

PCF to open 2 eldercare centres in Jurong, boost services in Simei

Move to meet rising demand for senior care services amid a fast-ageing population

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The PAP Community Foundation (PCF), better known for being the largest pre-school operator in Singapore, will open two new eldercare facilities in Jurong and add to its capacity in Simei, to meet the rising demand for senior care services in an ageing population.

The expansion into Jurong by the third quarter of 2025 will see the PCF open an active ageing centre in Jurong West, within the boundaries of the West Coast GRC, and a senior care centre in Jurong East, within the Yuhua single-member constituency, said Mr Andy Seet, senior director of PCF's senior care division, on the sidelines of the PCF Family Day 2024 on Oct 6.

Active ageing centres serve as drop-in recreational centres aimed at promoting active engagement, social interaction and community involvement, and the facility in Jurong West will cater to about 3,000 to 4,000 senior citizens.

Senior care centres focus on delivering physical or medical care support to frail seniors at more convenient locations, and the one in Jurong East will serve up to 100 seniors in need of daycare or rehabilitation services.

In Simei, the PCF will set up another senior care centre in 2025 next to its current one at Block 120 Simei Street 1, which is located in East Coast GRC, said Mr Seet.

Demand at the existing centre has been consistently high, and there are sometimes up to 15 people on the waiting list for one of the 55 slots for dementia and maintenance daycare services and 30

slots for active rehabilitation services, Mr Seet added.

Prime Minister and Finance Minister Lawrence Wong, speaking at the event held at Downtown East, reiterated the Government's commitment to creating a more family-friendly environment in Singapore.

One aspect of this is to provide better care for seniors, he added, noting that with a rapidly ageing population and longer life expectancy, more people will end up in the sandwiched group having to look after their elderly parents and young children at the same time.

The Government's National Population and Talent Division has projected that around one in four Singaporeans will be aged 65 or above by 2030, up from one in 10 in 2010.

PM Wong said it is critical not to just have a long life, but also to keep healthy and to age well.

To this end, the Government has rolled out nationwide programmes such as Healthier SG and Age Well SG to help people stay active and keep healthy as they grow old, he added.

But government policies alone are not enough, and that is where the work of charities and non-profit organisations, such as the PCF, can play a critical role, he said.

PM Wong, who is also deputy secretary-general of the People's Action Party (PAP), said this was the motivation behind the PCF stepping up to meet Singaporeans' needs in the eldercare space.

He added that PCF, the charitable arm of the PAP, plans to open more eldercare centres in the future. It now runs nine senior care centres and four active ageing centres under its eldercare arm, PCF



Prime Minister Lawrence Wong with (from left) Senior Minister of State Low Yen Ling (in orange jacket), Minister for Digital Development and Information Josephine Teo and Minister of State Sun Xueling at the PCF Family Day 2024 at NTUC Club @ Downtown East on Oct 6. ST PHOTOS: LIM YAOHUI



Ms Lee Jing Yi, an assistant manager at Mandai Wildlife Group, sharing with five-year-old pupil Kaelyn Chong facts about the oriental pied hornbill at the PCF Family Day. With them are Kaelyn's parents, Mr Terence Chong and Ms Jocelyn Liew.

Sparkle Care.

"When I started out in life, I had access to PCF services. I hope later in life, when I get older, I also will have access to PCF services near my home. Then PCF can take care of Singaporeans from start to finish," said PM Wong, who attended a PAP kindergarten in Marine Pa-

rade in the 1970s.

On the foundation's plans, Mr Seet told The Straits Times that PCF has worked with the Ministry of Health (MOH) and the Agency for Integrated Care to project where eldercare services will be in greater demand so as to step in where needs are unmet.

While these projections are still being worked out, he noted that there has been interest in having more eldercare services in areas such as Punggol, Marine Parade and Bedok.

He said the foundation's goal is to open three or four eldercare centres each year in 2026 and 2027. He

did not say where they would be located.

In the 2023 Action Plan for Successful Ageing, MOH said the goal was to have 220 eldercare centres by 2025, which will cover an estimated 80 per cent of the total senior population. There were 60 such centres in 2021, and the number has grown to 208 as at April 2024.

On Oct 6, PCF also announced its partnerships with social service agencies Fei Yue Community Services and Allkin Singapore in sub-regions where it is operating.

For example, in Yew Tee and Limbang, PCF Sparkle Care and Fei Yue are working together to conduct care assessments, develop care plans and coordinate care for seniors with other providers in the community.

At the Oct 6 event, PM Wong said that as a charitable foundation, PCF also strives to do its part to support the wider community, noting that a fund-raising event is held in conjunction with the foundation's family day each year.

He noted that the 2024 fund-raising event by South West District – under Mayor Low Yen Ling, who is also Senior Minister of State for Culture, Community and Youth, and Trade and Industry – raised more than \$600,000 for charities.

"Ultimately, this spirit of fellowship is what is important in Singapore. We need this spirit of partnership to take Singapore forward," he said.

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Thousands protest around the world, demanding end to bloodshed

FROM A1

anniversary of the Oct 7 attack.

"We are prepared with increased forces in anticipation of this day", when there could be "attacks on the home front", Rear-Admiral Daniel Hagari, the military spokesman, said in a televised briefing.

Just hours after that warning was aired, a 25-year-old woman was killed and 10 others injured on Oct 6 in what was described as a suspected terrorist attack in the southern Israeli city of Beersheba.

Israel's ambulance service, Magen David Adom, said in a statement that five people were taken to hospital with gunshot wounds and another five were mildly injured by glass and shrapnel.

"The terrorist was neutralised at the scene," police said in a statement.

Early on Oct 6, the Israeli military issued evacuation orders for the vast majority of northern Gaza, saying this was in preparation for "a new phase" in the war.

That came hours after Israeli warplanes attacked Jabalia, the largest of Gaza's eight historic refugee camps in the northern part of the enclave.

The Israeli military said it surrounded an area where it has identified Hamas fighters and "efforts by Hamas to rebuild its operational capabilities".

It also said it struck a mosque and a school-turned-shelter in the central Gaza city of Deir Al-Balah overnight, describing the two locations as Hamas "command-and-control centres" nestled among civilians, without providing evidence for its claims.



Displaced Palestinians fleeing areas in the northern Gaza Strip after an Israeli evacuation order on Oct 6. The Israeli military instructed residents to head towards what it said is a humanitarian-designated area in Al-Mawasi in southern Gaza. PHOTO: REUTERS

The Palestinian Health Ministry in Gaza said at least 26 Palestinians were killed and dozens more were wounded.

The Israeli military instructed residents to head towards what it said is a humanitarian-designated area in Al-Mawasi in southern Gaza.

Palestinian and UN officials, though, say no place in the enclave is safe, including the humanitarian zones that Israeli missiles have hit several times.

"The war is back," said 52-year-old Raed from Jabalia, before he and his family left for Gaza City on Oct 6.

Asked whether they would go to Al-Mawasi as the army requested, he replied: "As if they didn't kill people displaced in the so-called humanitarian areas? We will not leave northern Gaza."

In recent weeks, Israel has intensified attacks against Hamas' allies, like Hezbollah in Lebanon.

Israeli air strikes hit just south of Beirut overnight into early Oct 6, sending an orange fireball and thick black smoke into the sky.

"Last night was the most violent of all the previous nights. Buildings were shaking around us, and at first I thought it was an earthquake. There were dozens of

strikes – we couldn't count them all – and the sounds were deafening," said Mr Hanan Abdullah, a resident of the Burj al-Barajneh area in Beirut's southern suburbs.

The attack came less than an hour after the Israeli military issued new evacuation warnings for parts of the area known as the Dahiya, where Hezbollah holds sway and where heavy bombardment in recent days has already forced many residents to flee.

Israel has been systematically targeting the leaders of Hezbollah and Iran's other regional proxies.

A Lebanese security source said on Oct 6 that Hashem Safieddine,

who was believed to have succeeded Hassan Nasrallah as head of Hezbollah, had been out of contact since Oct 4.

An Israeli air strike near Beirut's international airport on Oct 3 was reported to have targeted him.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, meanwhile, visited troops along the border with Lebanon on Oct 6, his office said.

At least nine Israeli soldiers have died nearly a week after the Israeli military launched ground operations against Hezbollah inside southern Lebanon.

Thousands of protesters took to the streets in major cities around

the world on Oct 5, demanding an end to bloodshed in Gaza and the wider Middle East.

About 40,000 pro-Palestinian demonstrators marched through central London, while thousands gathered in Paris, Rome, Manila, Cape Town and New York City.

Demonstrations were also held near the White House in Washington, protesting against the US' support for its ally Israel in military campaigns in Gaza and Lebanon.

Protesters at New York City's Times Square wore the black-and-white keffiyeh scarf and chanted slogans like "Gaza, Lebanon, you will rise, the people are by your side". They held banners demanding an arms embargo against Israel.

In Jakarta, the capital of Indonesia, at least 1,000 pro-Palestinian protesters gathered on the morning of Oct 6 near the US embassy, demanding that Washington stop supplying weapons to Israel.

More protests were planned in several cities on Oct 6.

In London, counter-demonstrators waved Israeli flags as pro-Palestinian marchers walked by. There were 15 arrests on the sidelines of the protests, according to police, who did not specify whether those detained were from either group.

In Rome, police fired tear gas and water cannon after clashes broke out. About 6,000 protesters defied a ban to march in the city centre.

In Berlin, a protest drew about 1,000 demonstrators with Palestinian flags, who chanted: "One year of genocide." NYTIMES, REUTERS

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