

“Big Ideas from a Small Nation”: Panellists’ Profile

Panel 1— Growth, Technology & Enterprise: “From Factories to Frontier Industries”

Synopsis: This panel will trace Singapore’s economic development model from the EDB-led industrialisation and foreign-investment strategy that powered early growth, through to the question of what drives the next generation of value creation. Panellists should assess whether the state-led, FDI-anchored model remains fit for a world of reshoring, technological sovereignty, and intense competition for talent and capital, and debate where the next growth engines lie, whether in deep tech, the green economy, the digital economy, or enterprise and innovation ecosystems. The discussion should confront the tension between Singapore’s traditional strengths (efficiency, execution, openness) and the more uncertain, failure-tolerant capabilities that frontier innovation demands.

Panellists:



Mr. Manu Bhaskaran is the Founding CEO of Centennial Asia Advisors, providing independent research on Asian political and macroeconomic trends, drawing on 40 years of regional experience. He is also Adjunct Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of Policy Studies, Singapore, focusing on macroeconomic policy. Previously, he held senior roles at Société Générale, overseeing Asian economic and investment strategy and equity research, and helped expand its presence in Southeast and South Asia. He earlier served in the Singapore government, leading strategic regional assessments. Mr. Bhaskaran has held key public service roles and sits on multiple boards. He was educated at Cambridge University and Harvard Kennedy School and is a CFA charterholder.



Ms Jacqueline Poh was appointed as Chief Executive Officer of JTC Corporation since 1 April 2025 and also a Director on the Jurong Port Board. Ms Poh was previously Managing Director of the Singapore Economic Development Board (EDB) from 2021 to 2025. She was the Chairperson of Design Singapore Advisory Board and board member of EDB Investments. Prior to EDB, Ms Poh was Deputy Secretary in the Prime Minister’s Office Strategy Group. She was also the founding Chief Executive of the Government Technology Agency of Singapore (GovTech) and Managing Director of the former Infocommunications Development Authority. She has held key positions in three Ministries – manpower, finance and defence. Ms Poh is an alumnus of Oxford, Cambridge, INSEAD (MBA) and Stanford.



Prof Aaron Maniam is currently Deputy Director at the Institute of Policy Studies and Professor in Practice at the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy. His applied research, teaching and policy engagement work focuses on issues connecting technology, public policy and public administration: how governments use technology (most recently, AI in its generative, agentic and other forms), how they plan for the long term, what facilitates both processes and how they can be improved. He was a member of the Singapore Foreign and Administrative Services from 2004-2023. He was then Fellow of Practice and Director, Digital Transformation Education, at the Blavatnik School of Government at the University of Oxford (2023-2026). He taught on the School’s Master of Public Policy and executive education programmes, and convened its thematic cluster on digital technology, bringing together scholarship and practice on digital issues. He continues as Affiliate Faculty of the School, a position created for former full-time staff who retain a connection with the School’s work and mission.



Mr Ang Yuit is Mr. Ang was elected President of the Association of Small & Medium Enterprises (ASME) in 2023. Currently serving his second term, he leads Singapore’s SMEs through the economic headwinds of the 2020s—navigating global trade shocks, ecosystem restructuring, and the rapid rise of AI. Focusing on expanding market access and AI capabilities, Mr. Ang strongly advocates for local enterprises to unite under “Team Singapore” to build collective resilience and growth.

Panel 2 — Ageing, Inequality, and The Social Compact

Synopsis: This panel turns to the social foundations of the nation. Singapore's early social policy, home ownership through the HDB, savings via the CPF, meritocracy and multiracial cohesion, was itself a set of big ideas that underpinned political and economic stability. Today those foundations face new strains: a rapidly ageing population, widening inequality and questions about social mobility, evolving expectations of a younger and more diverse citizenry, and pressures on the social compact between citizen and state. Panellists should assess which elements of our social model remain robust, which need reinvention, and what new ideas can keep society cohesive and mobile through profound demographic and economic change.

Panellists:



A/P Walter Theseira is an Associate Professor of Economics, School of Business, Singapore University of Social Sciences. His Ph.D. is in Applied Economics and Managerial Science from the Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania. His areas are applied microeconomics, behavioural, and experimental economics. His research has been published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences and the Journal of Economic Behavior and Organisation. His policy research covers housing integration with the Ministry of National Development, vehicle quota auctions with the Land Transport Authority, and the Singapore Retirement and Health Survey. He has served as an economics research advisor for several Singapore Government agencies, and is a Board Member of the Competition and Consumer Commission of Singapore. He was a Nominated Member of Parliament in the 13th Parliament of Singapore.



Ms Melissa Khoo is the Chief Executive Officer of the Central Provident Fund Board (CPF Board) since October 2023. Prior to her role at CPF Board, Melissa was Deputy Secretary at the Ministry of Education from April 2019 to September 2023. She has held leadership roles in the Ageing Planning Office (Ministry of Health), Prime Minister's Office Strategy Group, and Civil Service College Institute for Public Sector Leadership. She started her public service career in the Ministry of Finance, and has done stints in Singapore Exchange (SGX), and Shell Singapore's Downstream Management Consultancy. She previously served on the Boards of the Government Technology Agency, Singapore Institute of Technology and Singapore University of Social Sciences. She currently serves on Singapore Management University's Partnerships and Impact Committee and is a member of the International Women's Forum (Singapore). Melissa holds a Bachelor of Economics (Distinction) degree and a master's degree in International Policy Studies from Stanford University.

Panel 3 — Sustainability & Resilience: “From Energy Security to Climate Strategy”

Synopsis: This panel will examine resource and broader resilience. What started with water self-sufficiency has now broadened to today's far larger tests: climate adaptation for a low-lying island, energy security and the transition to cleaner sources, and food and resource resilience in a fragmenting world. Panellists should consider how the pioneer generation push to achieve resiliency can be applied to these harder, more global challenges, and what genuinely new thinking is required where Singapore cannot simply engineer its way to self-sufficiency.

Panellists:



Dr Teh Kok Peng is the Chairman of the East Asian Institute at the National University of Singapore (NUS). He served as President of GIC Special Investments from 1999 to 2011, where he led investments across private equity, infrastructure and international venture funds. Prior to this, he was concurrently Deputy Managing Director of the Monetary Authority of Singapore and GIC. Dr Teh began his career at the World Bank in 1975 and has held numerous senior leadership and board appointments, including Chairman of Ascendas and Azalea Asset Management. He has served on the boards of leading organisations including

OCBC, China International Capital Corporation, Sembcorp Industries and the Urban Redevelopment Authority. He currently chairs the Advisory Boards of Granite Asia and Seraya Partners and serves on the boards of Fullerton Health and CM Capital Corporation. A former President of the Economic Society of Singapore, Dr Teh holds a First Class Honours degree in Economics from La Trobe University and a Doctorate in Economics from Oxford University.



Professor Euston Quah is the Albert Winsemius Chair Professor of Economics and Director of the Economic Growth Centre at Nanyang Technological University (NTU), Singapore, and President of the Economic Society of Singapore. He formerly served as Head of Economics at NTU for 15 years, playing a key role in developing the department into an internationally recognised centre of economic research and education. Prior to joining NTU, Professor Quah held senior academic and leadership positions at the National University of Singapore (NUS), including Head of the Department of Economics and Deputy Director of the Public Policy Programme. He is the only academic to have headed the Economics departments of both NUS and NTU. Professor Quah has advised Singapore government ministries and international organisations, including the World Bank and Asian Development Bank. A prolific scholar and author, he has published extensively in economics and public policy, with over 100 journal articles and Lead Opinion Pieces and more than 20 books.



Mr Munib Madni is the Chief Executive Officer of the FAST-P Asia Pte Ltd, overseeing the strategic direction and execution of Financing Asia's Transition Partnership (FAST-P), a blended finance initiative launched by the Monetary Authority of Singapore. FAST-P brings together international public, private and philanthropic partners to support Asia's decarbonisation and climate resilience. Munib previously spent close to 14 years at Morgan Stanley Investment Management, where he served as CIO of Asia Equity and co-Portfolio Manager for a US\$14 billion global mandate. Munib is a CFA Charterholder with a Master of Science in Environmental Management from the National University of Singapore. He also holds a Bachelor of Laws and a Bachelor of Business Administration in Finance (First Class Honours) from the University of Technology, Sydney.



Mr Wong De Rui is the Head of the Sustainability Office at GIC, Singapore's sovereign wealth fund. He leads research and investment integration on long-term sustainability themes, including climate change, nature, supply chains and inequality, and works closely with GIC's investment teams, industry partners and academic experts to assess their implications for investment portfolios. Drawing on his earlier experience as a macro strategist and equity analyst, Mr Wong focuses on translating complex sustainability issues into practical investment insights. He was recognised among Asian Investor's Top 10 Sovereign Wealth Fund Executives in Asia in 2024. Since 2021, he has chaired the Paris-aligned Investment Working Group of the Asia Investor Group on Climate Change (AIGCC) and joined its Board Committee in 2024. Mr Wong holds a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Economics from Northwestern University.

Panel Chairpersons



Dr Taimur Baig, heads global economics as well as macro strategy for interest rate, credit, and currency at DBS Bank. Prior to joining DBS, Dr. Baig was a Principal Economist at the Economic Policy Group, Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS). Earlier, he spent nine years at Deutsche Bank's Singapore office, where his last position was Managing Director and Chief Economist, Asia. During 1999-2007, he was based in Washington, DC, at the headquarters of the International Monetary Fund, where his last position was Senior Economist. Dr. Baig is an Honorary Advisor to the Global CFO Network, Director Fellow at the Asian Financial Cooperation Association, and Council Member of the Economic Society of Singapore. He holds a PhD in Economics from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He attended London School of Economics and Wabash College for his B.A. in Economics.



Mr Martin Tan the CEO, Majurity Trust (complete profile to follow)



Dr Jang Ping Thia is the Acting Chief Economist of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), where he leads the Economics Department and advances the Bank's thought leadership in sustainable infrastructure development. He oversees economic research and provides strategic guidance on macroeconomic developments, debt sustainability and project economics to support the Bank's investment decisions. Before joining AIIB in 2016, he served in senior positions at Singapore's Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Trade and Industry, where he focused on fiscal policy, macroeconomic analysis, economic research and policy evaluation. Dr Thia holds a PhD in Economics from the London School of Economics.

Closing Fireside Chat — “The Ingredients for Success”

Synopsis: This reflective capstone features a conversation about the deeper ingredients behind Singapore's track record of bold, successful bets. Moving beyond any single policy, the discussion will surface the intangibles, the mindset, institutional culture, long-term orientation, willingness to take calculated risks, and tolerance for being wrong, that allowed big ideas to be conceived, championed, and executed. It should also look ahead: how does a mature, successful, and more risk-averse nation preserve that founding boldness, and how are ideas sourced and talent cultivated to carry it forward?

Speaker



Prof LIM Siong Guan a Professor at the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, National University of Singapore, and Senior Fellow of the Singapore Civil Service College. He was Group President of GIC (2007–2016), Chairman of the Singapore Economic Development Board (2006–2009), and Head of the Singapore Civil Service (1999–2005). He was the first Principal Private Secretary of founding Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew and has held Permanent Secretary appointments across several ministries. He is a Member of the International Board of the stars Foundation, Senior Advisor to Insignia Ventures Partners, and Chairman of Honour (Singapore) Ltd. He has co-authored two books with Joanne H. Lim and authored “Can Singapore Fall? Making the Future for Singapore”.

Moderator



Dr Prakash Kannan is the Chief Economist and Director of the Total Portfolio Strategy Group at GIC, where he leads global investment outlook and asset allocation. He serves on several key committees, including Investment Management, Sustainability, Group Risk, and Currency Risk Management. Since joining GIC in 2012, he has held roles such as Deputy Head of Total Portfolio Strategy and Head of Economics & Capital Markets. Previously, he worked at the IMF and Bank Negara Malaysia. He is Vice President of the Economic Society of Singapore and serves on multiple advisory councils. He holds degrees from MIT and Stanford and is a CFA charterholder.