

# Smarter healthcare on the way with 5G robots and other innovations

These will help Singapore cope with future challenges like a limited labour force: Heng

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Senior Health Correspondent

Nifty 5G-powered robots and augmented reality may be part of the healthcare landscape here soon, as Singapore continues to find smarter ways of better caring for patients in the face of a rapidly ageing population.

Innovations such as these will help the nation's healthcare system cope with future challenges, such as a limited labour force arising from a greying population, said Deputy Prime Minister Heng Swee Keat at the Centre for Healthcare Innovation's Innovate 2022 conference on Friday.

He announced that a new Virtual Centre for Healthcare Innovation Living Lab will be launched in early 2023, which will look into virtual reality and augmented reality innovations in the training of medical students and healthcare professionals.

Currently, robots are already being used to deliver medication to patients at Tan Tock Seng Hospital (TTSH). These robots are now being considered for other uses, such as helping people navigate in hospitals, as part of a new 5G collaboration between the hospital's Centre for Healthcare Innovation (CHI) and the Infocomm Media

Development Authority.

Mr Heng said Singapore has built a world-class healthcare system, but it is a continuous challenge to achieve a good balance among what some have called the "iron triangle" of healthcare: cost, accessibility and quality.

With the rapidly ageing population, the country is also facing constraints such as a more limited labour force. Hence, finding an optimal spot within the iron triangle will remain a key challenge for Singapore and many other societies, the minister said.

The key to balancing the iron triangle is innovation and translating it into impactful uses, he added.

At the event, Dr Janil Puthucherry, Senior Minister of State for Health, officially opened TTSH's Medical 3D Printing Centre, which is located at CHI.

The 3D printing centre started operating in 2020 and has come up with 250 models for various uses, including body parts to help patients understand their medical conditions and why they have to undergo certain procedures.

In their speeches, Mr Heng and Dr Janil highlighted TTSH's vision of becoming a "hospital without walls", where digitalisation enables care to be delivered beyond the hospital any time.

For instance, patients can use the

HealthHub app to register themselves at a clinic and find out the number of patients ahead of them, said Dr Janil.

In his speech, Mr Heng said TTSH is ramping up the use of telehealth and that in 2023, it will be launching "telepods", which will provide clinicians with a conducive space to carry out teleconsultations.

The use of artificial intelligence to predict and prevent falls in patients is another example given by Dr Janil.

The fall prediction system, known as Presage, was trialled at TTSH in 2021.

It is now also being used at Ng Teng Fong General Hospital, Mount Elizabeth Novena Hospital, Jurong Community Hospital and the AWWA Adult Disability Home in Pasir Ris, said Mr Myron Wee, deputy director of the digital and smart health office at CHI, at a media tour of CHI on Thursday.

Healthcare ultimately remains a high-touch industry, and an innovative workplace culture must be encouraged so that every healthcare worker feels empowered to make suggestions on how to innovate for the better, said Mr Heng on Friday.

He said underpinning all of this are partnerships and collaborations. Healthcare clusters can learn from one another, and collaborate with industry, research institutes and international partners.

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President Halimah Yacob meeting pioneering Malay women writers at The Arts House on Friday during an exhibition to honour and showcase their contributions. Titled Not An If, But A Must!, the exhibition is among the more than 200 programmes for this year's Singapore Writers Festival. The festival runs from Nov 4 to 20. ST PHOTO: DESMOND WEE

## S'pore Writers Festival opens with celebration of female Malay literary pioneers

Toh Wen Li

The Singapore Writers Festival (SWF) kicked off on Friday with an opening ceremony at the National Gallery Singapore.

This year's event - back in full force after the onslaught of the pandemic - has more than 200 programmes and some 280 writers from Singapore and other countries.

Among the headliners are British author Jeanette Winterson, American sci-fi author Ted Chiang and Hong Kong writer Tung Chiao.

"After two years of digital and hybrid editions, it feels nothing

short of surreal to be making a return to a full-scale format this year," said festival director Pooja Nansi.

The annual festival, now in its 25th edition, runs from Nov 4 to 20 and spans three weekends for the first time.

Most of the events will be happening in the Civic District, where a new festival village has also been introduced.

Ms Nansi added: "The newly pedestrianised area around Victoria Theatre and The Arts House will be transformed into a literary and lifestyle playground where everyone of all ages is welcome to soak in the festive vibes and enjoy some F&B offerings, stellar music acts and sunset DJ sets."

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Before the ceremony, President Halimah Yacob attended an exhibition at The Arts House spotlighting pioneering women of the Malay literary scene, titled Not An If, But A Must!.

She said in a speech afterwards: "The festival is the first platform to honour and showcase, at a national level, the contributions of Raja Aisyah Sulaiman, Adibah Amin, Dr Hadijah Rahmat, Dr Sa'eda Buang, Rasiah Halil as well as the collective Kumpulan Bebas Melata, which includes Rohani Din, Khaziah Yem, Kamaria Buang, Faridah Taib and Nordita Taib.

"Spanning from the early 20th century till today, their works sought to explain, interpret, understand and respond to the world in which we live."

The showcase, she adds, is "testament to their tenacity and perseverance".

SWF is organised by Arts House Limited and commissioned by the National Arts Council.

Its theme this year, "IF", was inspired by a poem by Cyril Wong. Go to <https://www.singaporewritersfestival.com/home> for more information.



Singaporean pop superstar JJ Lin wowing the 30,000-strong crowd at the National Stadium on Friday, during the first of his two JJ20 World Tour 2022 concerts in Singapore. PHOTO: UNUSUAL ENTERTAINMENT/JFJ PRODUCTIONS

## Grand homecoming for S'porean singer JJ Lin

It felt just like old times, as if Covid-19 never happened, as Singaporean pop superstar JJ Lin kicked off his nostalgia-tinged JJ20 World Tour 2022 on Friday at the National Stadium.

The singer-songwriter previously performed two sold-out shows at the same venue in December 2019, as part of his Sanctuary 2.0 World Tour, shortly before the pandemic hit.

His new comeback tour celebrates his 20th anniversary in show business, and Friday's concert was attended by 30,000 people, including Health Minister Ong Ye Kung.

Lin opened the three-hour show at 7.30pm with a ballad, then launched into the high-energy number Mummy.

The 41-year-old also addressed the adoring crowd: "Hello Singapore, welcome back!"

Kick-starting his world tour from home ground was "very special", he said. "Do you know that it really comforts me to know that you guys are here?"

Lin will perform again on Saturday at the same venue, where tickets have sold out. He will also be performing in Taiwan and Malaysia in December, before heading to North America, Europe and Australia in 2023.

Benson Ang

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