

# ESS Panel Discussion Forum on Post Singapore Budget 2020

## ABOUT THE SPEAKERS



**Manu Bhaskaran** is Director of Centennial Group International and the Founding Director and Chief Executive Officer of Centennial Asia Advisors. Mr. Bhaskaran has more than 30 years of expertise in economic and political risk assessment and forecasting in Asia. Before joining the Centennial Group, he was Chief Economist for Asia of a leading international investment bank and managed its Singapore-based economic advisory group. Mr. Bhaskaran is a well-regarded commentator on Asian financial and economic affairs and has regular columns in business weeklies such as the Edge in Singapore/Malaysia. He serves as Member of the Regional Advisory Board for Asia of the International Monetary Fund; Senior Adjunct Fellow, Institute of Policy Studies; Council Member of the Singapore Institute of International Affairs; and Vice-President of the Economics Society of Singapore. Mr. Bhaskaran has a Master's degree in Public Administration from the John F Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University and a Bachelor's degree in economics from Cambridge University. He has also qualified as a Chartered Financial Analyst.



**Chia Ngee-Choon** is an Associate Professor and Deputy Head in the Department of Economics at the National University of Singapore (NUS). She is the Co-director of the Next Age Institute at NUS and Co-editor of the Singapore Economic Review. Her current research interests include pension economics, health economics and the fiscal impacts of aging. Her works have appeared in internationally referred journals. She has consulted for major international agencies such as the ADB, ADBI, IDRC and the World Bank. She was commissioned to study retirement adequacy of social security in Singapore for the Singapore Central Provident Fund (CPF) Board and the Ministry of Manpower; and was invited to do collaborative research on policy issues with government agencies in Singapore.



**Pushpanathan Sundram (Nathan)** is the Chief Executive Officer of PublicPolicyAsia Advisors Pte. Ltd, a strategic and business advisory firm headquartered in Singapore. The firm covers the emerging Asian economies and assists businesses and trade associations to navigate the region by providing critical market information, developing actionable strategies and plans, and advocacy. The core services provided include research intelligence, government affairs, stakeholder engagement, regulatory compliance, issues/crisis management, strategic communication, trade association management, research and publication, and customized training. The company also works with a number of Asian governments in financing sovereign projects as well as private sector projects with its legal partners. Nathan has more than three decades of experience working at the highest levels of government, international organisations and the private sector. He has a wide stakeholders network in government, international organisations, think tanks, academia, and civil society across Asia and is sought after as a consultant, resource person and speaker on topics related to ASEAN and Asia. Besides his corporate clients, he also consults for ASEAN, UN and other international organisations. Nathan was the Deputy Secretary-General (Deputy Minister) for the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) from 2009 to 2011. He spearheaded the development of the first AEC Blueprint (2009-2015) and later its first three years of implementation. He also set up the ASEAN Scorecard process to measure the AEC implementation by ASEAN member countries. He worked on establishing an independent and dedicated unit, the ASEAN Integration Monitoring Office (AIMO) in the ASEAN Secretariat to undertake AEC surveillance. Prior to that, he served in several senior positions in the ASEAN Secretariat from 1996-2009, which included Principal Director of the Bureau of Economic Integration and Finance, Director of External Relations and Special Assistant to Secretary-General of ASEAN. During this period, he was at the forefront in conceptualising and implementing the ASEAN+3 and East Asia Summit cooperation and developing the initial framework for the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). He also contributed to the drafting of the ASEAN Charter and the Eminent Persons Group (EPG) for the future of ASEAN-China and ASEAN-India dialogue relations respectively. He worked with the Secretaries-General of ASEAN from 2006 to 2008 to establish the Economic Research Institute of ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) to support the think-tank work needed for the ASEAN as well as East Asia economic integration. Nathan transitioned to the private sector in 2012 as the Managing Director, Asia Pacific of EAS Strategic Advice, a leading European public affairs consulting firm. He managed a number of global corporate clients and trade associations while working in EAS. In 2015, he joined NYSE listed Fortune 500 company Eli Lilly as its Director for Market Access, ASEAN. He subsequently assumed higher positions of Regional Director and Senior Director for Public Policy and Government Affairs in the company. He left Eli Lilly to set up his own consultancy, PublicPolicyAsia Advisors Pte. Ltd in Jan 2020. Nathan received several commendations and awards in his career. For his work in ASEAN, he was awarded the first NUS Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy Outstanding Alumni Award in 2011 and the Sahametry Medal (Commander Class) from the Government of Cambodia in

2012. He also received in 2013 the PublicAffairsAsia Magazine's Gold Standard Award for Professional Excellence for his pioneering work in government affairs in Asia. In 1995, he received the Good Service Medal from the Ministry of Defence, Singapore. He now serves as the Chairman of the Food and Agriculture Committee of the US-ASEAN Business Council; Council Member of China-ASEAN Business Alliance; Advisory Board Member of the Global Coalition for Efficient Logistics; Executive Committee Member of the Asian Animal Health Association and; Senior Fellow of Singapore Institute of International Affairs. Nathan holds a Bachelor's Degree in Economics from the National University of Singapore and a Master Degree in Public Policy from the NUS Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy and Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, USA. He is completing his PhD in Public Policy with the School of Public Policy, Chiang Mai University, Thailand. He writes on ASEAN and Asia issues which are covered in local, regional and international media. He has authored books and contributed chapters to books related to ASEAN and Asia.



**Song Seng Wun** holds a Master of Arts in Econometrics from the University of Canterbury, New Zealand. He started his career as an economist in Malayan Banking Bhd in Kuala Lumpur. He moved to Singapore in 1990 and worked as a Regional Economist with various major multi-national financial institutions such as Merrill Lynch; Warburg Dillon Read as well as ABN Amro. Mr Song areas of focus are in the economies of ASEAN-5. He is a familiar icon in South-East Asia's news media as he has greatly contributed his professional views on the regional financial markets.



**Walter Edgar Theseira** is Associate Professor of Economics, School of Business, Singapore University of Social Sciences. He was previously at Nanyang Technological University. He earned his Ph.D. in Applied Economics and Managerial Science from the Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania. His areas are applied microeconomics, behavioural, and experimental economics. He has conducted policy research including studying the licensed moneylending market in Singapore with the Ministry of Law, and vehicle quota auctions with the Land Transport Authority. He was the academic co-investigator of the Singapore Retirement and Health Survey. He has served as a research consultant/advisor with the Economist Service of the Ministry of Trade and Industry, the Ministry of National Development, the Ministry of Social and Family Development, and as an Economic Expert with the Civil Service College. He is a Nominated Member of Parliament for the 13th Parliament of Singapore, Second Session.

## CHAired BY:



**Vikram Khanna** is Associate Editor of The Business Times, Singapore's financial and business daily, where he has worked since 1993. He has been a columnist for the paper and also coordinates the prestigious full-length interview series, The Raffles Conversation. Over the last 23 years, he has personally conducted more than 250 one-on-one interviews with global CEOs, central bank governors, entrepreneurs, Nobel laureates and other thought leaders from around the world. Prior to joining The Business Times, he was an economist at the International Monetary Fund in Washington DC for seven years. He is Vice President of the Economic Society of Singapore. Vikram has B.A., M.A. and M.Phil degrees in economics from the University of Cambridge.