

MY HOME IN



SECONDS

AVA TO GET NEW CHIEF ON MAY 21

THE Agri-Food & Veterinary Authority (AVA) will have a new chief executive when its present CEO, Dr Chua Sin Bin, retires on May 20.

Ms Tan Poh Hong, the deputy CEO (Estates & Corporate) of the Housing Board, will be the new AVA chief with effect from May 21.

Ms Tan, 50, who is married with two sons, has an honours degree in estate management from the National University of Singapore and a Master of Business Administration with Distinction from New York University.

POLICE SEEK KIN OF 80-YEAR-OLD MAN

THE police are looking for the family of an 80-year-old man who died at the Jamiyah Home for the Aged recently.

Mr Tan Ah Peng, who had been a resident of the home since last August, died there on Feb 20.

Anyone with information on Mr Tan's family can call the police hotline on 1800-255-0000.

my paper 我报

ENGLISH EDITORIAL

 Consulting Editor: FELIX SOH
 felix@sph.com.sg

 Editor: YEOW KAI CHAI
 kaichai@sph.com.sg

 Deputy Editor/ Money Editor: SARAH NG
 ngsls@sph.com.sg

 News Editor: CHONG CHEE KIN
 cheekin@sph.com.sg

 Foreign Editor: WOON WUI TEK
 wuitek@sph.com.sg

 Entertainment/ Lifestyle Editor: JILL ALPHONSO
 jilla@sph.com.sg

 Sports Editor: CHIA HAN KEONG
 hankeong@sph.com.sg

 Art & Design Director: PETER WILLIAMS
 peterwil@sph.com.sg

 Copy Editor: KONG SOON WAH
 sw@sph.com.sg

HOTLINE: 6319-8880

e-mail: myp@sph.com.sg

ON THE WEB: mypaper.sg

TO ADVERTISE: 1800-822-6382

 TO GET A COPY: CIRMyp@sph.com.sg
 or call our circulation department at
 6388 3838 from Mon-Fri (9am-5pm)

SINGAPORE PRESS HOLDINGS

PERSONALLY SPEAKING

WITH ARAM PAN

Meet the *real* VR Man


FAR-SIGHTED: Virtual-reality photographer Aram Pan hopes to pique more people's interest in VR photography. (PHOTO: COURTESY OF ARAM PAN)

KENNY CHEE

VIRTUAL-REALITY (VR) photography enthusiast Aram Pan turned his hobby into a profitable business.

Virtual what, you say?

VR photography involves photographing objects from many angles and joining them in a cube-shaped virtual space. This makes the images appear as if they are in a 3-D environment.

Mr Pan, 33, told *my paper* in a recent interview he has seen an increasing number of clients since he set up a blog on his hobby last year.

Since then, his VR-photography company, Plus 720, has produced over 2,000 VR photographs and has been approached by 20 to 30 corporate clients to create virtual environments.

They range from public agencies like the National Library Board and the Singapore Civil

Defence Force to property and education firms. Among them are three companies from Indonesia and Malaysia.

One of his clients is Singapore Press Holdings Magazines, for which he has shot VR photographs of ballrooms for the Her World Brides' website.

Couples can visit the virtual ballrooms to get a 360-degree preview of the wedding-dinner venues without physically visiting them. They can also look up and down at the rooms.

Mr Pan's love for VR photography began in the early 2000s, when he was unsatisfied with how he could not capture scenes in their entirety with normal photography.

"So, I started shooting multiple images of a scene and stitched them together. This evolved into a hobby in VR photography," he said.

In 2005, he approached the Singapore Tourism Board to showcase Singapore to the world through VR photography.

While the idea did not pan out completely, Mr Pan saw business potential in his hobby.

Eventually, he set up Plus 720 to do commercial VR photography in 2007.

"But I didn't have time to develop the business then as I was too busy with work," said Mr Pan, who runs nutrition-supplement firm Plus Life.

He later made time to start the Singapore VR blog in February last year with VR shots he had taken in his free time.

The blog became very popular and has over 200,000 visitors to date, of whom almost 70 per cent are foreigners.

Among the visitors are public and private clients, who have been keeping Mr Pan busy with VR-photo requests.

For one thing, VR work from property firms has become so heavy that he has trained three part-timers to help him with photography.

Now, Mr Pan has set his

sights beyond Singapore. He set up another blog called Asian VR last December with VR photographs of Asian locales he has visited in his travels.

While he is not sure where Asian VR will take him, Mr Pan is certain of one thing.

"If I'm presented with a photography contract for work I know I wouldn't enjoy, I wouldn't do it. At the end of the day, it's about doing what makes me happy," he said.

kennyc@sph.com.sg

HELPDESK 我的字典

Virtual reality:
虚拟现实
xū nǐ xiàn shí

3-D: 立体的 lì tǐ de

Preview: 预览 yù lǎn

Entirety: 全部 quán bù

Singapore's pre-emptive strike on dengue

NEARLY 1.8 billion people in the Asia-Pacific region are at risk of catching dengue fever, which is becoming a major public-health concern.

Dr Chusak Prasittisuk, coordinator of the World Health Organization's (WHO's) South East Asia Region's Communicable Diseases Control, said the organisation is concerned with the fatality rate of dengue haemorrhagic fever as it reflects how the medical community is managing the cases.

He was speaking yesterday at the opening of the first Asia-Pa-

cific dengue workshop in Singapore, organised by the WHO, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the National Environment Agency (NEA).

Dengue fever is fast spreading to newer areas, with the frequency of outbreaks increasing and the disease evolving.

According to latest statistics from WHO, occurrences of dengue haemorrhagic fever – the more serious type of dengue fever – have increased by over 70 per cent since 2003, and it has killed almost three times more people in South-east Asia.

Dr Chusak said: "The medical community may need more training because the young generation of young practitioners may not be aware of early detection and proper case management. This is our big concern."

He added that dengue fever was spreading to areas that were once unaffected, and that the predominantly urban disease was also spreading to rural areas like Nepal, Bhutan and Timor Leste.

Hence, a regional and international approach is essential to tackle the disease that is spread

by the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito species, he said.

The workshop is part of the Asia-Pacific Dengue Strategic Plan which comprises lectures, site visits and hands-on field experience, where participants will study the implementation and operations of the dengue programme in Singapore.

NEA's chief executive officer, Mr Andrew Tan, said Singapore's strength lies in the way it takes a proactive and pre-emptive approach to reduce mosquito breeding, and how it tries to "deal with the problem before it hits us".

- THE STRAITS TIMES