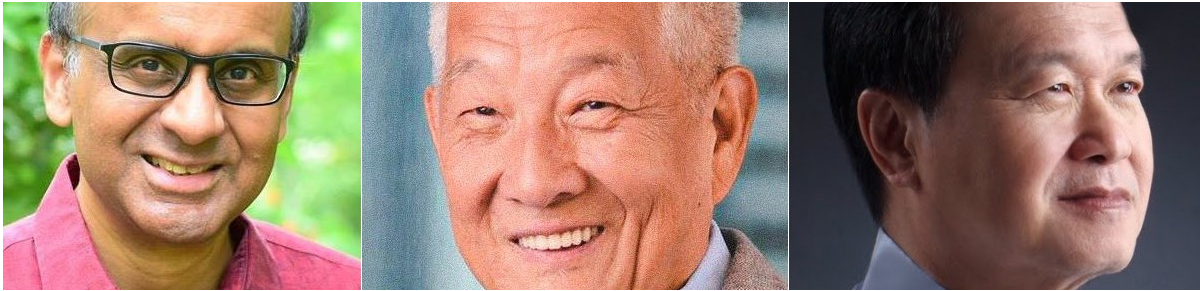




Takeaways

A newsletter by RICE



The campaigns are officially over.

After a spate of political scandals over the last few months, the three candidates running for president have been astute about one thing: that concerns of impartiality are at the forefront of voters' minds.

Tharman Shanmugaratnam, formally of the People's Action Party, branded himself as a "neutral referee" if he were to be elected to office. There were, however, questions about how neutral he could be when his former colleagues still sit in Parliament.

Ng Kok Song threw his hat in the ring after Mr Shanmugaratnam. The former Chief Investment Officer of the Government Investment Corporation campaigned on being the only non-partisan candidate among the three. While that might be the case, Singaporeans pointed out that his senior position in the civil service—and the ruling party's extensive reach—means that he might not be as independent as he thought.

On his end, former NTUC Income CEO Tan Kin Lian questioned the independence of his competitors. He entered the election campaigning on the fact that he was, in fact, the most independent candidate. But how independent can one be with the backing of Singapore's opposition figures?

The campaigns' hustings may be over, but Singaporeans will now question the idea of what it means to be an “independent” political candidate, given the ruling party’s stronghold in Singapore.

For now, we wait to see who the electorate has chosen to represent Singapore—as its custodian of the reserves, and as a unifying figure for all Singaporeans.

*P.S. We've also learnt some of you found your way here through your friends. If you haven't already, **subscribe** to our weekly newsletter today!*

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No One Thought It Would Be Like This



Twelve years ago, Singapore had a curious four-way fight for the presidency. If you could go back to 2011 to ask yourself who you think would run for president again, who would you pick?

It's surreal (confounding even) that in 2023, former nominees Tan Cheng Bock and Tan Jee Say have rallied behind Tan Kin Lian. Even though the latter came in dead last in 2011, he's gained a groundswell of support like no other this year—all while facing controversy for his off-colour remarks and candour.

Tan Kin Lian's Presidential Campaign Doesn't Make Sense. But Is It Working?

All Aboard the Pineapple Express



The favourite to win the presidency is, of course, Tharman Shanmugaratnam. And while the former senior minister had already garnered favour for his work in Parliament, he still wanted his presidential campaign to be effective.

RICE social media lead Yuli found herself at two dialogues over a weekend, where she got up close with the man himself. Here's her dispatch from the flowery frontlines.

**'What You See Is What You Get':
Observations From a
Weekend With Tharman**

The Indepen-dance



To be Singapore's president means disavowing any affiliation with a political party. This year, we're getting three candidates who've branded themselves independent, but with all three carrying their own meaning of the word.

Beyond the pineapples and "pretty girls", RICE associate editor Kimberly Lim explores just what 'independent candidate' means in this tightly-wound race.

**Will the Real Independent
Presidential Candidate
Please Stand Up?**

Live to Dye



For Felix Nai, his hands are blue all the way to his forearms. His blue nails, not a result of a manicure, are his calling card.

The Good Riddance founder practices the niche trade of indigo dyeing, which he had to learn through a three-year apprenticeship in a small Japanese town. There, he also found a new way to live life.

**Meet Felix Nai, the
Singaporean Indigo Craftsman
Who Learnt to Dye in Japan**

Uplifting Morals at Orchard Road



Is it a place of worship? A community club? An information center? To all of this, we say: sure.

The Che Sen Khor Moral Uplifting Society has stood out at Orchard Road despite its hidden vicinities—mainly due to its wild and untamed garden—but it's still looking for new members.

What Is a Moral Uplifting Society, and How Did One End Up in Orchard Road?

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

- We explore the lies our parents told us as kids so that we would, eventually, shut up and sit down.
- The Kinderland abuse travesty continues. (*via CNA*)

- A brief explainer on what's going on with the state of China's economy. (via Vox)
 - Canada's prime minister Justin Trudeau is taking a break from his midlife crisis to pay Singapore a visit next week. (via *The Straits Times*)
 - The primary cast of iconic 2002 film '15' reunited, and they took to Facebook to post about the meeting. (via *Shaun Tan/Facebook*)
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As polling closed today, take a look back at our vox-pop investigation on the streets as we asked: what do you want to see in a Singaporean president?

**Singapore Presidential Election
2023: Do the People Care?**

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. The ultimate jukebox musical '&Juliet' announces ticket sales. The production starts in September but best to get yours before they're all

gone.

2. The Projector will screen Taiwanese mystery thriller 'Bad Education' this weekend, which will take place before a Q&A with the film's director and lead actor.
3. One of the oldest historical districts in Singapore will play host to a Sunday afternoon of fun, music, art, and Filipino food with Sunday Tambay.
4. Another Silent Disco party is taking place at the top of Marina Bay Sands this weekend.
5. A Food Truck Fiesta awaits you at Sentosa's Palawan Green, starting today.

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