



Takeaways

A newsletter by RICE



The verdict is out...

'Easier' is better than 'simpler'.

It was announced last week that Singapore's Land Transport Authority (LTA) intends to migrate the national usage of EZ-Link cards to a more centralised SimplyGo system. Some commuters might be already familiar with the latter if they use their debit cards to tap in and out. But yet, Singaporeans are generally perplexed by this move.

Of course, we asked some of our readers about their complicated feelings about the transition to SimplyGo. They range from horrified ("I know [my dad] can go to the SimplyGo app to double confirm if I am telling the truth about my whereabouts") to cynical ("The problem is that SimplyGo looks like it's digitalising for digitalisation's sake").

But what do you think about SimplyGo? And of LTA's larger digitalisation moves? Hit us up at community@ricemedia.co. The conversation (and uproar) isn't ending anytime soon—not when the transition is already facing some roadblocks.

Meanwhile, it was made official this week: Former Transport Minister S. Iswaran faces over 20 charges, including corruption, after a lengthy investigation. We also ended up learning the guy, uh, *really* loves musicals.

*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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Anything But EZ



Nobody said it was EZ. *Okay, we'll stop.*

While the full SimplyGo transition only starts in June, readers have come out to express their opinions about the bumpy ride thus far.

Singaporeans Speak on the

When It Doesn't Warrant a Warrant



The Criminal Procedure (Miscellaneous Amendments) Bill 2024 was announced, and it's going to be the subject of intense debate in Parliament down the road.

Why? The amendment introduces proposals for officers to have increased powers to search citizens without warrants, especially in the cases of more serious potential offences. The question looms: will this result in Singaporeans giving up *more* rights to personal privacy?

**Ponderings on Police Power and
Personal Privacy**

Iswaran's Way Through Broadway



After last year's shock announcement that an active cabinet minister was arrested, S. Iswaran now faces 27 charges—two of which are counts of corruption.

The other charges are frankly quite funny. The former Transport Minister has been accused of accepting bribes in the form of tickets... and *a lot* of them are musicals.

**According to His Corruption
Charges, Iswaran Was Living the
High School Musical Life**

Calculated Risks



It's generally accepted as the Rite of Adulthood that in order to look after oneself, one must have an insurance plan. What's not so easily spoken about is how pricey it can be for some.

We sat down with two young adults to unpack this prickly topic and ask: can insurance even be affordable?

**Can Young Adults Even Afford
Insurance Nowadays?**

****Vin Diesel voice** Family**



Earlier this week, we introduced a new editorial partnership with Persatuan Pemudi Islam Singapura (PPIS) under our ongoing Storytellers programme.

Together, we've explored the different facets that make up the Singaporean family, and how that may look like in minority communities.

**The Kaleidoscope of Kinship:
An Intimate Look at Singapore's
Diverse Family Make-Ups**

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

- Former Transport Minister S. Iswaran has been handed 27 charges—allegations of corruption sparked off a six-month long investigation that began with his arrest. [Here's what the timeline has been since then.](#) (via *The Straits Times*)

- It's officially the season of the Dragon! Festivities at Chinatown in celebration of the impending CNY holiday have begun, and officials have advised to exercise judgment when going shopping in the city. (via CNA)
 - It's also concert season in full effect. Coldplay will be making their way here next week to a sold-out engagement at the National Stadium over six days.
 - Meanwhile, the venue will then see Bruno Mars perform there in April—pre-sales for the first day were predictably snapped up, so another date has been added. Oh, and Taylor Swift fans without a ticket have one more chance to snap theirs up. (via NME Asia, Mothership)
 - Things are heating up in Indonesia as their presidential race reaches a fever pitch. (via SCMP)
 - An alleged drug trafficker in Melbourne was arrested, and his possessions were seized—including over 70 boxes of Lego. (via The Guardian)
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Adulting is tough, as we've explored in several thinkpieces and features. Sometimes, it may feel that older generations aren't sympathetic to the current conditions of the economy.

Not everyone. Our subject—an 88-year-old retiree—looks back on her days when she had to save every penny to raise a family and buy a home.

**My Grandmother's Advice for
Adulting 101**

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. Community platform Crane will host the Artsy Market at their Joo Chiat residence this weekend. Buy some artisanal goods and take part in activities—learn more [here](#).
2. Sometimes, the future is already at our doorstep: the [Flavours of Tomorrow Food Festival](#) promises to bring alternative food delicacies to the Singapore Science Centre this weekend.
3. Take a leap into Cambodian fine dining with celebrated chef Mariya Un Noun, who will host a three-hour “interactive dining experience” for the benefit of Cambodian children. Book [here](#).
4. An afternoon stroll need not be ordinary, not with the return of [ARTWALK Festival](#) in Little India and the wider area of Katong, beginning today.
5. For the rest of January, starting today, expect a bevy of unmissable music performances at [Tanjong Pagar Distripark](#) as part of Singapore Art Week.
6. Go watch the [musical adaptation](#) of animated film *Madagascar* this weekend in S. Iswaran's honour.

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