

**UNIVERSITY**  
***ACADEMIC ASSIGNMENT***

NEWSROOM PRACTICE AND THEORY  
ASSIGNMENT: REPORTING AND WRITING

*Topic:*

*Write and report two current significant news stories  
in your local context*

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**Date:** 24 June 2003

Edmond Ng

terrorthreat1

21 June 2003

### **High risk of terrorists' attack in Singapore**

Singapore is at high risk of terrorists' attack, an army officer said yesterday.

The army officer, who wishes to be known only as Lim, said during an interview, that the threat of terrorists' attack in Singapore is not only highly possible, but also certain, if the national security authorities are unable to pinpoint the exact planned activities of the terrorists in this region. Lim said this is evident from the recent arrests of Singaporeans in Malaysia and Thailand for involvement in terrorism activities.

The latest arrest involving a Singaporean fugitive, Arifin bin Ali alias John Wong Ah Hung, 42, was apprehended in Bangkok on May 16. Arifin is a senior member of the Singapore Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) organisation, who along with other members, were tasked by the Singapore JI leader, Mas Selamat, to hijack a plane from Bangkok to crash into Changi Airport, said the Ministry of Home Affairs. The plan was aborted when it was exposed, following an alert initiated by the Singapore authorities.

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“If the attack had succeeded, it would have been the first suicide attack in South-east Asia done by locals in the region” said Dr Rohan Gunaratna, a terrorism expert from the Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies.

Gunaratna said the arrests highlighted the fact that Singapore could not afford to lower its guard despite having disrupted JI operations here.

During a briefing on homeland security on May 23, Deputy Prime Minister, Dr Tony Tan warned that Singapore’s continued support for the United States-led war against terrorism places it “very high” on Al-Qaeda’s target list.

“We must assume that the Al-Qaeda and its regional associates, the Jemaah Islamiah group, will relentlessly continue to seek out any opportunity that presents itself to mount an attack in Singapore interests. This threat is not to be taken lightly” he said.

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Edmond Ng

matureage1

23 June 03

### **Mature-age job seekers face discrimination**

Employers are age biased when hiring new workers, according to a survey conducted in Singapore.

The survey by a Monash University off-campus student last month on 50 people, including employers, recruitment consultants, and mature job seekers, revealed that the unemployed over 40s face age discrimination when seeking jobs.

According to recruitment consultant Jacqueline Goh, companies normally specify the age requirements for short-listing candidates. Goh said that if any résumés received from job seekers does not state the age, the agency will either follow-up with the applicant to verify the information, or dispose the application from its short-listing.

A former information technology consultant, Roy Ng, 41, said although employers are careful not to use the word “age” in their advertisements, most still indicate their preference for “young and energetic” or for “candidates between 20s and early 30s”, even when the job is administrative or does not require any physical ability.

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Ng said that while the government encourages people to upgrade themselves through higher education or skills training to gain employability, chances for mature-age getting employed are slim. He said despite attending many training courses, he does not get interviews for the same jobs applied by his younger course mates.

An employer of a shipping company said he would “rather train and employ a young school leaver than a slow, over 40 unemployed supervisor” because the mature-age is “burnt out, not agile, and tend to have accidents at the work place”.

In a recent review on the labour force, an unemployment rate of 5.5 per cent is forecasted at the end of this year. Report on the labour force 2002 indicates that the unemployed who are over 40s make up 50 192 people. This constitutes 2 per cent of the 4.4 per cent unemployment rate last year.

ends

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