

**Publication: The Edge Singapore Online**

**Date: 01 June 2020**

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Singapore will have to find ways to rely less on foreign workers and accelerate automation of some tasks in its post-pandemic economy, Second Minister for Finance Indranee Rajah told reporters Monday.

“It should be less and less repetitive manual operation and those should be replaced by automation, and the local population can do more on higher value-added activities,” said Rajah. “But this has to be done in stages with caution because we can not just take out all the manual power all of a sudden.”

The topic of foreign workers has come to the fore in the city-state as Covid-19 infections among those living in dormitories have surged, accounting for more than 90% of total confirmed cases in the country. Singapore now has one of the highest number of recorded infections in Asia, with almost 35,000 cases.

Separately, Rajah said Singapore will redesign its infrastructure system, with investment focused on partnerships across the clean energy, public health, information & communications technology sectors, while promoting a “friendly regulatory environment,” she said.

Rajah also further outlined a previously announced program with the World Bank Group and Singapore Management University to train senior and mid-level regional government officials involved in project preparation.

Despite the impact of the pandemic, international financial sources remain available and very keen to support clean energy projects, said Rajah, who is also minister in the prime minister’s office.