population, Mr Gan said with re-employment legislation coming into effect in 2012, MOM has been reaching out to companies to help them be re-employment ready.

About 64 per cent of private firms have implemented measures to let their employees continue working, he added. S RAMESH