

## Driver rams steps outside MRT station

TEO XUANWEI  
xuanwei@mediacorp.com.sg

A DRIVER rammed through several reflective posts and crashed into the steps outside Raffles Place MRT station during the evening peak hour yesterday.

The driver, a man in his 30s, was conveyed to Singapore General Hospital after he complained of chest pains. It is believed he was driving his grey Hyundai Getz down Robinson Road when he skidded at the junction of Cecil

Street and Robinson Road and crashed.

This comes more than two years after the Land Transport Authority (LTA) made traffic changes to better regulate traffic flow at the busy junction. In July 2005, a raised curb was installed along Cecil Street to create an interrupted two-lane slip road. This meant motorists from Robinson Road could no longer travel towards D'almeida Street.

About two and a half months later, the kerb was removed to prevent jaywalking, and a flat red marker with white stripes took its place. The controversial change sparked off a slew of accidents at the junction involving motorists who didn't know about the rule changes.

Several drivers wrote in to this paper and

complained that the new rules were confusing and the markers not visible enough.

The LTA then made changes again, with a row of yellow-and-black reflective posts erected on top of the red markers.

But drivers complain the rules at the junction are still too confusing. Said Mr Ali Abdul, 62: "New drivers or those unfamiliar with the roads here may panic when they realise they can't turn where they want to."

One cabby sad he has seen some near-misses. Another taxi driver, Mr Ang C H, 43, said the reflective posts are not sufficient to warn drivers to keep to their lanes. "Imagine if someone was walking on the pavement and an accident like today's happens?" he said.



PEAK HOUR:  
The Hyundai  
came to a stop  
outside Raffles  
Place MRT.

WEE TECK HIAN

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## Under 20 and HIV-positive

More young patients  
as total number of  
new cases hits 422

NINE youth – six of them males – between the ages of 10 and 19 were diagnosed as HIV positive last year, the most ever in a single year according to records dating back to 1985.

There were just two such cases the previous year, and four cases each in 2004 and 2005.

As expected, the number of new cases of HIV infection last year hit a record high of 422, up from the previous year's 357 cases, according to the Ministry of Health (MOH).

One case involved HIV being contracted through a blood transfusion overseas – the first such reported case in the past six years.

Another case was a baby infected by his mother during pregnancy. There were three cases reported in each of the previous three years.

Of the total number of new cases, 93 per cent were men. Sexual transmission accounted for 95 per cent of all new cases – nearly two thirds involved heterosexual sex.

About one-eighth of patients were between 20 and 29 years of age. Said Action for Aids: "More young persons are having sex and at a younger age. Programmes meant for young people must address all aspects of sexual be-

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— Action for Aids

haviour, including homosexuality and condom use, otherwise those most at risk will not be helped."

Only 13 per cent of new cases were detected through voluntary screening. Most were detected when HIV testing was done in the course of medical care.

And more than half were already in the late stage of infection, signalling "an urgent need" for those in the high-risk groups – such as men who engage prostitutes – to go for regular testing, said the MOH.

With HIV rapid testing rolled out to many general practitioner clinics last year, the test is now available at most clinics.

Also, a pilot voluntary, opt-out HIV-testing scheme took off at Changi General Hospital in December, with all adult in-patients having to sign a form if they do not want to be tested for HIV.

When changes to the Infectious Diseases Act come into force, a person who "has reason to believe" he might have HIV/Aids – even if not tested – must inform his partner of the risk and take "reasonable precautions", or face penalties.

## HFMD CONTINUES TO SPREAD

The number of Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease cases hit 1,466 cases last week, up 18 per cent from the week before. From Sunday to 3pm yesterday, another 574 cases were reported. With 11 childcare centres and preschools ordered to close and another 32 advised to shut voluntarily, some nanny services are reporting as much as a 30-per-cent jump in business.

watch

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