Time to break out of our comfort zones

The article, “Have we lost edge because we have it easy?” (The New Paper, 19 Jun), by Shashank Nigam on self-reliance, curiosity and enthusiasm, was insightful and thought-provoking.

Having been born and bred in Singapore for the past 24 years, I would say that I have taken things for granted. The comfort level provided by Singapore through its order, stability and affluence has made us forget about the hardships that the average person in India or China faces.

However, with the recent influx of young and energetic expatriates filling up posts in MNCs, Singaporeans like me are already beginning to feel the heat of staying too long in our comfort zones.

I am a third-year student in a local university and have interacted with many foreign students, especially those from India and China.

Most of them come from backgrounds totally different from ours. Back in their countries, they see both poverty and affluence and are highly driven to succeed. Some are well-known for their creativity and enthusiasm for acquiring new knowledge.

I’ve always regretted not being zealous enough during my younger days to explore new ideas.

The environment I grew up in was one that encouraged individuals to pursue jobs that promise lifelong employment and not chase after their dreams. Taking risks, like venturing into a start-up, was viewed with caution.

But these days, many Singaporeans are coming out of their comfort zones due to the increasing competition faced in making a living here.

The people’s view of the Government as a facilitator has also changed. More of us are heading to India and China to either make money or to acquire knowledge and experience. New skills are being picked up even at an older age to stay relevant in the economy. The need to rely on oneself for success is increasingly being felt by many Singaporeans.

We do not need an inefficient transport system or a high crime rate to be able to stay alert or face any drastic situation. In fact, these will hamper our development.

However, we need to be more open to other people, locals and foreigners alike.

In this way, we will be able to gain new insights and opportunities.

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