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no change in S&CC charges

There will be no increase in the service and conservancy charges (S&CC) this year for residents and commercial units managed by the 14 Town Councils run by the People's Action Party (PAP).

In a statement yesterday, the PAP said the decision would lessen residents' financial burden due to the rising cost of living. The last revision of S&CC rates was in September 2004.

"The 14 PAP Town Councils will continue to exercise prudence in their financial management, and explore cost-effective ways in providing quality maintenance services for our residents," they said.

wage premiums for ite grads who upgrade: Survey

Some 53 per cent of Institute of Technical Education (ITE) graduates sought higher qualifications within five to 10 years of completing their ITE courses, with almost two-thirds of them attaining diploma qualifications, according to a survey.

Those who upgraded their qualifications and skills enjoyed improved wages and career prospects. National ITE Certificate (Nitec) and Higher Nitec upgraders enjoyed wage premiums of 11.6 per cent and 12.8 per cent, respectively, from upgrading, relative to their peers who did not. The survey by the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Manpower polled 9,340 former students who had graduated between 1997 and 2001.

s'pore third in managing environmental challenges

Singapore has been ranked as one of the top three cities in managing environmental challenges such as air pollution, infectious disease and the potential impact of natural disasters, according to a report by MasterCard.

Among 21 key centres of commerce, Melbourne took first place and Johannesburg second.

Singapore's placing is partly a result of the Government's action to manage the quality of water, air and waste removal systems. Another contributing factor was the low risk of unpredictable environmental events such as earthquakes.

But Singapore could be susceptible to effects of climatic change, such as permanent flooding due to a rise in sea-level.

a 'day off' campaign for domestic maids: unifem

Less than half of Singapore's 150,000 domestic maids get a day off from work, according to the Singapore chapter of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (Unifem Singapore).

To raise awareness of their plight, Unifem Singapore is working with local non-government organisations on a "day off" campaign, scheduled for March 1 with a series of MRT Poster Ads along the North-East Line. One of the main aims is to build support for a change in legislation, giving maids one rest day a week.