

In this issue of News in Focus, we take a look at current developments and potential lessons for Singapore.

## Leveraging Asia's Power to Confront Global Challenges

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance Mr Lawrence Wong shared his views on what Asia can do to confront global challenges and maximise chances for future success at the Nikkei Forum 28th Future of Asia.

### Upholding peace and stability amidst great power rivalry

ASEAN's approach is about active engagement, finding common ground and advancing cooperation to promote regional peace and stability. ASEAN-centric fora and institutionalised agreements provide important platforms for ASEAN and the major powers to meet regularly and discuss regional issues, thereby fostering mutual trust and sense of community within the region.

### Tackling Climate Change

Climate change is a global crisis with grave, long-term consequences for humanity and will only intensify over time. ASEAN has established a taxonomy for Sustainable Finance. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) is working with several Southeast Asian countries to pilot an Energy Transition Mechanism. Beyond financing, ASEAN countries are working to make the energy system more inter-connected and resilient, towards the goal of an ASEAN Power Grid.

### Securing Economic Prosperity

Rising protectionism is undermining the multilateral trading system and the global economy. In ASEAN, we will work to maintain more open economic cooperation, by actively engaging partners within and outside of Asia. Concurrently, we will continue to strengthen multilateral institutions and fortify the rules-based order for economic development and cooperation.



Sources: PMO, 23 and 25 May; DPM Wong's FB post and CNA, 26 May.



You may read the full speech here:  
<https://go.gov.sg/nikkeispeech>

## ASEAN Centrality is Important Amid a Troubled World

Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong led a Singapore delegation to attend the **42nd ASEAN Summit** from 10 to 11 May 2023 in Labuan Bajo, Indonesia.

At the summit, ASEAN leaders reviewed ASEAN's progress and discussed ways to further enhance collaboration in the digital and green economies.



Following the success of the Lao PDR-Thailand-Malaysia-Singapore power integration project, PM Lee called on ASEAN to continue working towards a joint power grid. Other than discussing international and regional developments, the leaders also discussed:

### Ongoing conflict in Myanmar

Myanmar's junta had not made significant progress on ASEAN's Five-Point Consensus (5PC) plan. Given the ongoing conflict in Myanmar, ASEAN cannot go back to "business as usual" with Myanmar, and there is no change to the format of only inviting Myanmar to ASEAN meetings at a non-political level. Regardless, ASEAN would continue to engage all parties involved, including the junta and the National League for Democracy party, towards the goal of an ASEAN Power Grid.

### Singapore continues to help Timor-Leste towards ASEAN membership

To support Timor-Leste's ASEAN membership, Singapore has launched a special technical assistance package – the Singapore-Timor-Leste ASEAN Readiness Support (STARS) package, to train Timor-Leste officials in ASEAN knowledge and skills. Timor-Leste's Prime Minister Taur Matan Ruak was also present at the summit as an observer for the first time.

### ASEAN Centrality is important amid troubled world

PM Lee stressed the need for ASEAN to be unified, cohesive, effective and central amid a troubled world.



Sources: PM Lee's FB post, 10 May; CNA and PMO, 11 May.

“The more troubled the world is, the more you need a safety life raft. And ASEAN is our life raft; it is the life raft for all ASEAN members. Because each one of us, in a global context, we are not that big.”

– Prime Minister Lee at the sidelines of the 42nd ASEAN Summit



## Questions for conversations

Both PM Lee and DPM Wong stressed the importance of regional integration and ASEAN centrality in the face of great power rivalry.

- ① What are the opportunities and challenges Singapore might face in our efforts to foster closer integration with our ASEAN neighbours?
- ② What can we do as individuals to support Singapore's efforts for closer ASEAN integration?

*We'd love to hear your thoughts ! Drop us a mail at [nexus@defence.gov.sg](mailto:nexus@defence.gov.sg)*

## Youths to Co-develop Policies with Government

To address a wish among youths to play a greater role in policy formulation beyond just dialogue and consultation, new youth-led panels to develop and recommend policies to the government will be launched later this year. The platform aims to provide youths with “a stake in shaping Singapore's future”, especially so with issues that will impact their lives in the near future.

This initiative was prompted by feedback that Singaporean youths wish to be engaged in in-depth discourse with policymakers.

Minister for Culture, Community and Youth Edwin Tong shared details of these youth-led panels at the National Youth Dialogue:

✔ These youth panels would be **set up for two to three times a year**, each surrounding a **different topic or policy** that strongly resonates with the youths in Singapore. While the topics for each panel will be disclosed within the next three months, youths have expressed interest in topics such as the cost of living, mental health and environmental issues.

✔ Before the panels dive in to tackle various policies, **youths will be first equipped with information about the challenges** such as budget considerations that government agencies and ministries are facing. In turn, youths will discuss, share data points and propose solutions, policy shifts or adjustments.



✔ Each youth panel would comprise **about 20 to 30 young people from diverse backgrounds**, and **topics from the panel that merit further discussion may be presented in Parliament** through a White Paper or Green Paper sponsored by MCCY. Minister Tong shared that the recommendations will be taken seriously, and that the government will close the loop with the panel members “whatever the outcomes might be”.

*Any young person interested in being part of the panels may visit [www.nyc.gov.sg/youthpanels](http://www.nyc.gov.sg/youthpanels) to find out more.*

*Sources: Minister Tong's FB post, TODAY, 25 May; Mothership, 26 May; ST, 27 May.*



## Questions for conversations

The government saw opportunities to engage youths in light of their desire to co-create with the government on issues which will impact their lives in the near future.

- ① To what extent do you think the youth-led panels are useful in supporting policy making?
- ② In your opinion, what is one policy that should be co-developed with the youth-led panels?

***We'd love to hear your thoughts ! Drop us a mail at [nexus@defence.gov.sg](mailto:nexus@defence.gov.sg)***

## National Day Parade 2023

This year's National Day Parade (NDP), themed Onward as One, will be the first full-scale NDP at the Padang since 2019.

The theme for NDP 2023, "Onward as One", calls upon Singaporeans to look forward confidently and move onward together in building our shared future as one united people.

One of the highlights for this year's programme will be the Total Defence Parade, featuring the six pillars of Total Defence using floats and assets from the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF), Singapore Police Force and Singapore Civil Defence Force together for the first time.

The SAF's Digital and Intelligence Service will also make its inaugural NDP appearance, with its Guard of Honour marching contingent.

### NDP 2023 Logo

Lion head looking forward confidently and resolutely, showing Singapore's determination to come together to build a shared future.



The five stars represent the nation's ideals of democracy, peace, progress, justice and equality which firmly anchor Singaporeans as we move onward as one.

Number "58" embedded in the lion head, reminding us of how far we have come in the last 58 years.

Logo tilted upwards, showcasing Singaporeans' aspirations to take our nation to greater heights, amidst any challenges that may lie ahead.



**We'd love to hear from you!**

Do send us your thoughts to the questions above by emailing us at [nexus@defence.gov.sg](mailto:nexus@defence.gov.sg)

We'd also like to produce better products for you. Do give us your feedback via the QR code or at this link.

<https://go.gov.sg/feedbacknif>

**Thank you!**