

RP Open House makes headlines

By PRIYA SUNIL

The build-up to the annual three-day Open House extravaganza was furious – with banners going up, booths set up and student leaders getting ready to greet secondary school students and their parents. And Republic Polytechnic did not disappoint.

Between Jan 8th and 10th, 10,979 visitors came by. And we had a few VIPs to boot.

Education Minister Mr Heng Swee Keat came on day one to have a look and he left impressed. Speaking to reporters after his tour, he said he would be “very excited” if he were a student looking for courses in RP. He took a tour of the different booths and tried several of the interactive games.

RP also made history and the headlines when we launched the first teaching dispensary in Singapore which simulates an actual pharmacy.

This facility is a collaboration between Republic Polytechnic and Khoo Teck Puat Hospital, and is named the Republic Polytechnic-Khoo Teck Puat Hospital Teaching Dispensary (RP-KTPH).

“We have already been collaborating with them for a long time for IIP (Industry Immersion Programme), now we are going further so that we have our own practice done here so that students can actually practise dispensing over here at RP,” said Mr Adreus Tan, a Diploma in Pharmaceutical Sciences lecturer.

The launch event was graced by Guest-of-Honour Associate Professor Muhammad Faishal Ibrahim, Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Transport.



FIRST OF THE LOT: Republic Polytechnic launches the first teaching dispensary in Singapore during this year’s Open House to teach Pharmaceutical Science students to dispense medication.

PHOTO BY: CLAUDIA CHAU

There, a few students gave the audience which comprised guests from the healthcare industry, a preview of how a scenario at a pharmacy would be simulated.

The dispensary will be used mainly during a curriculum module for third-year students of the diploma’s Pharmacy Practice track. It was designed to give students a hands-on experience on packaging and dispensing over 600 drugs, among other technical skills to give them a head start for their internship programme.

Juliana Fransisca, a second year student was thrilled. “We are lucky because we are the first batch going to use this dispensary lab. Before this, we only had the normal labs and we didn’t have any dispensary so by doing this, we actually know what the actual pharmacy looks like and we can do it not only theoretically but also practically,” she said.

Paolo Gonzales, 15, a Yusof Ishak Secondary student,

was also impressed. “It’s quite interesting; it really helps because I really lack knowledge of the courses that are available. I can go to the website but through interaction with the people who actually take the course, I can really get insights to what the course offers,” he said. **R**

MEET RP’s ARM WRESTLER CHAMPION



PHOTO BY: ANGELA LIM

This is Valen Low. His form teacher banned him from the sport, saying there was no future in it. He was mocked by people who didn’t think arm wrestling was even a proper sport. Valen is now having the last laugh. The School of Sports, Health and Leisure (SHL) student became the first Singaporean to win a major championship, when he emerged victorious at the Asian Open Arm Wrestling Championship in June last year. Read his story.

Why I chose RP over JC

It is the season where O-level results are out and students choose the next step in their academic journey. For some, it can be an agonising decision between the “safe” route of going to a junior college or choosing the more “hands on” polytechnic education. Our writer talks about his experience.

By YOGARAJ PANDITURAI

Since coming to Republic Polytechnic (RP), many people have asked me this. Why RP? I get this especially from my friends and family, because I was a student of Victoria School (VS), a school where the majority of students head to JC and university.

When my results came out last year, I knew I could have done better. But I was glad the ordeal of the O levels was over and now it was time for me to choose my path. In my year, 96 per cent of the cohort was eligible to enter a JC and that included me.

I decided however that the academic route was not for me. I was quite interested to pursue a Diploma in Mass Communication (DMC). I have always wanted to be a journalist and I felt this was a step towards that goal. I applied to the media courses in all five polytechnics. RP offered me a spot and I ac-

cepted it straightaway.

If I had any illusions that poly life would be easy, they were quickly shattered on my first day.

I sat through a Problem Based Learning (PBL) class and I was lost. I had no idea why the students had to solve problems. Shouldn’t the teachers tell us the solutions? Everything seemed hard – from the Problem Definition Template to the study breaks which were spent preparing for presentations.

In VS, there were teachers and textbooks. RP though introduced me to lecturers and laptops. It was a whole new ball game now. I felt like I was tossed at sea and that I had to figure out how to learn, by myself.

My lecturers weren’t like my teachers in VS. Instead of monotonously going through worksheets and paper, they put more emphasis on engaging us

students on a deeper level. But they expected more out of me. Before I knew it, a week flew by, then a month. Before long I sat for UT3 and I was done with semester 1. It was incredible that my classmates and I survived!

Having gone through the first semester, the answer to the question of why RP became clearer to me.

I was tired of flipping workbooks and sitting through mass lectures. I wanted something different and I found it here. I know it is not going to be easy – that even presenting every day can get tedious and my stress levels will increase as I go into Year 2 with more projects and greater demands on my time.

But if anyone asks, “why RP?”, I have a lot more to say. And I would start with: “why not?” **R**

Editor's Note

Time flies when you are enjoying what you are doing. This is the second of the two issues that my team and I have put together and what a way to bow out! In this edition, we have lined up some amazing stories that you are bound to love. Republic Poly held its colourful and vibrant open house in January and we bring you the highlight from this year's showcase. Seeing the secondary school students visit our campus certainly brought back vivid memories for me as I was once like them, taking a tour around RP. It made me reflect back on why I made the choice to go to RP.

Some of you may reminisce about the decision to come to RP - read our writer's reflection on his choice. It is also the season of love with Valentine's Day around the corner and we share with you what you can do, regardless of your status on the very day. Plus, the holidays are in sight, and many of us would be planning for a trip together with our friends and we offer some suggestions on where you can go. Our students at RP continue to make a name for themselves and in this edition you can read about three of them who have their name up in lights. My team and I had such a great time putting this issue together and we sincerely hope you feel the same as you read on. I hope you had a wonderful semester and here's to a happy holidays and a much needed break! For more interesting and exclusive stories, please check us out on

www.republicanpost.sg

Deepanraj Ganesan



PHOTO BY: NUR HUMAIRA WAHAB

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Taking the alternative route to a diploma

Started in 2013, the Polytechnic Foundation Programme (PFP) has proven a hit among GCE 'N' Level Graduates.

By NUR ZALIKHA

While most secondary school students would take the O-level route to secure a place in a polytechnic or a junior college, 18-year-old Rachel Ng skipped the national examination in an effort to get a head start in her desired diploma.

She enrolled in the Polytechnic Foundation Programme (PFP), a year-long programme open to the top 10 per cent of Normal Academic graduates. The students' performances are evaluated after a year, before they proceed to their chosen diploma course.

A typical day for Rachel would require the former CHIJ St. Theresa's Convent student to sit for three different modules each day. She would start the day with Mathematics, followed by English which last one-and-a-half hours each. Rachel will conclude her day with a two-hour long Understand-

ing Customers and Businesses module.

Rachel, who was part of the pioneer batch of PFP students in 2013, eventually chose to pursue a Diploma in Mass Communication.

"I loved writing and was always intrigued by advertisements on television. I read the newspapers and watched the news and then realised I wanted to be a journalist, that's why I chose Mass Communication," she said.

Each year, about 1,200 places are set aside for students under the programme. Mr Ismail Tahir, Support Executive for PFP, feels the programme benefits students as they are exposed to a new environment. "They of course learn the foundation to prep them for Year 1, but at the same time, students get to hone the skills that will help them with the transition into Year 1 better," he said.

Jacynth Toh, another student from the PFP, said the programme gave her opportunities she would not have received if she took the O-Levels route instead. "PFP has allowed me to change as a person and become a more confident individual," added the Diploma in Mass Communication student.

Transiting from a secondary school to polytechnic was no easy feat for Rachel. While the PFP's manageable timetable and activities provided her a taste of polytechnic life, Rachel needed more time to adapt to other demands.

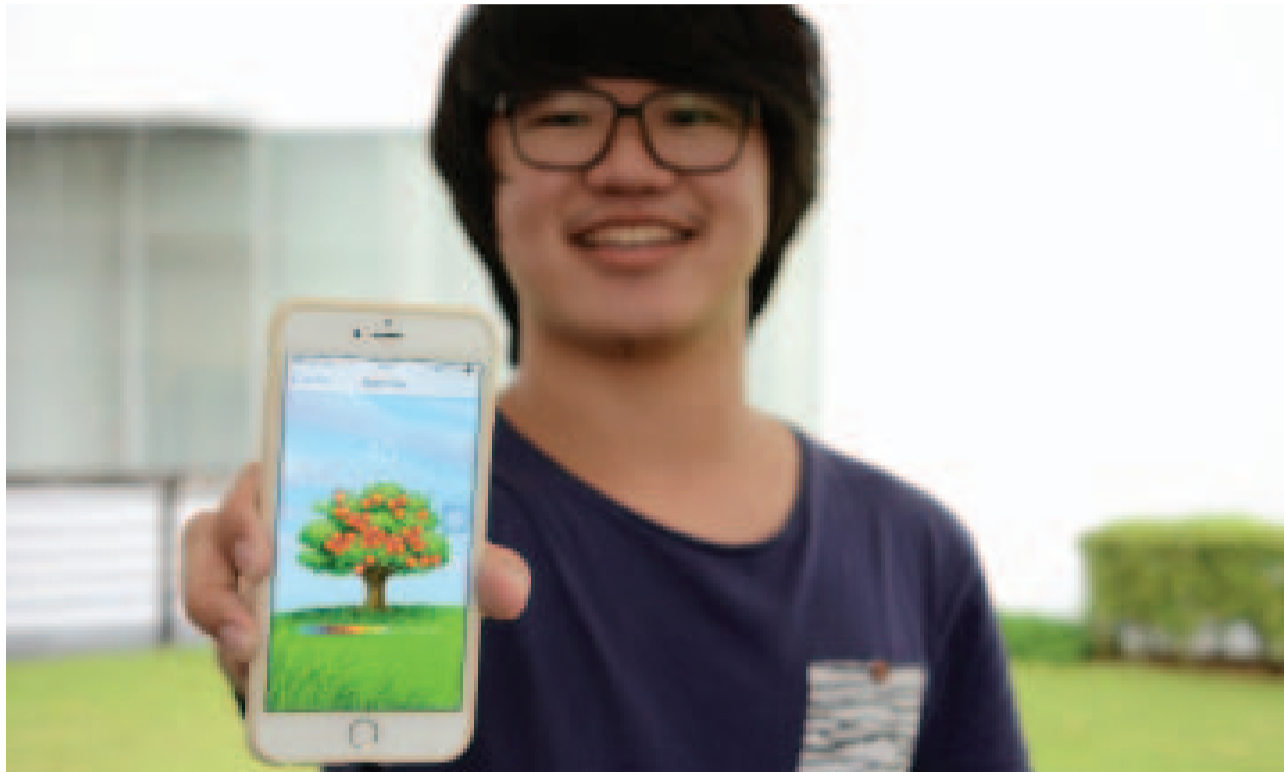
She said: "Some modules required more effort in terms of graded assignments and projects which were really taxing, but the programme served its purpose to help prepare for my first year in poly."

When asked which part of the PFP did she miss the most, Rachel quipped: "There were no RJs." **R**

SOI's App enthusiasts bag two national prizes

By Woon Jie Min

Technology-driven competitions inspire Infocomm students to create apps that impact the local community



AN APP A DAY KEEPS THE SMARTPHONES AWAY: Team leader Libern Lin Yue Bin, showing the award winning app 'Apple Tree', which encourages smartphone users to put their phones away for more face-to-face interaction.
PHOTO BY: SHAHIDA ARIFF

A team of Republic Polytechnic students have been awarded \$30,000 for developing an app idea that encourages people to put down their phones and get in more human-to-human interaction.

The team - made up of Libern Lin, Fang Ling Qing and Lester Yap, all 20-year-olds from the School of Infocomm (SOI) - was awarded the grant at The Splash Awards in November last year.

The Splash Awards is an annual IT competition organised by the Singapore Computer Society, to engage students through various aspects of Infocomm Technology by using fun and creative ways.

More than 170 participants took part in the contest which is centred on the theme "Bringing Singaporeans Closer Together", to celebrate Singapore turning 50 this year.

There were a total of three rounds before the judges decide on the winner. The team felt that the most challenging round was the final round.

"We were excited, yet nervous. We had to put a lot of effort into our presentation scripts to make sure we got everything right," said Libern, the team's

group leader.

The team's winning app idea "Apple Tree" aims to encourage more face-to-face interaction among friends and family.

"When people come together, everyone is busy with their phones. By creating this app idea, we hope to solve this social problem of people interacting less," said Ling Qing.

The Apple Tree app works when two or more users to put their phones together. The app will lock the phones, while a virtual apple tree grows on their screen. The more number of phones are being connected, the faster the

apples grow.

These virtual apples collected can then be exchanged for vouchers or discounts from partnered vendors. Users are also encouraged to exchange the virtual apples in the form of donations for charities.

The team hopes the users can benefit from the app, especially those who hardly get to spend quality time with their friends or families.

Libern said: "This app will help users make full use of their quality time spent together, and they get rewarded doing so."

The app is expected to be released in March this year, to mark the SG50 celebrations. **R**



LUCKY NUMBER THREE: Fang Ling Qing, Libern Lin, Lester Yap, all 20, receive their award from National Development Minister Desmond Lee at the Splash Awards 2014. They developed an app idea to encourage users to put their phones away.
PHOTO BY: FANG LING QING

AN APP TO HELP DEMENTIA PATIENTS

By Dawn Lee

A team of Republic Polytechnic students called Adam & Friends clinched third place in their app in the inaugural Samsung Solve For Tomorrow competition. Six finalists comprising teams from polytechnics and universities took part in the competition.

Adam & Friends which comprises of four third year students from the School of Infocomm (SOI) - Adam Tok, Ahmad Naufal, Amarul Afiq and Iffah Farhanah, ages 20 to 21 - and with help from their facilitator, Sasidharam Nair developed an app that won a \$5,000 seed grant.

The grant will help aid their idea into a real application. Their placing also meant that they will be given access to the Infocomm Development Authority lab where they will be mentored to develop and experiment their app.

Held for the first time locally, the global competition encourages students to leverage technology to address social issues and conceptualise solutions that will benefit the community.

The app contains several features which allow storage of past photos, vid-

eos and favourite past time music.

"There is no known cure to dementia, but this app helps to slow down the process and makes it easier for the patient's family to adapt to the change in behaviour," said team leader, Adam.

Made up of three phases, Adam & Friends submitted a three-minute video that articulates the social issue and proposed idea. After being shortlisted, the trio had to attend a one-day workshop where they had the opportunity to learn from industry experts and refine their ideas before submitting their final proposal.

The app idea came from of the team members, Amarul who said that he was inspired by a student doing a final year project on dementia during an overseas trip.

"Their project made me do some research and realise that there was a rise in dementia patients in Singapore and thought that this app would help make impact," he said. **R**

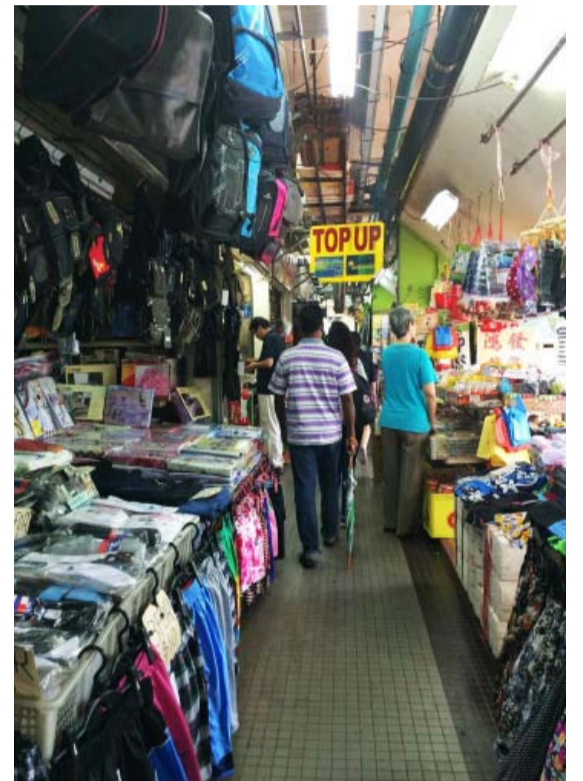
The Old in Woodlands

Old Woodlands Town Centre was a place where many heartlanders used to frequent in the past, since the opening of many other shopping malls, many have flocked to the new and left the old behind. A photo essay by Adelene Chua, Jenell Tan, Feeza Atiqah and Siti Quraisha.



QUIET TOWN:

Old Woodlands Town Centre, situated just before Woodlands Checkpoint, sits abandoned and quiet in comparison to its heydays during the seventies and eighties, when it was the regional town center of Woodlands. **PHOTO BY: JENELL TAN**



SWEET NOSTALGIA:

One might feel that he had stepped back into time, being here at the shops of Old Woodlands Town Centre. It's an entirely different feeling as compared to stepping in a mall. Consisting of 192 shophouses, Old Woodlands Town Centre sells a wide range of items from clothes to electronic appliances.

PHOTO BY: FEEZA ATIQA



PAST GLORY:

Without realising, many would have walked past the empty square board without knowing that it used to be plastered with posters of the latest movies. What's left behind are just rusty staples, if one staple symbolises one poster, one can only imagine how busy the theatre used to be. **PHOTO BY: ADELENE CHUA**



EMPTY:

The trademark neighborhood cinema owned by the Shaw Brothers, where the public would go to watch their movies. It has been left unused since the mid-2000s when the newer and shinier Cathay Cineplex opened at Causeway Point Shopping mall. **PHOTO BY: SITI QURAISHA**



STANDING STRONG:

The ground which See Toi Watches – which has been in operation for half a decade – stands was once a rubber plantation that was flattened to make way for the construction of Block 4A some 36 years ago. **PHOTO BY: ADELENE CHUA**



LOOKING BACK:

Mr Tan, 83, reminiscing the past with pictures. His shop, See Toi Watches, has been at Woodlands Town Centre for over 50 years. **PHOTO BY: JENELL TAN**



FADED COLORS:

Years of rain has washed out the vibrant colours from drawings on the wall of Elias Kindergarten since its opening in 1996. **PHOTO BY: SITI QURAI SHA**



BIDDING GOODBYE:

The Housing Board announced that Blocks 1A to 6A had been chosen to be redeveloped in 2016, which means that tenants will soon have to leave the premises. Some residents are looking forward to the re-vamp but many can't bear to see the place they have spent most their childhood go. **PHOTO BY: JENELL TAN**



Head the right way this *Valentine's* Day!

Whatever your relationship status, Valentine's Day is bound to provide some with the perennial headache: What should you do to mark the occasion? The Republican Post has put together some suggestions of where you can go, whether you are single, attached or out on the first date.

By S SANJAY

"The Day I Shot Cupid" - Indoor Laser Tag

PHOTO: TRIPADVISOR SINGAPORE



SINGLES

You can gather some friends and give the meddlesome Cupid a shot right back. An interactive game played in an indoor arena in the heart of Orchard Road, players in Indoor Laser Tag score points by tagging targets and opponents with a Phaser gun.

The facility offers up to 35 game formats to cater to participants of various fitness levels. Each mission lasts around 20 minutes - briefing and actual game play - and can accommodate up to 24 players.

Where: 60A Orchard Road
B1-04/05/06

Price Range: \$15 to \$18 per person

Opening Hours:

Sun - Thurs: 12pm - 9pm

Fri and Sat: 11am - 11pm

"Food is the way to my heart" - Food for Thought

PHOTO: FOOD FOR THOUGHT



ATTACHED

For the lovebirds, this is probably your time to impress. But you can also bring your partner out for a nice meal without burning a hole in your pocket.

There are several Food for Thought restaurants, but the Singapore Botanic Gardens outlet branch is probably the chain's standout branch as it is set among picturesque views. The restaurant can seat 300 people and features full-height glass walls that let in natural light. If you want to soak in the surroundings, you can also rent a picnic basket which comes with a selection of finger food and drinks. The restaurant does not impose a service charge.

Where: 1 Cluny Road

Tanglin Gate #B1-00

Price Range: \$7 to \$27

Opening Hours: Mon - Sun: 8am to 9pm

"The heart is like a garden" - Gardens By The Bay

PHOTO: URBAN SPLATTER



FIRST DATE

A stroll at the Gardens by the Bay may not sound like the most exhilarating activity, but it is definitely a platform for you and your date to get to know each other better. Try taking the footpath behind the Flower Dome and Cloud Forest, and walk towards the Marina Barrage in the evening.

Enjoy the conversation, amid the cool breeze and under the stars. After the walk, you can stop at Satay by the Bay for food. Just remember, you are in no hurry to label yourselves as a pair.

Where: Gardens By the Bay

18 Marina Gardens Drive

Price Range: Access to the Outdoor Gardens in Bay South is free

Opening Hours: 5am - 2am daily



Must-catch acts in 2015

If you're a music lover, 2015 is the year for all things good in terms of music here. Here are five gigs that you should definitely catch:

By SARA KOH

THE SCRIPT



PHOTO COURTESY: JOVENATHEART.COM

When: Apr 21

Venue: Singapore Indoor Stadium

Ticket Prices: Standing - \$148, \$118, Seating - \$128, \$98

Why Catch It: Let your inner pop-infused rocker out of the closet and rock with The Script as they make their return here.

ED SHEERAN



PHOTO COURTESY: TODAYONLINE

When: Mar 14

Venue: The Star Theatre @ The Star Performing Arts Centre

Ticket Prices: \$88, \$128, \$168

Why Catch It: Let Ed Sheeran strum on your heart strings and be prepared to be mesmerised by this lyrical genius.

ONE DIRECTION



PHOTO COURTESY: SONYMUSICSINGAPORE

When: Mar 14

Venue: National Stadium

Ticket Prices: Standing - \$168, Seating - \$388, \$198, \$188, \$168, \$148, \$128, \$88

Why Catch It: Fall in love with their good looks and silky smooth voices when they come to our humble shores for the first time.

FUTURE MUSIC FESTIVAL ASIA

When: Mar 13 - 14

Where: Changi Exhibition Centre

Ticket Prices: \$148 (one-day pass), \$208 (two-day pass), \$388 (two-day VIP pass)

Why Catch It: For the electronic-music junkies, this one's for you! Get ready to feel pulsating beats through your body as you groove it.

ALT-J

When: May 17

Venue: The Coliseum, Hard Rock Hotel Singapore, Resorts World Sentosa

Ticket Prices: \$95 (early bird), \$105 (standard), \$125 (door)

Why Catch It: For all things indie, heart wrenching and tear-jerking melodies, make sure you catch this one.

SINGAPORE INTERNATIONAL JAZZ FESTIVAL

When: Mar 6 - Mar 8

Venue: Event Plaza at Marina Bay Sands

Ticket Prices: \$125 (one-day pass), \$255 (three-day pass)

Why Catch It: Two words. Jessie J. Need I say more?

Holiday with friends without bursting the budget

By SARAH PINO

It is no secret that most students have little to get by from their part-time jobs and so having a holiday with their friends might seem impossible. But with some planning (and consistent saving) it is possible to go on a short trip. The key is to book early – often budget airlines have sales and prices go up during peak travel season. Another thing to do is to compare with different airlines and book the cheapest quickly. We have put together three suggestions for travelling with friends for less than \$400.



PHOTO: GOINGPLACES

Bali, Indonesia



Culture, art and natural beauty are all on offer in this very popular Indonesian resort. Pristine white-sand beaches and excellent temple architecture welcome travellers who are keen to have a holiday that is fun yet affordable. Do be aware that there are locals who quote you “tourist prices” – do some research and remember to bargain. Flight tickets can be as low as \$98 (tigerair.com) per trip.

Outside of the main tourist spots, simple rooms at homestays are about \$10 (Private Dorm Legian, \$16). For a more luxurious choice at a villa, it’s \$21 a night in Budget Bungalow Room 2 (travelmob.com) - if it’s split between four people, it’s only \$5.25 a night!

For the more adventurous, White Water Rafting is at USD68 (about S\$90). Go surfing and rent a surfboard at about \$9.30. Don’t know how to surf? No problem! Surfing lessons in Bali is offered all around the island for about \$26 per lesson!

Palawan, Philippines



Palawan stays loyal to the Philippines’ tag line, “it’s more fun in the Philippines.” The biggest dilemma you and your friends would have is whether to dive, snorkel or swim. Once you’ve seen one part of the island, it’s hard not to explore the rest.

Island hopping is a great way to spend time with your friends. Each island - like Luli, Starfish, Cowrie and Pandan - are all great for snorkeling but they offer their own unique attractions of polar opposite tides, starfishes, slugs and just plain tambay area, a colloquial term for Singapore’s lepak, respectively. Learn why when you visit!

Don’t miss walking up and down 150 steps to swim in the clear turquoise waters of Kayangan Lake, which boasts its natural beauty. Enter for only P200 (about S\$6).

Flight tickets are around \$170 on Cebu Pacific Airlines. Stay in villas such as Eco Room in Puerto Princesa (travelmob.com) for \$25 a night (\$6.25/person if you share it with 3 other friends).

Also, when it comes to eating, experience the Filipino Culture and eat like the locals: using your hands! They say it tastes better that way.



PHOTO: GOHOPPING

Phuket, Thailand



Dubbed as Thailand’s most popular beach destination, Phuket now offers more activities such as golfing, watching muay-thai boxing matches or riding elephants. Of course, nothing beats what the island is truly well-endowed with: hidden lagoons.

Discover lost worlds in collapsed cave systems by exploring Phang Nga in kayaks.

John “Caveman” Gray, a pioneer of sea canoeing in Phang Nga Bay and environmental activist, found the hidden lagoons and has made it accessible to all travellers.

His all-day guided tour costs 3000 to 4000 baht (S\$120). It may be a little pricey but the package is complete with food on-board.

Flight tickets are about \$98 (tigerair.com) per trip. A studio in Karon Beach costs \$27 a night from travelmob.com. Split four-ways, that’s only \$6.75 a night!



PHOTO: PANORAMIO



Hooked on arm wrestling

By BRANDON MARK

Find out how an RP student chased his dreams and co-founded the only club in Singapore for the sport.

His passion in arm wrestling started with informal matches with his classmates. But what began as fun and games soon became a serious matter for Valen Low.

Intrigued by the sport, he began researching online to learn more. He also started an informal league in his secondary school, incurring the wrath of his teachers as they felt it was disruptive.

"My form teacher tried to ban me from arm wrestling," Valen said. "They told me there was no future in this sport."

Mocked for pursuing his passion, Valen is now having the last laugh. The Republic Polytechnic health management and promotion student became the first Singaporean to win a major championship, when he emerged victorious at the Asian Open Arm Wrestling Championship in June, last year.

Valen felt his hard work has been vindicated by the win, even though he acknowledged some may not consider arm wrestling a sport.

"I do not blame those people as arm wrestling is not a mainstream sport," said the 20-year-old. "However, the sport is expanding and I feel that people will know about the sport sooner or later. They should understand what governs the definition of a sport and should not exclude arm wrestling as an actual sport."

Valen's road to success was not easy. Soon after he participated in his first competition in December 2010 in Malacca, his parents demanded he quit the sport and focus on his studies as he had scored 32 points for his O-levels. But he preserved and dipped into his own savings to compete in various competitions in Malaysia.

Valen began to make his mark in 2011, with wins in the junior categories in several competitions across the Causeway. His grades also improved at ITE College Central, where he took a community sports and recreation course.

Valen's success also caught the attention of other arm wrestling enthusiasts here, and he co-

founded Singapore's only club for the sport. The club now boasts over 15 regular members who train every Sunday at his parents' four-room flat in Yishun with the aim of competing overseas.

Valen, whose right arm is stronger than his left, rubbished the notion that arm wrestlers train only by bench pressing heavy weights. Instead, newcomers should get on the arm wrestling table and wrestle as much as they can, he added.

Valen's parents are now more supportive of his passion in arm wrestling. "I feel that he should be doing whatever he feels happy about... as long as he feels happy, I will support him," said Mdm Goh Poh Choo, Valen's mother.

His father, Mr Roger Low Fook Cheong, added: "We feel that the Government in Singapore should

support and give some recognition towards his admirable work ethic and dedication towards the sport of arm wrestling, either through funding or a venue to train."

Valen had previously contacted the authorities here to recognise the sport but their response was tepid. To fund his expenses for overseas competitions, he has used his tournament winnings, loans from his parents and bursary awards. He has spent at least \$5,000 thus far.

Valen said he does not view arm wrestling "as a way to earn money", but vowed to continue to do his best in his studies and his sport. "I want to show to others not to give up on their dreams or aspirations and believe that everything is possible if you believe in yourself," he said. **R**



VALEN LOW VS NIZAR YUSOF: Valen Low vs Nizar Yusof from Malaysia at the FitX Armwrestling Cup 2014, Melbourne Australia. **PHOTO COURTESY: VALEN LOW**

Food Diary's Daniel Ang dishes out

By SAMANTHA LOH

Mr Daniel Ang has been a lecturer at Republic Polytechnic for 10 years now. He also writes a food blog which was nominated for the Singapore blog awards in 2012.

1. What made you start a food blog?

I like to eat. A lot. And I like writing. So, Singapore Press Holdings (SPH) suggested I start a food blog. I thought why not. At the time, food blogging just started out.

2. What is the most memorable food review you have ever done?

There is so many! I wanted to find out about old school bakeries. So, I went around Singapore to look bakeries built before the 1960s. It's interesting to know that even if Singapore is expanding so fast, there are still these little gems around hidden corners, waiting for us.

3. Is there a food blogger that you look up to? And why do you look up to them?

Miss Tam Chiak is somebody I really admire. Because she's very resourceful and she does a lot of hawker reviews. She spends time talking to them, really making friends. This is something I admire. So, to me, food blogging is not just about writing stories or taking good pictures. She really gets to know the people behind the business.



A FOODIES DREAM: Full-time food blogger and part-time lecturer Daniel Ang has made a name for himself as he was nominated for the Singapore Blog Awards for two consecutive years in 2012 and 2013. **PHOTO COURTESY: DANIEL ANG**

4. What do you wish other people knew about the food dairy that they don't know now?

Ans: Maybe this is not so known. But I pay for most of my meals. People think all food bloggers get a lot of free meals. Yeah, I get a lot of restaurant invites but I don't actually go to any of them. Maybe 5 to 10 per cent, friends invite I will just go to show support.



5. Have you ever received unhappy complaints about the reviews that you have made?

All the time. I just received one from a noodle stall owner. She was unhappy about a negative review I wrote about her shop (a beef noodle shop). I wrote that the noodles were served lukewarm. Really, it was served cold. So I was not harsh. Sometimes, readers will say "ehh you wrote about this being very good but when I went, it was very average."

6. What advice would you give to those who wish to start a food blog, just as you had?

Don't start for the sake of money because some people will see "oh, a food blogger earns a lot of money". Some are. I won't deny that. So, don't start a food blog just because you think it is very glam. Not even for a food blog, for any other blog. Very few make good money. So, if you want to start a blog of any kind, make sure you are really passionate about it. **R**

A football reprieve for Woodlands

S.League champions Warriors FC will be calling Woodlands home this season as they prepare to play their home matches at the Woodlands Stadium.

By DEEPANRAJ GANESAN

Football in Woodlands was dealt a blow in November, last year when the professional outfit based in the area was forced to merge with another. Fans had voiced concerns about the merger of Woodlands Wellington with Hougang United, as some lamented the loss of a team which had been an integral part of the community for nearly two decades.

Now, another team is set to fill the void in Woodlands. Warriors FC, which won fans over with their exciting brand of football when the team clinched the S. League title last year, will play their home games for the upcoming season at the Woodlands Stadium. This is due to upgrading works at the Choa Chu Kang Stadium ahead of June's South-east Asian Games.

The defending champions' move to Woodlands was welcomed by Warriors head coach Alex Weaver.

He said: "I like the stadium, especially the state of the field. The field at Choa Chu Kang was not really consistent in terms of its quality. We had to change tactically, to play to the surface at home. Now, we can be more consistent in terms of tactics and that can only be good for us."

Several residents The Republican Post

spoke to were enthusiastic about the news, including 20-year-old Karthik Kahleichelvam, a Media Production and Design student at Republic Polytechnic. He felt the Warriors' move would only help to boost the image of Woodlands.

Karthik said: "I think having Warriors playing at Woodlands Stadium is great since it is so close school and going down to watch their games after school can prove to be a great retreat for me. After all, they are the champions so I am not complaining at all!"

But for 52-year-old Hussain Razzak, the news of Woodlands' merger with Hougang United and the subsequent change of tenant at the Woodlands Stadium has hit him hard. A Woodlands Wellington fan since 1997, Mr Hussain is one local football enthusiast who will not be watching the Warriors in action any time soon.

He said: "There should never be another club coming over to an already established club's home ground, especially one with a rich history like Woodlands. It's like telling an Everton fan to support Liverpool since Everton is no longer in Merseyside."

The Woodlands Stadium, which has a capacity of 4,300, has been home to Woodlands Wellington since the S.League's inception in 1996. However, the team has failed to better its second-



CHAMPIONS: The Warriors celebrate their 2014 triumph and will be hoping to have a repeat of these scenes at Woodlands this season. **PHOTO COURTESY: S. LEAGUE**

place finish in the S.League in 1996, and was second-from bottom last year.

Warriors FC's coach Weaver thinks his team can bring some excitement to the Woodlands area, even though it is not known if the team would make the move permanent. "The local community from Woodlands is important to us and I hope our brand of football will attract them to catch us in action," he said. The new S.League season kicks off in March. **R**

Celebrating new year in the heartlands

By SABRINA MUHLESSEDDIN

When one thinks of New Year countdown in Singapore, the usual that comes to mind are big-scale events at Sentosa or The Float @ Marina Bay. While they may be a stupendous way to wrap up the year, the trip home isn't exactly that friendly.

However, there is an alternative. One can still enjoy large-scale countdown parties without the worry of heavy traffic jams or beating the crowds after the party. The catch? They are all located in the heartlands!

Toh Jia Xing, 14, said she wouldn't miss it with her family. "We chose to come here every year because it is closest to home, it is less crowded and it brings my family together."

Hypesteria, held at the open field near Woodlands MRT Station, was one of the 50 Community Countdown Parties organised by the Sembawang GRC Youth Executive Communities.

Hypesteria highlighted the themes of reflect, celebrate and inspire. From exhibitions on highlighting how far Singapore has come, to interactive game booths, as well as performances from local youth bands, there were activities for everyone to enjoy.

Crowds were streaming in even before the gates were open. While some were excited to get their hands on the goodie bags consisting of a custom-made beach mat and finger lights, others were anticipating the grand finale of the fireworks display.

The night got off to a great start with residents forming up a huge SG50 logo made of table tennis balls. The logo, which was made up of 7,744 red and white table tennis balls was launched after the display of fireworks at midnight by Minister Khaw Boon Wan and grassroots advisers to promote active ageing lifestyles through the celebration of SG50. It was arguably the highlight of Hypesteria.

"The SG50 logo made of ping pong balls

is unique as it is the largest in Singapore," explained Jaclyn, 18.

The plan to set a new record was meant to mark the beginning of Singapore's Jubilee year.

At Hypesteria, young local talents were also given a chance and a platform for them to shine in their areas of interest. Residents were soaking in the performances of loyal youth bands through a picnic-style concept while waiting for the grand finale - a fireworks display to welcome 2015.

21-year-old Nadhirah Abdul Rashid said: "You can see from the faces of the people here, how genuinely happy they feel to welcome the New Year. People are wishing each other a happy New Year as soon as the clock strikes 12. You can feel the positive vibes." **R**



COLOURING UP THE NEW YEAR: The balloon booth attracted the longest queue. Everyone was eager to get their hands on the balloons which contains LED lights. **PHOTO BY: SABRINA MUHLESSEDDIN**

Largest trampoline park makes hearts jump, literally

A new air-conditioned facility promises a fun and effective workout for young and not-so-young.

By RACHEL NG

Fancy bouncing off walls with friends? Or a workout that is more effective than running?

Zoom Park Singapore, the largest indoor trampoline park here, may just be the attraction for you.

Opened in December, last year, the air-conditioned facility is located at Pandan Gardens. Occupying a space the size of four basketball courts, Zoom Park has various activity zones such as a main court, a rock wall, dodgeball courts and slam dunk lanes.

When I arrived on a Sunday, I was greeted by the sight of a snaking queue of people - mostly children - waiting to enter the park. Thankfully, I had booked tickets online for my group of friends prior to our visit and we escaped the wait.

Admission to the park costs between S\$14 and S\$17 an hour, with jump times starting every half hour. You also have to purchase a pair of socks with anti-slip soles for S\$2. The cost may be a bit more expensive when compared to other attractions here, but I reckon a novelty like Zoom Park is worth the price.

A possible starting point for visitors will be the rock wall. It poses a series of challenges, such as straight-up climbs and overhangs. A large foam pit nearby provides the assurance to climbers they could fall comfortably if the climb proves too challenging. I person-



CANNONBALL: Bouncing off walls and trampolines is not only allowed, but also encouraged at the park's popular foam pit, where your fall would most definitely be cushioned.

PHOTO BY: RACHEL NG

ally enjoyed the foam pit the most - it is so comfortable you could fall asleep while lying in it.

The two dodgeball courts are also another attraction worth visiting. They may be located at the back of the facility, but they proved to be the most popular attraction among visitors with groups waiting for up to 20 minutes to play a game. But this is no ordinary dodgeball, as players have to dodge balls while maintaining their balance on trampoline mats.

As the wait proved too long, my friends and I decided to try out other activity zones

first. However, watching others play dodgeball was enough to plan my next return to Zoom Park. The game is a great way to bond with your friends or family, and frankly it can be rather comical as you see them struggle for their balance while trying to be competitive.

There is also the main court, which is covered with wall-to-wall trampolines. Here, visitors can try their hand at attempting various stunts.

With so many activities to try out, let's just say an hour at the park was definitely not enough. But if you are looking

for an extraordinary experience with your family or friends, I think Zoom Park fits the bill. It is not too exhaustive or remotely boring - it is the exact opposite, in my opinion.

Those behind the park cite several benefits of jumping on a trampoline. For instance, a NASA study found that jumping on a trampoline for 10 minutes is equivalent to a 30-minute run. An hour on the trampolines can burn up to 1,000 calories, according to Zoom Park.

For those looking to party, the disco experience is recreated on trampolines every Friday and Saturday night. The lights will be dimmed and the latest hit songs will be played as jumpers light up the arena with their glow sticks and glow in the dark socks. **R**

ZOOM PARK SINGAPORE

PlayLor! Arena
200 Pandan Gardens
#01-14
Singapore 609336.
Website:
<http://www.zoomparkasia.com/>
Telephone Number: 6334-4615

Not too Taken by this blockbuster

By VELDA LIM

"I will look for you, I will find you, and I will kill you."

Sound familiar? While fans of action movies know this line from the Taken trilogy, people who spend way too much time on the Internet see this as the perfect response to anyone who has crossed them.

The Taken film series revolves around Bryan Mills, a former member of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), who sets out to track and kill a group of bad guys who have taken his precious family members. For no reason. Or maybe there is a deeper reason, but does it really matter? We all just want to watch this to see the old man kick butt. And, just to be clear - one family member is taken for each movie.

The third instalment of the series, Taken 3, was released in cinemas on January 9, 2015. The fun starts

when our tough old guy flips out at finding his dead ex-wife, Lenore (played by Famke Janssen) dead in his bedroom. It doesn't help that the police caught wind of this and busted into his house, either.

What does he do? He runs before he gets taken, too.

Despite grossing over S\$14 million during the first weekend of its release, I wasn't as taken with the movie as many others were. The story was standard fare: a typical cat and mouse game. Even if they did try at pulling a plot twist at the end, it just didn't work out. Though there was good pacing, the story line was let down by being predictable.

For starters, the elaborate cut-scenes of detective Franck playing with his chess piece throughout the entire movie had little point and the random underwear-clad Russian boss Bryan was just down-

right weird.

Final verdict: this is really for Liam Neeson fans (since he has publicly said he will not do anymore in the franchise) or those who want to see how the Taken series finally ends. **R**



PHOTO COURTESY: WORLD OF ENTERTAINMENT.INFO



Insta-fame for RP student

With over 300 million users, Instagram is one of the fastest growing social media platforms popular amongst youth. While most people upload selfies and pictures of their meals on their account, there are a group of Instagram superstars who are followed by thousands every day. We speak to two RP students who are insta-stars.

By KANE RAYNARD GOH



Ameerul Hakim | @ameerulhakim

Follow

At first glance, you wouldn't expect this slightly medium-built young man to have more than 12,900 (and counting) followers on Instagram. Even if you are a follower, you probably wouldn't recognise if you saw him on

the street because all pictures on his account barely have a full view of him.

Instead, 18-year-old Ameerul Hakim's Instagram feed is like a checkerboard - filled with minimalistic black and white pictures of people around him with a quirky twist.

"I get very amused when I look at photos from brands like American Apparel and Louis Vuitton as well as magazines such as Cereal and Kinfolk. I try to re-create those ad campaigns that I am inspired by, and one led to another which sparked my need to make my photos nicer," said the second-year Diploma in Aerospace Avionics student who first started using Instagram four years ago.

Ameerul has since become very serious about his pictures so much so that he created a dummy account to curate his pictures before posting it onto his real account. Even though he is good at his pictures, Ameerul admits it takes him about two hours to come up with the right caption for his pictures. This means he is constantly on his phone and it has become a big part of his life.

Ameerul recalled an experience where he dropped his iPhone 5 into the Kallang River. "I was posting almost three times a day back then and after the incident happened, I went on with life without having any means to connect with the world outside for a week, and it was quite a painful week," he said. But through that experience, Ameerul has learned that art cannot be rushed as he cuts down on pictures he post up each day.

All the hard work and effort that Ameerul puts in has paid off as he has since gained local and international attention. His work was featured in the MAD About Singapore exhibition at ION Orchard and he is one of Instagram's suggested users - a title given by Instagram to deserving Instagram users who consistently shares great pictures.

Although having never been paid for his work, he sees a bright future for his work as he finds a need to be creative and to work in companies like Kinfolk and Cereal magazine. Ideally though, he could get paid for his passion.

"I know of this person who has dropped out of school after being offered a job to photograph overseas for a lifestyle company," Ameerul shared with us about Instagrammers making their mark and landing job opportunities abroad.

Despite all the attention he receives, Ameerul doesn't like to really talk about fame.

When asked why he has such a discreet anonymous identity on his Instagram, he said: "I am an introvert. I don't always want to be in the limelight because it tends to be overwhelming. The only thing that I want to be in the limelight is my work - not me."

His followers have nothing but praises for him as he often receives comments on each picture he posted, complimenting his work.

"I find Ameerul's Instagram feed really cool and impressive. Sometimes I wonder how much effort he takes to produce his pictures because even though his pictures doesn't have much context, it somehow tells a story - which I guess is a hard thing to do," said Afiq Naquiddin, 18, a follower of Ameerul's Instagram account. **R**

PHOTO BY: AMEERUL HAKIM

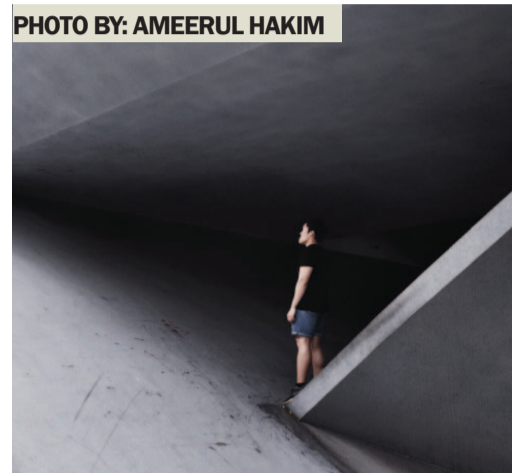


PHOTO BY: AMEERUL HAKIM



PHOTO BY: ALEX WONG

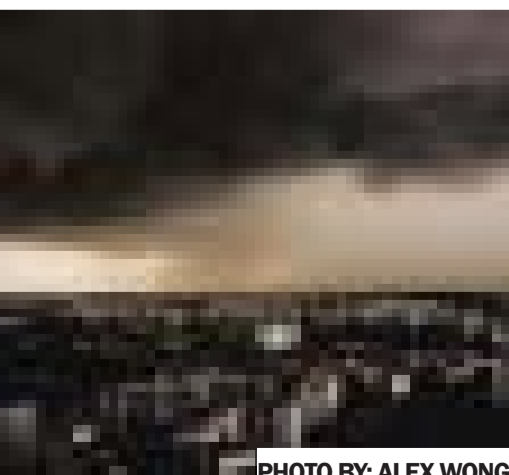


PHOTO BY: ALEX WONG



Alex Wong | @killerfvith

Follow

"Death, where is your sting?" That is the first line you would read on his profile when you enter 18-year-old Alex Wong's Instagram account. He shows the daredevil side of him through his pictures as he explores roof tops, dangles off the edge of a 30-storey building and stands close to a busy road full of oncoming traffic.

Why does he do these stunts?

"My Instagram feed is a reflection of who I am and is influenced by street photography. At 16, I started to take photography more seriously instead of just taking selfies and pictures of food because I hope to use my photos to inspire or encourage someone and tell stories of faith and love".

The first-year Diploma in Interactive and Digital Media student aspires to be a photographer in the future and uses Instagram as a platform to practise his skills and showcase the fruits of his labour.

His work has caught the attention of many as he was featured on Visual Supply Company (VSCO), an American-based art and technology company popular amongst people worldwide and has a specially curated gallery of exceptional pictures known as the VSCO Grid.

Despite not getting paid, Alex is delighted and feels honoured upon receiving the e-mail from VSCO that his works is selected to be showcased on such a prominent platform.

But Alex isn't just getting attention; he is also making new friends along the way.

"Instagram connects people with the same interest and passion together. Being able to connect with so many people through this tiny application on the phone is really something for me and has definitely changed my life in a way as I use it to interact with others," he explained.

Through Instagram, Alex has met many new people and is now part of a 16-men squad called Ghostbusters. They all met through the application about two months ago and meet regularly about twice a week to hang out and go for shoots together.

With more locals fostering new friendships through Instagram, Singapore's Instagram community account, InstaSG, organizes monthly gathering, known as an InstaMeet, for local Instagrammers to come together to bond and exchange knowledge for their common interest in photography and Instagramming.

As to why more people are taking Instagram more seriously, Alex shared with us his thoughts.

"I think people don't only want to present themselves nicely in reality, but in the virtual world as well. I guess there's a sense of pride in what they post online on their accounts, so they would naturally want to take nicer pictures too," he said. **R**

Written off before, but back with a BANG



SHL student Muhelmy Suhaimi wins an award and gets a chance to train overseas

By KUMARAVEL TAMIL SELVOM

When he was in Secondary 1, Republic Polytechnic student Muhelmy Suhaimi was told by everyone - including his coach - he was not good enough for the school's football team. He also suffered a back injury, causing him to miss training for six months.

But Muhelmy never gave up, as he took the criticism and setbacks in his stride. "I try to stay positive no matter what people say and always keep working hard," said the Sports and Leisure management student.

Muhelmy's hard work paid off in Dec last year (2014) when he edged out five other nominees to win The New Paper Dollah Kassim Award. The national Under-18 midfielder also bagged the Singapore Pools Passport to Excellence prize, which includes a training stint at an elite football club overseas.

Muhelmy broke down and sank to his knees when the announcement was made at Jurongville Secondary School. "Winning the Dollah Kassim Award is every young football player's dream," Muhelmy said.

"It means a lot to me. After



GOING FOR GLORY: The sky is the limit for Muhelmy as he sets his sight on representing Singapore one day. **PHOTO BY: HASIF HASNY**

18 years, I finally got the recognition of my hard work and I felt relieved."

Muhelmy was introduced to football at the age of five by his older brother, Muhaimin, now a striker with the national under-23 team. Football then became a big part in the brothers' lives as they pushed each other to do better in almost everything on and off the field.

Muhelmy credits his mother, Sarina

Durimi, as his pillar of strength. Muhelmy's parents are divorced, and Sarina raised the boys to understand the value of determination and perseverance.

"She had sacrificed a lot so that both my brother and I would be brought up well," said Muhelmy.

"There was once my brother and I had no money to buy football boots for a trial, so my mom worked extra overtime just to

buy us boots."

Launched in 2010, the Dollah Kassim Award recognises football excellence and character. Some of the previous recipients include Courts Young Lions midfielder Adam Swandi, who spent two weeks at the youth academy of English Premier League club Newcastle United.

Although he does not know which overseas club he would be training with, Muhelmy welcomes the opportunity and hopes to do his best. The School of Sports, Health and Leisure student says he will tackle the books first, before he takes to the field to train in the evenings.

"I would be quite tired by the end of a school day but I will manage all my work, like RJs, before training so that I could put all my concentration on training," said Muhelmy. "No matter what you do you need to give a hundred percent for everything and the result will reflect the effort."

Spurred on by the award, Muhelmy has his sights set on representing the country's senior team. "It is my wish to represent Singapore one day - a dream I had since young and I will work hard towards it," he said. **R**

Footballer by day, netballer by night

By M.SHANJAYAN

You may spot a familiar face if you catch Singapore's netball team and the Republic Polytechnic women's football team in action. Aqilah Andin, who stands at 1.75 metres tall, is the key cog for both teams.

The 18-year-old was part of the national squad which was crowned Asian netball champions in Sept last year. The team also finished runners-up at the Nations Cup held in Singapore in December.

Off the hard court, Aqilah had also achieved success on the field. Last November, she was part of the RP team that clinched their third consecutive POL-ITE title.

Aqilah, who is pursuing a Diploma in Sports Leisure and Management, said she was always interested in sports since she was a child.

"When I was young, my father influenced my brother and I to play different sports, and it has stuck ever since," she said.

Aqilah's talent and passion for sports caught the eye of her primary school teacher, who urged her to try for a place at the Singapore Sports School. Aqilah eventually impressed selectors and earned a place in the school.

"I guess my height played a part," she said. "In my first year, I had no skills but be-

cause we trained every single day, I managed to improve."

It wasn't long before selectors from the national team came knocking on the doors. In 2012, when she was just 16, she was called up by the national team, making her the youngest netballer to represent Singapore.

"It was quite shocking and scary because I was very young when I got selected," said Aqilah. "Everyone around me doubted as to why I was selected when there were better people than me."

But the defender has repaid the faith shown in her, and she has since represented the country 25 times.

As for football, Aqilah picked up the game through kick-about with friends and neighbours at the void deck.

Last year, she participated in the trials for the RP team as a goalkeeper, but her coach later converted Aqilah to a striker. Aqilah went on to repay her coach's faith when she scored three goals in the POL-ITE games, even though she acknowledged she is more comfortable with the rules of netball than football.

Aqilah brought up a recent example of how she had ran on to a delightful pass, but had forgotten about the offside rule in football. "I sprinted my life away for the ball but it was ruled offside," she said. "My coach screamed, 'Watch out for your offside', so angrily that I got really

scared."

Asked about how she strikes a balance between sports and studies, Aqilah credits her school mates for their help.

"I have great friends who help me catch up on the modules I missed," she said. "I will also read through the lessons I did not attend as to prepare myself for the understanding tests." **R**



BUSY BEE: Aqilah is either defending the lines for the national netball team or scoring goals for the school football team. **PHOTO BY: NUR HIDAYAH ROSLAN**