

Total Defence Crucial for Singapore to Weather and Overcome Difficult Challenges



"Total Defence is our anchor that will keep Singapore safely moored when the going gets rough. This is the decade or two decades of gross uncertainty and all the factors are colluding against peace and stability and we will be lucky if there is continuous growth still. We must tend to all pillars, ensure that each is sound. That way, our solidarity is ensured, and our chances of survival in an increasingly troubled World assured."

- Defence Minister Dr Ng Eng Hen at the Total Defence Awards (TDA) Ceremony 2022 on 10 Nov 2022

Total Defence Awards (TDA)

- Established in 1986, the TDA is the highest accolade that recognises a wide array of stakeholders' support for National Service (NS). These include educational institutions, community support organisations and individuals.
- In 2016, the NS Mark Accreditation Scheme was introduced to acknowledge a broader base of employers, businesses and organisations that pledge and act on their support and advocacy efforts in strengthening the defence of our nation.

Supporting spouses who are NSmen in all possible ways



Mrs Haseena Seah signed up with the SAF Volunteer Corp (SAFVC) as a security trooper in 2018 to better understand her husband, Captain (CPT) (NS) Nicholas Seah's role in NS and TD.

“NS is a duty of every Singaporean man and the least we can do as their family members is to extend our full support to them whenever we can, in whatever ways we can.”

- Mrs Haseena Seah, Award Recipient of the NS Advocate Award (Individual)

Appreciating support from family strengthens family ties.



NS training can be supported by workplace policies, such as:

1. Recognising the value of NS experience
2. Taking care of NSmen physically and mentally
3. Supporting NS through NSman employees' spouses
4. Building camaraderie with fellow NSmen
5. Open communication between NSman employees and employers



Company support raises morale of NSman employees

2. Importance of Cyber Defence in an Increasingly Connected Digital World

At the Singapore International Cyber Week (SICW) which took place on 18 to 20 October 2022, Senior Minister and Coordinating Minister for National Security Mr Teo Chee Hean spoke about the importance for countries to develop comprehensive strategies to protect themselves from threats across all domains.



- In the past year, Singapore endured a surging number of cyber-crimes, phishing campaigns, and ransomware and malware attacks that impacted small and large businesses alike.
- Cyber actors continue to grow in their sophistication, scope, and maliciousness – targeting governments, private companies, and individuals.

Taking charge of one's personal cyber hygiene

- Keeping passwords safe and secure
- Using multi-factor authentication
- Backing up data regularly
- Keeping apps, software, and firmware up to date
- Backing up data to a secondary source
- Using network firewalls
- Ensuring high-quality antivirus protection

Domestically, we need to strengthen our Total Defence by protecting:

1. Our Physical Digital Information Structure
e.g. hardware and systems operated by our telcos, internet service providers, the physical cables and other digital connections.
2. Our Soft National Infrastructure
e.g. Singpass, PayNOW.
3. Our Critical Information Infrastructure
e.g. digital systems that are critical to our essential services.
4. All organisations
5. Individuals

- Everybody has a responsibility to adopt good cybersecurity practices and protect the systems and devices that we use.
- Individuals, businesses, and countries need to work together, so that we can strengthen our collective defence and protect our cyberspace and digital systems more comprehensively.

3. Adapting to Changing Security Threats

On 28 Oct 2022, the SAF officially established its fourth service – the Digital and Intelligence Service (DIS).



“ Just as the SAF defends Singapore in the air, land, and sea, the fourth service will provide us the capabilities to defend ourselves against attacks in the digital domain. ”

- President Halimah, at the inauguration ceremony of the DIS

Introducing the DIS



- Defending the digital domain: The DIS was set up to integrate the SAF's capabilities in dealing with a wide spectrum of external threats, including those in the digital domain.
- The DIS will be made up of four main units, called commands. These are in the areas of: (1) intelligence; (2) C4 (command, control, communications, and computers) and cyber; (3) electronic protection and psychological defence; and (4) training.
- Evolving threat landscape in the digital domain: Digital attacks by state and non-state actors can result in the disruption of essential services and local elections, as well as theft of data.

Sources: MINDEF, 28 Oct; CNA, 28 Oct

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