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Muslims gather for Hari Raya Haji prayers

More than 1,000 Muslims gathered at the Abdul Razak Mosque yesterday morning, with many doing their Hari Raya Haji prayers on the road, along Jalan Ismail, off Jalan Eunos. To ensure that the mosque's volunteers could also join in the prayers, volunteers from Shinyo-en, a nearby Buddhist organisation, helped to facilitate a partial roadblock, diverting traffic outside the mosque.
ST PHOTO: NG SOR LUAN



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Instability in HK a problem for everyone: Shanmugam

Instability in Hong Kong is a problem for everyone, including Singapore, said Law and Home Affairs Minister K. Shanmugam. He added that Singapore does not have the ability to weather a similar crisis. Unlike Hong Kong, which has "the huge advantage of China's support", Singapore has no one to support it, he said. He added that compromise and a clear approach that deals with political and socio-economic problems will be needed for the situation in Hong Kong to be resolved. Mr Shanmugam made the remarks in an interview last week with Hong Kong newspaper South China Morning Post and Chinese-language daily Lianhe Zaobao.

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Investors preparing for political uncertainty in Malaysia

Malaysia's investors are preparing themselves for political uncertainty after recent speculation on whether Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad will step down for his designated successor Anwar Ibrahim before the next election, which is due to be held in 2023. Observers said most investors have already factored in the risk of Tun Dr Mahathir not handing over the reins to Datuk Seri Anwar, defying what was agreed by their Pakatan Harapan coalition. Capital flight is also unlikely to ensue if there is a leadership battle, as investors are pouring money into companies considered less likely to be affected by changing politics.

SEE WORLD A8

SUSS law school takes in more poly grads

29 such students in this year's intake of 68; selection focuses on applicants' backgrounds

Amelia Teng
Education Correspondent

Singapore's first two law schools have been opening their doors to more than just top junior college students recently. However, the country's newest and third law school has been welcoming a diverse range of students ever since it was set up in 2016. The law school at Singapore University of Social Sciences (SUSS) has gradually expanded its intake ev-

ery year, while at the same time taking in an increasing number of polytechnic graduates. This year, it admitted 29 applicants from polytechnics, out of an intake of 68 across the undergraduate course and Juris Doctor programme, which is for students who already have degrees. Last year it had 21 polytechnic graduates out of a batch of 63, and in 2017 there were 19 poly graduates out of a pioneer intake of 61. The other applicants were degree holders, and International Baccalaureate and A-level holders.


The SUSS law school - where the average age of students is the late 30s - was set up to address a shortage of lawyers in criminal and family law. It will grow its intake to 75 students for next year's cohort. The school's students are generally a more diverse bunch than those at the other universities, and include working adults like counsellors, paralegals, police and prison officers, and social workers. The school's vice-dean Darren Koh said: "Here we have an entire law school that bucks the trend. Our profile of students is not the traditional type of students who join law schools in Singapore. "Criminal and family law are areas (where) fewer people practise but

and be more aware of issues in life." Prof Koh, who is head of taxation and law programmes, said the school has turned applicants away if it deemed them unprepared for the demands of law school. It gets about 200 applications a year. "We tell them to go work for a few years and if they think they still want to practise law, come back again." This is also to address the attrition rate among young lawyers in the profession, many of whom entered the industry because it was "the most natural thing to do after getting distinctions", he added. Students need a grade point average of at least 3.5 upon graduation to qualify as professional lawyers, just like law graduates from the Na-

tional University of Singapore and Singapore Management University. "People are expecting SUSS law graduates to be a different breed... (We) need lawyers who can do a good job and stay in the field," he said. ateng@sph.com.sg

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Third-year law student Diyana Atan worked as an optometrist before entering the Singapore University of Social Sciences law school. ST PHOTO: GIN TAY

Poly graduate pursues interest in law at SUSS

Amelia Teng
Education Correspondent

Ms Diyana Atan worked for about a year as an optometrist before she found out about the new law school opening at the Singapore University of Social Sciences (SUSS).

The Ngee Ann Polytechnic optometry graduate said she had always wanted to pursue law, despite her parents' preference for her and her siblings to go into science-related disciplines.

She had taken the junior college path but left after a year because she found it to be too much of a "pressure-cooker" environment. Ms Diyana then went into optometry – her mother's choice for her – after which she worked for a while, but the idea of studying law was always at the back of her mind.

She said she had considered applying for the law schools at the National University of Singapore or Singapore Management University, but was won over by SUSS. "After talking about it with my close friends and family, I came to the decision that SUSS was better overall because, in the event of an emergency, I could always work."

"SUSS just offers me better flexibility and, in the end, we are all taking the same Bar exams. There's no difference in the quality of students," said Ms Diyana, 24, a third-year law student.

She is among a growing number of polytechnic graduates entering the SUSS law school. This year, it admitted 29 applicants from polytechnics, out of an intake of 68 across the undergraduate course and Juris Doctor programme, which is for students who already have degrees.

Ms Diyana had continued working while taking night classes for a year at the university before deciding to leave her job and study full time. Her course fees are fully sponsored by Mendaki.

She said her interest in the legal profession started in primary school – she liked reading thrillers and detective novels by the likes of John Grisham, Dan Brown and Agatha Christie.

Ms Diyana, whose father is a businessman and mother a housewife, said she hopes to help people in need as a lawyer. She is interested in both criminal and family law, helps out at legal clinics and has completed a pro bono stint at the Syariah Court.

She said: "When people come to see us, they are in an emotional state. I try to give them some guidance and show them some light."