

Creating a better future

Government ministries are releasing their addenda to the President's Address this week. Here are the highlights of yesterday's addenda.



MINISTRY OF FINANCE

The ministry set out how it will maintain a sound fiscal system that plans for the future, backed by an effective and efficient Government that innovates and delivers value for money. Its plans include:

- Investing in making innovation pervasive, deepening capabilities in firms and workers, and forging partnerships with businesses and trade associations.
- Building up Singapore's revenues, while ensuring taxes remain competitive to encourage private enterprise and individual initiative.
- Continuing to keep Singapore's overall tax and transfer system equitable, fair and progressive.
- Managing government expenditure growth carefully and continually seeking more cost-effective solutions in the public sector.
- Exploring new funding approaches for large-scale infrastructure investments, particularly through borrowing by statutory boards and government-owned companies.



PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE Strategy Group

The Strategy Group noted that a more complex economic, geopolitical and demographic landscape will require policy responses to challenges that are still emerging and not yet well-defined. To tackle these challenges, it will:

- Get government agencies to work more closely together as solutions to policy challenges will increasingly cut across ministries.
- Develop and implement population policies that enable all Singaporeans to age with purpose and dignity, and make Singapore a great place for families. It will also maintain a careful balance in foreign worker and immigrant flows.
- Coordinate Singapore's domestic and international actions to protect the Republic against the impact of climate change and support international efforts to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions.
- Leverage Singapore's strengths in research, technology and innovation to seize green growth opportunities.



PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE Public Service Division

The PSD said it aspires to serve Singapore and Singaporeans well through anticipating their needs, and delivering services to them in an agile and responsive manner. To do so, it will:

- Group services provided by different agencies together, starting with Moments-of-Life for Families, which aims to make it easier for Singaporeans starting a family to access government schemes.
- Mobilise "Whole-of-Nation" efforts by partnering businesses, citizens and other stakeholders to develop better solutions together.
- Continue to actively reach out to people overseas and in the private sector to hear their views, learn from them and improve public services.
- Build new capabilities for the public service to serve Singapore's future needs, including stronger engineering capabilities and infocomm technology expertise.
- Adopt more flexible and inclusive hiring practices for agencies, including hiring more people with disabilities and freelancers.



PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE Smart Nation and Digital Government Group

Singapore wants to harness digital technology to improve citizens' lives and government services to better meet citizens' needs. Technology is also key to the development of a vibrant future economy, and sets the stage for Singapore to become a Smart Nation. The Smart Nation and Digital Government Group comprises the Smart Nation and Digital Government Office and GovTech. Its plans include:

- Publishing a Digital Government Blueprint in mid-2018 outlining goals and strategies to improve government services.
- Forming Centre of Excellence for Information and Communications within GovTech to deepen public-sector capabilities in emerging areas such as data science, artificial intelligence and cyber security.
- Investing in key Smart Nation projects such as the National Digital Identity and e-payment systems to support seamless digital transactions.



MINISTRY OF LAW

MinLaw will continue its review of the Penal Code to make sure that the criminal justice system is fair and just. It will also review the civil justice system, to keep legal costs affordable. Another aim is to grow Singapore into an international legal services hub. Its plans include:

- Reviewing the Penal Code to cover new offences, look at how vulnerable victims can be better protected and assess if current punishments for sexual offences are sufficient. Laws on attempted suicide and marital rape immunity are being looked at too.
- Strengthening frameworks that help Singaporeans resolve disputes quickly, for instance by reviewing claim limits for Small Claims Tribunals.
- Promoting the international use of Singapore law and standards in commerce and dispute resolution to grow the country into an international legal services hub.
- Reviewing intellectual property laws to keep up with technology changes.