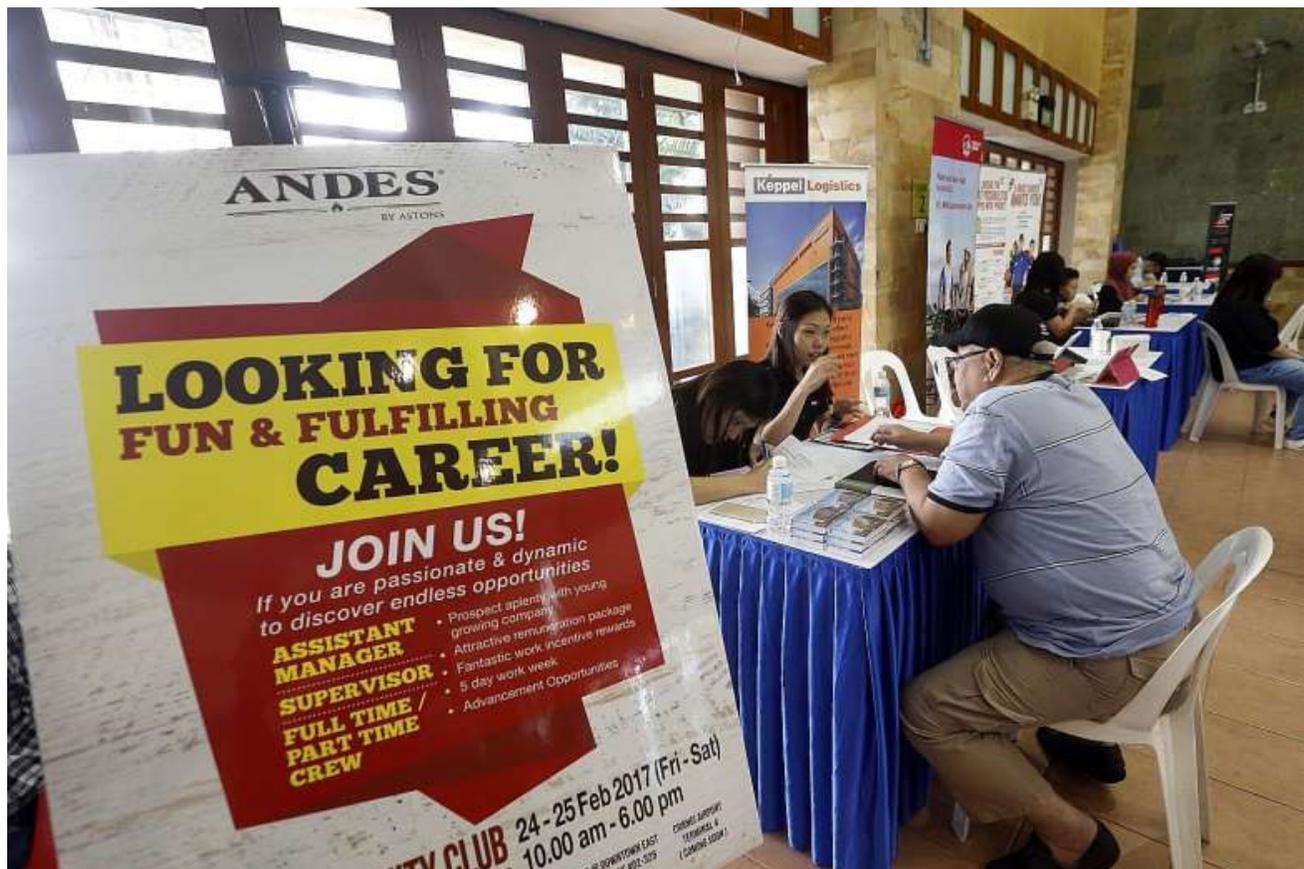


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Budget debate

Labour movement to work on job creation and placement



A job seeker being interviewed at a fair. To help workers pick up skills, NTUC will work with institutions to produce training modules relevant to employers. ST PHOTO: CHEW SENG KIM

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Labour MPs are not going to put their hands out and ask for more money from Budget 2017, said labour chief Chan Chun Sing.

Instead, the labour movement will work with employers and the Government to create jobs and help workers get them, Mr Chan told Parliament, in a speech that laid out how the National Trades Union Congress (NTUC) will tackle the scarcity of jobs in a slowing economy.

"Grants and subsidies alone won't create jobs, especially sustainable jobs," he said, adding: "The crux (of job creation) must come from our businesses, our access to markets and our innovation."

Speaking on the second day of debate on Budget 2017, he mapped out the steps that NTUC is taking.

It will consolidate the vacancies and job seekers' databases in the market so that it does not matter which centres those looking for jobs go to, he said.

He added: "We are even prepared to work with (private) agencies like LinkedIn to ensure that we do our placement well and do it faster."

To help workers pick up skills for future jobs, NTUC will work with and even prod institutions of higher learning to produce training modules relevant to employers.

"If we are not satisfied with the speed to market, we will work on it, we will improve, we will fix it," Mr Chan said. "So we are not going to talk about theories. We want to get things done."

Besides helping workers, the unions will continue to work with companies to raise productivity, added the Minister in the Prime Minister's Office. "It is a hard slog, it is not easy, but we are committed to do this."

He believed that the key to raising productivity lies in the 23 Industry Transformation Maps that the unions, employers and government agencies are working on. These plans cover 80 per cent of the economy and can raise productivity in the various sectors if implemented well.

Mr Chan also disclosed that the Manpower Ministry has formed a task force to study the implications of the rising number of freelancers and contract workers in the economy. New mindsets are needed to help protect these workers' legal and financial rights and help them plan for their retirement, he said.

The NTUC will support the ministry review, he added.

More information on the task force and review is expected to be disclosed by the ministry when its

Budget is debated in Parliament next week.

Toh Yong Chuan

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