



Takeaways

A newsletter by RICE



Ask most Singaporeans and you'll find one thing they can agree on: Tharman is the *man*.

In 2016, *Yahoo! News* found that Tharman was far and beyond the peoples' favourite to be our next Prime Minister. He led consensus at 69% (nope, not saying it).

It's seven years later, and Tharman Shanmugaratnam has surprised everyone. Yesterday (Jun 8), he sent his letter of resignation to PM Lee Hsien Loong. He intends to step down from his current ministerial post, and to "retire from politics". Now, he intends to be president, a position most would perceive as, well, political.

A presidential bid, in most countries, solidifies an ambition for the top spot in political power. In Singapore, as we know, the presidential post is still largely symbolic. Singaporeans have favoured Tharman for his even-keeled disposition and undeniable effectiveness as a policy maker. The man can *work*.

By stepping into a ceremonial post, will we get a different Tharman? Or, perhaps, could this signal a new, different kind of Singaporean president? We only have his word to our Prime Minister. Let's see what he'll say to all of us.

First Kiss Furore



In case you didn't know, Singapore TikTok went ablaze over a couple of virgins. A video that amassed over 100k views showed newlyweds sharing in the joy of their first kiss. Not just as husband and wife, but their first kiss as a couple together.

Our writer interviews the once-chaste couple, while also examining how local attitudes towards intimacy are changing. The comments we had were similarly a mixed bag: some maintained the furore was directed at the couple's apparent decision to milk the moment for social media clout, while others simply shrugged it off.

The bride's response? "I don't blame them."

**What It's Like to Wait Until
Marriage
to Share a First Kiss**

Heart for Heartland Seniors



It's a common sight to find elderly Singaporeans passing the time at your local kopitiam. But have you asked them why they're there?

As part of our [Storytellers](#) programme, where we help shape aspiring voices into compelling non-fiction stories, we had one writer from Singapore Management University who made that leap. This is what she found.

**Why Do Elderly Singaporeans
Spend Their Days at
Heartland Coffee Shops?**

Breaking Bread at the Break of Dawn



To wake up at 6am on a weekday takes commitment. To do it as a family unit? That takes discipline, love, and, as our writer reflects in this piece, privilege.

Readers agree on that last part. But what do you think?

**Is Being Able to Eat Breakfast
with Family Every Day a
Privilege?**

An Emo Band Gets Robbed



If you hadn't already been clued in Singapore's sprawling (but undeniably talented and hopeful) music scene, the first band you should know about is Forests.

They make music that may appear to be tear-stained anthems—hence, 'emo'—but this isn't your mascara-and-mayhem mallcore from the 2000s. Less whiny and more celebratory, each Forests show is an exhilarating ride. Their first US tour was set to bring their brand of mosh-worthy music to American fans—and there are plenty of them—but a van tour of this calibre brings danger. And the worst happened to them.

Sure, you read their *New York Times* piece. But that was sober Forests. We present drunk Forests with us, recounting their journey into the American wilderness in the name of sadboy rock.

**A Drunken Interview with
Forests, the Singapore Band
Who Got Robbed on a US Tour**

Our Mayor's Health Scare



Considering his mighty physique, we called Paul Foster a 'gym rat' in our headline. Most call him the Mayor of Singapore.

Even if Paul isn't on your Instagram feeds or your parents' television screens, he's everywhere else: gala parties, film premieres, and the like. So, when AIA reached out to partner up with us for a piece, we were surprised as anyone to find out his own health struggles. Even moreso that he'd been public about it on his own socials. After meeting him, we're thinking he's worth a follow.

**Paul Foster, Actor and Gym Rat,
on Getting Through a Health
Scare**

Short Grains, or *piping-hot topics by the spoonful.*

- Our beloved Turf Club will close its doors in 2024. Could this signal the end of horse-racing in Singapore as we know it?
- The impressively-high salaries offered to licensed plumbers these days are still failing to attract Singaporean workers. Why is that? (via Mothership)

- Indonesia is assuring Singapore we don't need to worry about a haze this year. (via *AsiaOne*)
 - A Singaporean comedian walked into a New York bar to tell jokes about Malaysia. Guess how that turned out? (via *Coconuts*)
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While someone like Tharman is known for his decorum, someone like Leong Mun Wai has been a political presence with a different kind of attitude.

We sat with him to talk about the 'real' Leong Mun Wai, someone whose zest for life rivals his passion for political change.

**Can Singaporeans Accept the
Real Leong Mun Wai?**

We like to go out! We also hate our weather.

But as much as our team is full of contradictions, we simply can't go by our weekend without checking out some things. If you're still deciding on where to go, let us highlight some unmissable events for you:

1. This flea market isn't playing around when they're calling themselves the Everything Fest. It's happening this weekend at Selegie Arts Centre. They have so much to offer that its first weekend last week drew controversy for its cramped set-up (via *The Straits Times*).
2. Eatbox is here to support the Singapore Badminton Open. They may not have *everything*, but they rival in sheer scale for a well-rounded weekend market experience.
3. The Italian Film Festival launches today at the Projector. Plenty of interesting newer fare, along with stone-cold classics like 'Cinema Paradiso' and 'The Good, the Bad and the Ugly'.
4. While we're at it, fancy a slice? Chooby Pizza is celebrating their third anniversary this Sunday with design studio Knuckles & Notch.
5. Sentosa is holding their own large-scale wellness festival from tomorrow onwards. Out of many activities, one is attracting major attention: a free-to-attend 5km Discovery Walk hosted by Choo Sung-hoon, aka the jacked-up MMA veteran last featured on Netflix's 'Physical: 100'. Don't worry, you wouldn't need to carry sandbags for this one.

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