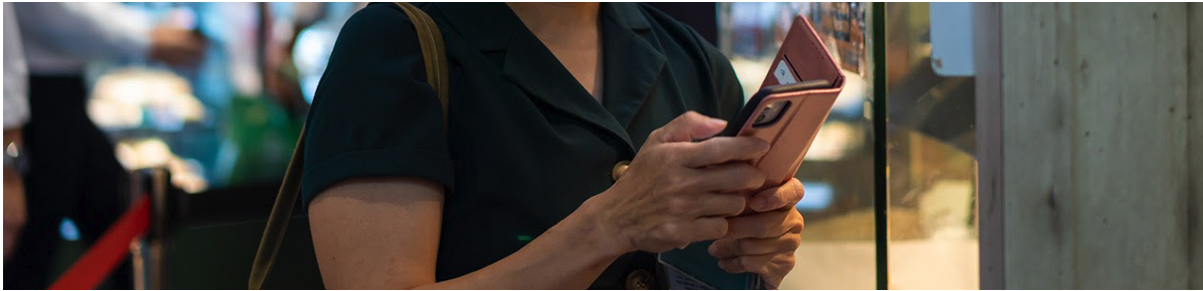




Takeaways

A newsletter by RICE



Hey, February's already leaping forward.

And Budget 2024 is here. This Friday afternoon, Deputy Prime Minister Lawrence Wong delivered the annual address in Parliament. You've probably already seen some highlights, but here are some of the key initiatives that were announced:

- 1) **Temporary financial support** for Singaporeans who have been “involuntarily unemployed”. While the details haven't been ironed out, this is significant for a country that has long resisted unemployment benefits.
- 2) **Monthly training allowance** for those above 40, who are entitled to an allowance equivalent to 50 percent of one's average income over the latest available 12-month period—up to \$3,000 per month. This seems to be a right step in encouraging people to take time off work to upskill.
- 3) **CPF boosts** for ITE graduates aged 30 and below in the form of a \$10,000 (!) top-up to their Ordinary Account after enrolling in a diploma programme and attaining their diploma.

We'll be unpacking more of this year's Budget statement in the days to come. For now, we had some of your most burning economic questions answered by an expert—and explored a lot more non-Budget stuff this week.

*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!*

*If you like our content and our vibes, consider being a **RICE Media patron** to support the work we do.*

Pricey Questions



Listen, it's okay to be confused and anxious whenever the annual Budget address rolls around. It's part of our job to dispel the more complicated stuff and talk about what it means for Singaporeans in the year ahead.

Before we do that, we went ahead to ask some of the burning questions you raised to a real expert in the field: Manu Bhaskaran, the Vice President of the Economics Society of Singapore (ESS).

**An Economist Answers
Singapore's Burning Questions
Ahead of Budget 2024**

To Play Play or Not to Play Play?



We wouldn't dream about the day when Gurmit Singh departs from our world. Sure, we don't see him on our screens as often as we used to—he isn't even appearing on Shopee ads that much anymore.

However, Gurmit is still active and thriving, even if it might be under the shadow of his most popular character. And, to him, that's totally okay.

**Phua Chu Kang Is Immortal.
Gurmit Singh Isn't.**

Relationship Woes



Whether we like it or not, GST is forever here to stay, like a clingy partner.

Your feelings about it aside, how do we live in a world where it feels like the GST is encroaching on our personal space more than ever? Where the rising cost of living starts to seep into not just your bank account but into your entire way of living life?

**Middle-Class Girlfriend,
9% GST Boyfriend**

Closet Woes



In 2024, we are approaching a stronger understanding of the way we perceive gender and sexuality.

Sure, it's Singapore, so the country still feels steps behind the progress a lot of us want to see. And, with the recent CNY festivities, many Singaporeans were faced with another year of trying their best to portray their true selves to their loved ones. That journey is tough.

As part of our Storytellers partnership with SMU, one student shares her story of conquering the closet doors—and how that has been like for other Singaporeans.

**Conditional Love:
The Queer Fear of Coming Out
to Family in Singapore**

Kinship No Enough



As much as Singapore thrives under a CMIO way of understanding our fellow neighbour, somehow it becomes a bit thornier when it's within our own families.

Over the CNY weekend, we asked those who participated in the celebrations about the mixed feelings that come with being mixed-blooded.

**The 'Not Chinese Enough'
Dilemma Among Biracial
Singaporeans Every CNY**

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

- The government will refund Singaporean individuals and businesses to a tune of S\$7.5 million, due to wrongly charged GST over the last five years. (via *CNA*)
- If TikTok CEO Chew Shou Zi's goal during his recent congress grilling session was to show how embarrassing US politicians can be, it apparently worked. (via *SCMP*)

- A friendship turned sour by business is a tale as old as time. This week, it was the impetus behind a court case between an ex-CEO and the owner of Zion Road Big Prawn Noodle. (via *CNA*)
 - The victor of Indonesia's presidential elections is Prabowo Subianto. The former son-in-law of late dictator Suharto has gotten activists fearing for their country's future. (via *The Guardian*)
 - Shout-out to the top 1% of Singapore—or the 1% of Singapore's top 1%. Luxury brand Louis Vuitton has opened a new high-end outlet at Ngee Ann City for its designated 'Very Important Clients'. (via *The Straits Times*)
-



Youth is finite, swag is forever. These elder Singaporeans have kept the vibes long-lasting, age be damned.

**Stylo Milo:
A Tribute to Uncle Swag**

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. You know tennis, but how much do you know about pickleball? Try your hand at the sport over at the first-ever [Tennis & Pickleball Festival](#) in Kallang.
2. Like cheese and wine, pets and a breezy afternoon with craft beer go together absurdly well. [Paws and Pints Yard](#), a pet-friendly outdoor bar, launches this Sunday at the Timbre+ Courtyard.
3. And, some movie picks for your weekend:
 1. *Madame Web*—the origin story of a Marvel supervillain that stars a hilariously blasé Dakota Johnson begins its run at all movie theatres.
 2. *Perfect Days*—this Japanese film nabbed a Best International Film nomination at the upcoming Oscars, and it has an abundance of screening slots for you to choose from at The Projector.
 3. *Money No Enough 3*—because, well, nostalgia for Jack Neo’s golden era can be surprisingly potent.

Rice Media Pte. Ltd.

27a Ann Siang Road, Singapore 069707, 069707, Singapore

This email was sent to {{contact.EMAIL}}

You've received it because you've subscribed to our newsletter.

[View in browser](#) | [Unsubscribe](#)

