



## 62 private schools meet stricter standards so far

By **LEE U-WEN**

SIXTY-TWO schools in Singapore have successfully met the stricter standards to operate here so far, six months after new laws were introduced to better govern the burgeoning private education industry.

The Council for Private Education (CPE) – a statutory board set up last year by the Education Ministry to regulate the industry – said yesterday that some 308 private schools had submitted their mandatory registration papers so far.

Of these applications, 164 had all the necessary documents in place, and 63 of them have undergone the full evaluation and assessment by the CPE.

All but one were eventually approved, but the council chose not to name the lone ranger, preferring to give that school another chance to apply before the June 20, 2011 deadline.

Among the first batch of schools that were given the green light include well-known names such as the Singapore Institute of Management (SIM), Informatics Academy, culinary school At-Sunrice Academy and PSB Academy. They

were among 36 each awarded a four-year registration period, while the remaining 26 – including FIS Education Centre and Kimage Hairdressing School – each received a one-year period.

They were deemed to have fulfilled all the necessary requirements relating to their managers, teachers, courses, academic and examination boards, premises and advertisements. The council said that it expects another 300 applications to stream in over the next year.

SIM chief executive Lee Kwok Cheong said that his institution was looking forward to working with CPE and other government agencies to further raise the quality, as well as the international reputation, of Singapore's private education sector.

The CPE also revealed that 13 private schools – out of an initial batch of 114 applications – have been awarded the new EduTrust quality mark, which replaces the pre-

vious CaseTrust for Education certificate issued by the Consumers Association of Singapore.

Six of these schools were awarded the EduTrust (four years), while seven were granted the EduTrust Provisional status (one year). No school has yet impressed the council enough to score enough points to earn the highest EduTrust Star level.

The EduTrust certification is a quality assurance scheme that assesses the

schools in six areas such as student protection, corporate governance, assessment of students and quality assurance.

PSB Academy chief executive Steve Lai said that being certified by the CPE is an assurance to its students and parents who "may have been concerned" over the school's academic quality, student fee protection and overall school management, given the recent spate of bad publicity involving rogue private schools recently.