

Nexus News in Focus

Issue 3/2020



A round-up of events with possible lessons and implications for Singapore

1. Applying a Circuit Breaker to Tackle COVID-19

On 3 Apr, strict “circuit breaker” measures were announced by Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong and the Multi-Ministry Taskforce (MTF) to pre-empt the trend of increasing local transmission of COVID-19. The elevated set of measures was necessary because despite best efforts, there had been more than 50 new cases daily and an increasing number of locally transmitted cases. Also, several clusters in foreign worker dormitories and a nursing home have emerged.

Stay Home, Stay Safe



The measures, which will be in place from 7 Apr to 4 May, include:

- Closing most workplaces premises, except essential services or key economic sectors which are critical for local and global supply chains.
- Full home-based learning for schools and Institutes of Higher Learning.
- Closing recreation venues, attractions and places of worship.
- Barring social gatherings.

MOH also issued a news release on 3 Apr, asking all Singaporeans to minimise movements and interactions in public and private places, and stay home in order to effectively slow the spread of infection. If people must go out to purchase daily necessities, essential services, or for urgent medical needs, safe distancing should be practised.

“Each and every one of us can, and must do our part, to keep everyone in Singapore safe from COVID-19.” -

– PM Lee Hsien Loong on 3 Apr

[Sources: CNA, MOH & PMO, 3 Apr; ST, 10 Apr]

Useful Resources

Information

- **Updates on COVID-19 Local Situation** (moh.gov.sg/covid-19): For the latest updates and advisories.
- **COVID-19 Situation Dashboard** (go.gov.sg/covid-19-dashboard): For a consolidated and official view of the Singapore COVID-19 situation.
- **Gov.sg WhatsApp** (go.gov.sg/whatsapp) & **Telegram** (t.me/govsg): For the latest information about COVID-19, correction of fake news, and important government updates on Telegram.

Healthcare-related

- **Singapore COVID-19 Symptom Checker** (sgcovidcheck.gov.sg): To help decide on what your next steps should be, based on symptoms experienced.
- **Flu Go Where** (phpc.gov.sg): To find a Public Health Preparedness Clinic (PHPC) and polyclinics near you.

****Safe distancing and contact tracing ****

- **TraceTogether** (tracetogogether.gov.sg): A community-driven contact tracing mobile application.
- **Space Out** (spaceout.gov.sg): To check how crowded shopping centres are.
- **Safe Distance @ Parks** (safedistparks.nparks.gov.sg): To check how crowded parks near you are.

Not sure what to do for the #stayhomeforSG Challenge? Try taking on the **Total Defence 14-Day Challenge** (see infographic below and visit We Are Total Defence on [Facebook](#) or [Instagram](#)).





2. Building Resilience and Emerging Stronger



While COVID-19 has severely diminished global production capacities and disrupted global supply chains, in an oral reply in Parliament on 6 Apr, Minister for Trade and Industry Chan Chun Sing shared Singapore’s multi-pronged strategy to deal with the disruption:

- **Stockpiling, import diversification, and local production** to ensure its food supply.
- **Working with like-minded partners.** Trading lines with countries like China and South Korea remain open, and a recent agreement with six countries like Australia, Brunei and Canada ensures supply chain connectivity for goods and essential supplies.

Deputy Prime Minister Heng Swee Keat in Parliament also said on 7 Apr that economic shocks and border closures caused by COVID-19 and the stringent measures put in place will have a big impact on Singapore’s economy.

“The question we should ask ourselves even now is when (the recovery) comes what sort of world it will be, and how ready Singapore will be to march forward again.” - – DPM Heng Swee Keat in Parliament on 7 Apr

He added that Singapore’s best response now is to build resilience in our economy and society. Key measures to do that are:

- **Two additional support packages** were announced – the S\$48.4 billion Resilience Budget and S\$5.1 billion Solidarity Budget. These will help viable businesses preserve their capabilities to recover and affected workers to make the best use of this downtime.
- **A new Emerging Stronger Task Force** focusing on economic resilience will be set up. Chaired by Minister for Social and Family Development Desmond Lee and PSA International group chief executive Tan Chong Meng, the task force will look for ways that can help Singapore’s economy bounce back from the COVID-19 crisis and be ready to ride the wave of demand when it happens.

[Sources: CNA, 25 Mar; ST, 2 Apr; CNA & TODAY, 6 Apr; CNA, 7 Apr; CNA & ST, 8 Apr]

3. Unity in Adversity

In this period, there have been many instances of businesses, communities, and individuals coming together contribute to the national effort to curb the spread of COVID-19 or to look out for one another.

Here are some examples:

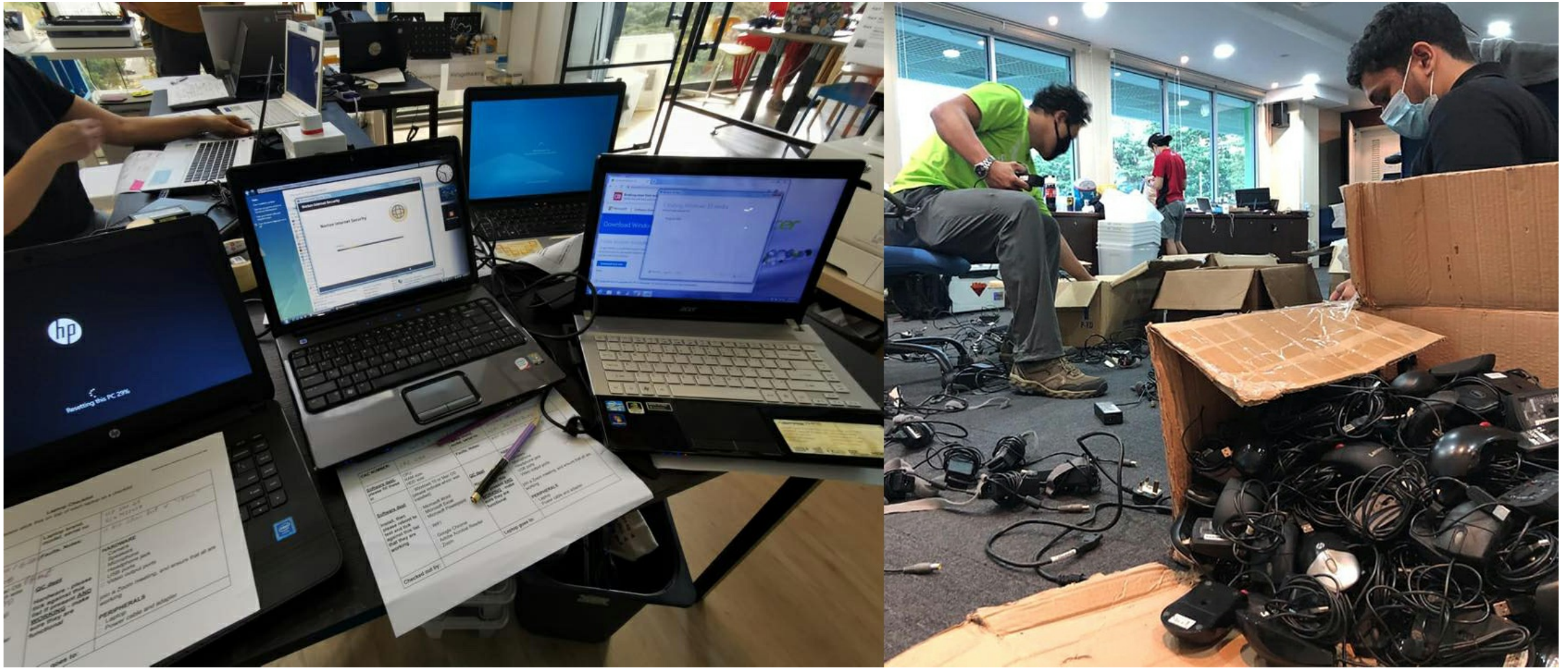
1. GoodHood.SG



In early February, tech entrepreneur Nigel Teo started a website (heroes.goodhood.sg/heroes) where people could **submit positive stories and messages of gratitude** for unsung heroes. On 22 Mar, he and three others also launched a mobile application [GoodHood.SG](https://goodhood.sg) in hopes of building “kampung spirit” and neighbourliness. The application connects people, enabling registered and verified neighbours to share items and services, either by selling or donating them.

[Sources: TODAY, 11 Mar; ST, 5 Apr]

2. Engineering Good



Non-profit organisation [Engineering Good](#) is **refurbishing laptops donated from Singaporeans and delivering them to students from low-income families. **

By 10 Apr, it has had more than 190 laptops donated, and over 100 requests from individuals and families wishing to receive them.

[Sources: TODAY, 10 Apr]

3. Razer



Gaming company [Razer](#) has **donated masks** to the National Council of Social Service (NCSS) and Bizlink, a non-profit organisation that provides employment services for people with disabilities.

Razer had also announced on 1 Apr plans to set up an **automated face mask manufacturing line in Singapore** within 30 days. It had initially converted existing product manufacturing lines in China to supply masks.

[Source: FB/Bizlink Centre, 30 Mar; CNA, 1 Apr; FB/Desmond Lee, 2 Apr]

4. Meiko Tailor



Local bespoke tailor [Meiko Tailor](#) has switched to **making masks from fabric**. Volunteers under People's Association new movement, The Masks Sewn With Love Project, are also targeting to make 50,000 reusable masks. The masks will be given to people who need them.

[Sources: ST, 5 Apr; TNP, 6 Apr; CNA & ST, 8 Apr]

MINDEF/SAF Support for COVID-19 Efforts

While the SAF has put in place additional measures to maintain operational readiness amidst the COVID-19 outbreak, here are some ways MINDEF/SAF has also been supporting the national COVID-19 efforts:

- Installed and manned **temperature screening stations at the airport.**
- More than 1,300 people from the SAF, MINDEF, and DSTA have been supporting MOH and ICA in **health monitoring**



and contact tracing.

- On 30 and 31 Jan, 1,500 SAF personnel worked around the clock to **pack 5.2 million masks** into packets of four for distribution to Singapore households. Then, on short notice, more than 150 soldiers were activated to **collect and deliver more than 5 million reusable masks** to 89 community centres and clubs from 3 to 5 Apr.



- The SAF Army Medical Services (AMS) is supporting the Ministry of Manpower and Ministry of Health in **providing basic health screening and consultation services to foreign workers** at Westlite Toh Guan Dormitory and S11 Dormitory @ Punggol. These are dormitories gazetted as isolated areas after emerging as major COVID-19 clusters.



- Parts of Bedok Camp II and Jurong Camp II which were unused and not required for any operational activities have been released to temporarily **house about 1,300 foreign workers** at Ministry of National Development’s request. They will move in progressively from 10 Apr.



[Sources: CNA & MINDEF, 31 Jan; ST, 3 Apr; MINDEF & ST, 7 Apr; PIONEER, 9 Apr]

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[If you have any feedback or suggestions, write in to us at nexus@defence.gov.sg.]