

NAVIGATING POWER AND INFLUENCE IN A SHIFTING REGION

As global and regional power dynamics continue to evolve, Southeast Asia stands at a strategic crossroads. From China's expanding influence to ASEAN's efforts to maintain unity amid great power competition, questions of legitimacy and leadership are increasingly central to the region's prospects. Small states face both risks and opportunities as they manage external pressures, while collective institutions strive to assert relevance and resilience. At the same time, non-traditional security challenges such as climate change and water scarcity are reshaping national priorities. Water scarcity is no longer a distant threat but a growing economic and strategic concern, with rising water costs prompting governments and communities to rethink sustainability, long-term planning, and regional cooperation. In this issue, we explore how states manage influence, address resource pressures, and contribute to a stable and prosperous regional order.

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Leadership without Legitimacy? China, ASEAN, and the Dynamics of Regional Power

Can Influence Alone Secure Lasting Leadership in Southeast Asia?

As China expands its regional footprint, questions of legitimacy and credibility come to the fore. [Selina Ho](#) Vice Dean (Research and Development) and Dean's Chair Associate Professor at LKYSPP, and Terence Lee, Senior Fellow Coordinator of MSc (Asian Studies) Programme at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, explore how ASEAN navigates major-power competition while protecting its autonomy; highlighting the delicate balance between influence, authority, and trust in shaping the region's future.

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Beware the crocodile: The challenge for small states

How Can Smaller Nations Survive in a Pond Dominated by Giants?

Small states face mounting pressure from major powers and regional instability. [Danny Quah](#), Li Ka Shing Professor in Economics, examines how they safeguard sovereignty, stay strategically relevant, and leverage alliances to challenge the notion that "might makes right" and foresight can rival sheer size in shaping regional outcomes.

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Preparing for a future where water costs more

How Will Rising Water Costs Reshape Policy and Strategy in Southeast Asia?

Water scarcity is no longer a distant threat but a growing economic and strategic challenge. [Tan-Soo Jie-Sheng](#), Director of Institute for Environmental and Sustainability (IES) and Assistant Professor at LKYSPP, explores how governments and communities are preparing for rising water costs, underscoring the need for sustainable management, policy innovation, and regional cooperation.

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As climate uncertainty deepens and demand rises, resilience will not come cheap. The question is not whether costs can be avoided, but how we prepare for them early and responsibly.

[Tan-Soo Jie-Sheng](#), Director of Institute for Environmental and Sustainability (IES) and Assistant Professor at LKYSPP

REGIONAL RESILIENCE IN A CHANGING WORLD: CAN ASEAN STAY COHESIVE AMIDST GREAT POWER RIVALRY?

In this episode of Policy Unpacked, [Selina Ho](#), Vice Dean (Research and Development) and Dean's Chair Associate Professor at LKYSPP, speaks with [Khong Yuen Foong](#), Li Ka Shing Professor in Political Science and Co-Director of Centre on Asia and Globalisation at LKYSPP and [Tan Tsien Li](#) in a panel discussion about how ASEAN is confronted by a complex and volatile strategic landscape and how a re-examination of regional resilience is especially needed in this increasingly contested world.



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FEATURED RESEARCH

Strategic choices for middle powers in developing AI capabilities: a case study of Singapore

How Can Middle Powers Leverage AI to Strengthen Influence? As AI becomes a key arena in great-power competition, middle powers must navigate complex strategic choices. This article introduces the 2CID framework and shows how Singapore is developing AI capabilities while balancing regional and global relationships. It offers insights into how smaller states can innovate, hedge risks, and assert influence in a rapidly evolving technological and geopolitical landscape.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Start	09:00 AM	04 to 06 March 2026	Mastering Impact Evaluation Equip yourself to design and deliver programmes that achieve real results. This course guides decision-makers through leading frameworks for understanding human behaviour, evaluating policy interventions, and applying global best practices. Through case studies, interactive exercises, and data-driven insights, participants will learn how to implement evaluation strategies effectively, enhancing policy outcomes and maximising value for stakeholders.
Start	02:00 PM	04 March 2026	Building Financial Resilience: Pensions & Financial Literacy Explore how financial literacy and policy design can strengthen retirement systems across Asia. This exhibition showcases student-led research on pensions and retirement policies, alongside new national survey findings from Singapore. Organised as part of the Social Science and Humanities Ideas Festival 2026, the event offers practical insights into building financial resilience for the future.
Start	09:00 AM	06 March 2026	Reimagining Regional Resilience in an Age of Great Power Rivalry How can Singapore and Southeast Asia strengthen resilience in a complex and volatile strategic landscape? This half-day event brings together interdisciplinary panels to examine emerging regional orders, institutional adaptation, and transboundary challenges, including technology, global value chains, and health security. Participants will gain insights into policy responses, strategic planning, and leadership approaches that shape a stable and resilient ASEAN.
Start	09:00 AM	24 to 27 March 2026	Women in Leadership: Advancing Together This flagship programme empowers women leaders to thrive and drive positive change in their organisations and communities. Participants will explore key leadership principles, personal branding, team and organisational management, and the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Through panel discussions with accomplished leaders across the public, private, and people sectors, participants gain practical insights, inspiration, and strategies to lead with impact and contribute meaningfully to society.

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VIDEO SHOWCASE



Singapore Budget 2026: Enduring Problems in Uncertain Times

Delivered amid global uncertainties and mounting domestic pressures, Singapore's first post-election budget sets out a forward-looking agenda. But is it enough? Just a day after Singapore Budget 2026, the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, Singapore Management University, and Nanyang Technological University assess what this year's budget has to offer, and whether it is sufficient to build a stronger, more inclusive society in Singapore.

[WATCH HERE](#)

Global-is-Asian (Online Magazine)

As power dynamics and regional challenges grow more complex, how can policymakers and leaders make sense of change while safeguarding stability? Global-is-Asian features research-driven insights on leadership, regional cooperation, and strategic resilience; offering evidence-based perspectives on how policy can navigate uncertainty and shape Asia's future.



FOR MORE THOUGHT LEADERSHIP:



A digital platform by the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy featuring thought leadership, expert commentary, and insights from LKYSPP faculty and regional voices on key policy challenges shaping Asia and the world.



A podcast series featuring a conversation with an LKYSPP faculty, policy expert or practitioner. Find out what they foresee happening in terms of trends and policies.



A series of events around Asia featuring a panel of relevant local experts, including LKYSPP faculty, to discuss policy topics.



A deep dive into interesting research or studies from LKYSPP faculty, breaking down the key points and highlighting the impact of the project.

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