

THE STRAITS TIMES

Parliament

New law to help architects work abroad

🕒 PUBLISHED MAR 1, 2017, 5:00 AM SGT

More than 1,500 architects registered here can soon practise in participating countries



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It will soon be easier for architects here to internationalise their businesses and practise overseas, under changes to the law approved in Parliament yesterday.

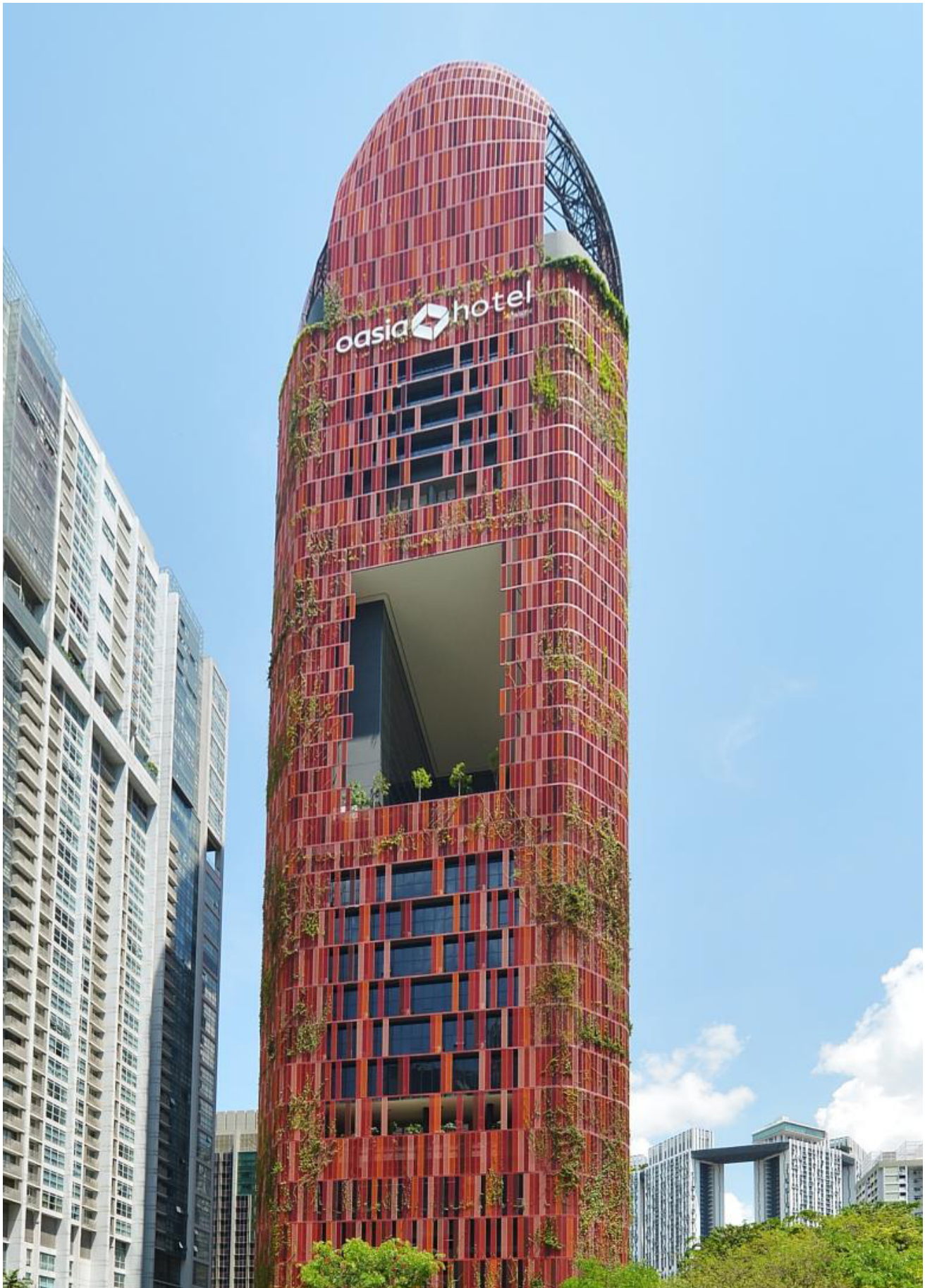
The Architects (Amendment) Bill will enable any architect registered with the Board of Architects here to ply their trade in a "participating overseas jurisdiction", Minister for National Development Lawrence Wong told the House.

The new law will allow the Board of Architects to form arrangements with its foreign counterparts.

These will recognise the more than 1,500 architects registered in Singapore and allow them to practise in those foreign countries.

Likewise, the board here would also have to recognise foreign architects registered in those jurisdictions, which also makes it easier for them to work here.

Mr Wong told the House that with globalisation, it is more likely that architects here will practise in foreign countries.





Oasia Hotel Downtown was designed by Spanish designer Patricia Urquiola with local firm WOHA. The new law will allow foreign architects from participating jurisdictions to practise here. ST FILE PHOTO

"Many of our locally registered architects are well recognised for their skills and professionalism, and many of them are expanding their business overseas," he said, adding that the amendments to the Bill were timely, and would "enable our architects to operate more effectively in a globalised world".

At present, Singapore has mutual recognition arrangements with countries such as Australia and New Zealand, and Asean member countries.

These were signed by governments, but the changes will allow the Board of Architects to make these arrangements.

They will also open up more opportunities for Singapore-registered architects to find work abroad, Mr Wong said.

The two MPs who spoke on the Bill - Mr Louis Ng (Nee Soon GRC), and Nominated MP K. Thanaetchimi - asked how the Government would ensure that overseas architects meet local standards.

Mr Ng said training and exposure for architects from less developed countries may not be adequate to familiarise them with standards and codes here, pointing out that the standard of architectural practice could be affected.

He asked how the profession here could be protected.

In response, Mr Wong said foreign architects recognised in their countries would have to pass an examination set by the board here, to ensure they have knowledge of local practice laws, rules and regulations.

Architects said the changes were timely. Ms Wo Mei Lan, director of Liu and Wo Architects, said: "This is very useful for us. We are very developed and advanced in the region, and this opens up jobs abroad."

Other notable changes in the law included the raising of the maximum penalty for errant architects from \$10,000 to \$50,000.

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