

**Media Statement  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Workers from the region still essential for the progress of the built environment industry**

***Singapore, 23 April 2021***

SCAL notes the immediate restriction of entry for non-Singapore citizens and non-permanent residents from India. SCAL understands that this restriction is in response to the worsening COVID-19 situation in India and the emergence of new virus variants.

This tightening will adversely affect the inflow of construction workers and will negatively impact the timeline of construction projects and cause further delays. The construction industry has been facing a serious labour crunch situation since Covid-19 pandemic started last year. Many construction workers left Singapore to return to their home countries during the pandemic. SCAL is working progressively to source for manpower from countries other than India.

SCAL is also concerned that some parties have tried to link the issue of bringing in foreign workers from India with CECA. Bringing in migrant workers from foreign countries has nothing to do with CECA. The construction industry needs migrant workers as they form the backbone of the labour force, and the majority of these workers are from India and Bangladesh. We need to bring workers in as no Singaporeans are willing to work as construction workers.

The impact of the labour crunch has already caused delay of construction projects for between 9 to 12 months while the cost of labour and materials has escalated by 30% to 50%. Some companies may be forced to close and it will adversely impact some 100,000 residents working in the construction sector.

Without a sufficient work force, Singaporeans will have to wait longer time for their HDB flats and apartments to be completed. Other buildings in the city such as healthcare facilities, infrastructure projects will also be delayed due to this setback.

The repercussions are that Singaporeans will inevitably be paying for higher construction costs if the situation is not resolved soon.



In the meantime, SCAL is working with various agencies to bring these workers from other countries in the Asean region back into Singapore in a safe manner via:

1. Accuracy and reliability of pre-departure testing at source countries
2. Quarantine at source countries
3. Vaccination programme
4. Lowering of SHN costs for workers in Singapore
5. SMM at sites to prevent future wave of infection

We hope that the government will continue to support the industry and make the necessary adjustments to help the construction industry tide through this difficult period.

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### **About The Singapore Contractors Association Ltd**

The Singapore Contractors Association Ltd (SCAL), formed in 1937, has grown in strength and representation, making the Association the official representative body of the construction industry in Singapore with about 3,000 members.

SCAL is well represented in numerous policy-making committees of professional bodies as well as of those set up by the government. SCAL is affiliated to various regional and international bodies such as the International Federation of Asian & Western Pacific Contractors' Associations (IFAWPCA) and the ASEAN Constructors Federation (ACF), whose objectives are shared by SCAL, that is, to foster fellowship and co-operation among contractors, to facilitate the exchange of technology and information and to develop and strengthen the relationship between governments and member countries.



SCAL is also fully committed to provide our members with a wide range of support from upgrading and updating fellow members on the latest construction practices and regulation to administrative assistance, all within the overarching framework of SCAL's vision – to lead the construction industry in building a sustainable future for Singapore – and mission which is to be an effective voice of the construction industry advocating business-friendly practices, promoting industry development, and fostering a safe and productive work environment.

To better serve our members, SCAL has five subsidiaries, namely Singapore Construction Mediation Centre, SC2, SCAL Resources, SCAL Academy and SCAL Dormitory to provide mediation services, audit services, training courses and accommodation for foreign workers.