

The Year in Review: Policy and Political Developments in 2025

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INTRODUCTION

This document reviews the key policy and political developments in Singapore in 2025. The year was significant as the country marked its 60th year of independence and a general election was held with Singapore's third prime minister (PM), Mr Lawrence Wong, leading the charge for the governing People's Action Party.

With United States (US) President Donald Trump slated to return to office for his second term in January 2025, Singapore braced itself for an era of renewed geopolitical tensions and economic uncertainty.

However, in successive quarters of 2025, the economy expanded year-on-year by 3.9 per cent, 4.6 per cent, 4.6 per cent, and 6.9 per cent, respectively, with industry front-loading purchases into the US to avoid the imposition of punitive import tariffs.

Overall, Singapore's economy expanded by 5.0 per cent in 2025, easing only slightly from the 5.3 per cent GDP growth in 2024. The Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI)'s forecast for GDP growth in 2026 ranges from 2.0 to 4.0 per cent (Ministry of Trade and Industry, 2026).

Singapore's core inflation rate cooled from 2.8 per cent the previous year to 0.7 per cent in 2025 (Monetary Authority of Singapore, 2026). This was lower than the global rate reported by the International Monetary Fund, which estimated that the global inflation rate had dropped from 5.8 to 4.2 per cent in 2025 (International Monetary Fund, 2025).

Overall unemployment rates remained steady in 2025 at 2.0 per cent. While resident unemployment rates held at 2.8 per cent between 2024 and 2025, citizen unemployment rates rose slightly from 2.9 to 3.0 per cent (Ministry of Manpower, 2026b). Additionally, the labour participation rate declined from 68.2 per cent in 2024 to 67.9 per cent in 2025, reflecting effects of Singapore's increasingly ageing population (Ministry of Manpower, 2026a).

Population trends in 2025 reflected continuing trends from previous years. At end of June 2025, the resident population in Singapore grew by 0.6 per cent to 4.2 million, with the citizen population growing by 0.7 per cent to 3.7 million while permanent residents remained at 0.5 million. Meanwhile, non-residents increased by 2.7 per cent to 1.9 million. The proportion of residents aged 65 years and older rose from 18.0 per cent in 2024 to 18.8 per cent in 2025, and the old-age support ratio¹ declined from 3.5 in 2024 to 3.3 in 2025 (Singapore Department of Statistics, 2025). Alarming, Singapore's total fertility rate sank to an all-time low of 0.87 in 2025, from 0.97 in 2024 (Singapore Department of Statistics, n.d.).

¹ The old-age support ratio refers to the number of residents aged 20 to 64 per resident aged 65 and over.

POLICY DEVELOPMENTS

Budget 2025

Budget 2025 Statement was delivered by PM and Minister for Finance, Lawrence Wong, in Parliament on 18 February. His first as PM and the last for the parliamentary term, it focused on managing cost pressures, supporting businesses and workers, sustaining green transition efforts and marking Singapore's 60th year of independence.

Observers described it as a “feel good” and “generous” budget, reflecting the government's emphasis on providing broad-based support at a time of economic uncertainty (Chew, 2025; Raguraman & Baharudin, 2025). However, opposition politicians raised concerns about the lack of longevity of the measures, contending that structural changes were also needed for long-term resilience of the economy and household finances (Singh, 2025).

Vouchers, Grants, Subsidies and Assistance Schemes

The continuing salience of cost-of-living concerns resounded in the Budget statement. To continue aiding Singaporeans in managing rising cost pressures, earlier support packages were extended and enhanced. Higher housing grants and subsidies targeted at seniors, larger families and people with disabilities were announced. These packages targeted those in middle- and lower-income groups as well as more vulnerable groups in Singapore.

Some social support schemes were enhanced — the ComCare Assistance scheme, targeted at lower-income individuals and families saw rises of \$120 to \$380 depending on household size. Others were expanded with the Enhancement for Active Seniors (EASE) programme now covering households in private properties, or extended, like in the case of the Enabling Employment Credit for persons with disabilities, which now runs till end-2028.²

To commemorate Singapore's 60th year of independence, PM Wong announced several one-time vouchers and forms of fiscal relief. These bonuses sought to encourage Singaporeans to patronise local businesses such as the CDC vouchers, engage with local heritage and culture like the \$100 SG Culture Pass credits and promote healthy living like the \$100 SG60 Active SG credits.

Opposition politicians raised concerns about cost pressures as well as the measures proposed to alleviate them. Workers' Party (WP) Secretary-General, Mr Pritam Singh,

² The EASE programme provides subsidised senior-friendly fittings in Singapore Citizen households with at least one senior citizen. Previously, the EASE programme was only available as an option for HDB flats selected for the Home Improvement Programme. The Enabling Employment Credit was introduced in 2021, providing wage offsets to employers of Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) to encourage local employers to hire them. Previously, the Enabling Employment Credit was scheduled to end on 31 December 2025.

questioned the need for the hikes in the Goods and Services Tax (GST) over the past two years, citing Singapore's "exceedingly healthy fiscal position" with the Budget surplus for 2024 revised from \$778 million to \$6.4 billion. He added that the one-off vouchers such as the CDC vouchers and SG60 vouchers could only help in the short-term (Tham, Chin, Baharudin et al., 2025). WP Chairman, Ms Sylvia Lim added that offering ad-hoc vouchers and handouts "may come across as missing the woods for the trees" (S. Lim, 2025). People's Action Party (PAP) Members of Parliament (MPs) responded that the surpluses reflected sensible management, and that global inflationary pressures meant Singapore needed prudent buffers (Tham, Chin, Baharudin et al., 2025).

Support for businesses

Easing cost pressures and advancing transformation goals were also key areas of focus in Budget 2025. Measures included enhancements to productivity and innovation grants, energy transition assistance and continued tax incentives to help maintain economic competitiveness in the changing Trump 2.0 world.

To do that end, the National Productivity Fund, for instance, received a \$150 million commitment to the Enterprise Compute Initiative to help enterprises adopt artificial intelligence (AI) solutions. Additionally, the Fund received a boost of \$3 billion to support automation, innovation and workforce skills, especially skills in emerging technologies such as AI, quantum computing and semiconductor research and development (R&D). At the Budget debates, PAP MP Dr Tan Wu Meng reminded the House that the benefits of AI should be equitable and that the Enterprise Compute Initiative should be made available to businesses of all sizes (Tham, Raguraman, et al., 2025).

Following recommendations from the Equities Market Review Group established by the Monetary Authority of Singapore in 2024, the Equity Market Development Programme (EQDP) was announced at the Budget. With the EQDP, the Monetary Authority of Singapore will invest directly in funds managed by Singapore-based asset managers focusing on Singapore equities, with the aim of increasing trading activity, investor interest and strengthening Singapore's asset management ecosystem (Tan & Goh, 2025). At the Budget debates, WP MP Mr Louis Chua questioned the effectiveness and sustainability of EQDP as seed funding and suggested that the government use its influence to increase the supply of quality companies available for public investment on the SGX to complement the EQDP (L. W. L. Chua, 2025).

Support for Workers

For workers, a continued emphasis on adaptability and inclusivity was highlighted at the Budget, with expanded schemes for skills upgrading, wage support for lower-income workers and facilitating mid-career transitions. These initiatives underscored the ongoing goal of building a resilient and future-ready workforce.

In particular, SkillsFuture schemes were strengthened. It was announced that the SkillsFuture Level-Up Programme would be extended to part-time training beginning in 2026, and the SkillsFuture Jobseeker Support Scheme broadened its eligibility criteria; the property Annual Value threshold for applicants was raised from \$25,000 or less, to \$31,000 or less, to ensure that middle-income jobseekers were covered in the scheme (Tay, 2024; Ministry of Manpower, 2024).

At the Budget debate, PAP MP Mr Darryl David asked for information about the extent to which SkillsFuture schemes have contributed to employment growth and increased wages. PAP MP Mr Saktiandi Bin Supaat also asked if the government had examined reasons for the suboptimal uptake of SkillsFuture training benefits (Tham, Chin, et al., 2025). Other MPs called for improvements in schemes targeted at under-supported groups: WP MP Mr Mohd Fahmi Aliman called attention to the limitations of the Workfare Income Supplement (WIS) noting that the existing criterion excluded workers above 60 years of age (Tay, 2025c). WP MP Mr Gerald Giam pressed for more structured and targeted job placement programmes and structured “returnship” programmes to help mid-career workers find jobs and re-enter the workforce (Giam, 2025).

In his Budget round-up speech, PM Wong acknowledged that there was more to be done to support workers, and the Government would convene the Tripartite Workgroup to explore this (L. Wong, 2025b).

Move towards sustainability

PM Wong reaffirmed Singapore’s commitment to sustainable growth and development, with extensions and expansions to existing green transition and resource efficiency schemes. These initiatives further Singapore’s goals of reaching net-zero carbon emissions by 2050 and are aligned with the Singapore Green Plan 2030, reflecting long-term policy and fiscal commitment to the cause.

Changes to these schemes included a top-up to \$400 in climate vouchers for citizen households under the Climate Friendly Household Programme. The programme was extended to private property households, allowing more Singaporeans to offset the cost of buying and using energy-efficient appliances (H. S. Chin, 2025d). Also announced was a top-up of \$5 billion to the Future Energy Fund to increase electricity imports as well as explore new clean energy sources (Mohan, 2025).

Minister for Sustainability and the Environment Ms Grace Fu laid out other plans for climate resilience and sustainability in her Committee of Supply speech, such as indoor cooling targets of 25°C or higher, as well as weather science research to help Singapore adapt to climate patterns (Fu, 2025).

WP Secretary-General Mr Pritam Singh noted that the extension of the climate vouchers to private households — “a relatively small and generally more well-off

segment” — was “ironic and telling” (Singh, 2025). PM Wong responded in his round-up speech that the climate vouchers were not meant to be cost-of-living support and instead encouragement to all Singaporeans to go green, and as such, was not “ironic” in its delivery to private property residents (L. Wong, 2025b).

US Tariffs

On 2 April, US President Donald Trump announced global tariffs, with a baseline of 10 per cent across all imports, known as the “Liberation Day” tariffs (“Key details,” 2025). Commentators hoped that the Singapore’s good relationship with the US, the US-Singapore Free Trade Agreement and Singapore’s trade deficit with the US could position Singapore more favourably on the US radar, but also noted that Singapore’s status as a financial hub that is home to many foreign — especially Chinese — companies and subsidiaries could draw scrutiny (A. Ng, 2025; Lin, 2025).

For a long time, Singapore enjoyed a close partnership with the US, with the US Embassy in Singapore describing the two countries as “closely linked” (U.S. Embassy Singapore, 2024). Under the US-Singapore Free Trade Agreement (USSFTA), Singapore imposes no tariffs on US products and runs a trade deficit with the US (Kang, 2025).

Despite all these, the Trump administration announced it would impose the baseline and sectoral “Liberation Day” tariffs to Singapore which included sweeping 100 per cent tariffs on patented pharmaceuticals and on semiconductors, which are among the country’s most valuable export segments (Chen, 2025; Ong, 2025a).

Soon after the announcement, a flash survey by the American Chamber of Commerce in Singapore indicated that 69 per cent of firms expected the new tariffs to have significant or moderate negative impact on their business operations (The American Chamber of Commerce in Singapore, 2025). After an initial spike in exports due to frontloading in anticipation of the tariff hike, Singapore’s key exports to the US declined by 42.7 per cent and by 12.2 per cent to China between June and July (Chiang, 2025).

Second-order impacts on Singapore were anticipated as well. Being a leading transshipment port, observers anticipated a decline in transshipment activity around Singapore (Medina, 2025). Additionally, with China facing harsher tariffs from the US, observers noted that Chinese products could be redirected from the US to Southeast Asian markets, placing pressure on the domestic markets (Kang, 2025).

The tariffs prompted a pivot towards strengthening regional partnerships. At the 10th Belt and Road Summit, Malaysia’s Transport Minister Mr Anthony Loke described the geopolitical situation as “unsettling” and called for greater cooperation in Asia (Fung, 2025). PM Wong similarly called for reforms in ASEAN to strengthen regional economic cooperation, and Singapore’s Foreign Minister Dr Vivian Blakrishnan called

for greater economic integration to better withstand the global challenges of rising protectionism and geopolitical uncertainty (W. K. Ng, 2025c; Baharudin, 2025).

National Day Rally 2025

PM Wong delivered the National Day Rally (NDR) speech at the Institute of Technical Education (ITE) headquarters on 17 August (L. Wong, 2025a). The speech focused on navigating uncertainties in AI usage and manpower while responding to the changing needs of both youth and seniors. It also emphasised strengthening social compact by fostering a more united “we-first” society (Y. H. Goh, 2025a). As the first National Day Rally after the 2025 General Election, and with the milestone of Singapore’s 60th year of independence, the Rally struck an uplifting tone, underscored by themes of continuity, unity and resilience.

Navigating Uncertainties

AI

Uncertainties about the advancing power of AI and its impact on Singaporeans were addressed by PM Wong in the NDR. While highlighting AI’s ability to solve complex math questions as well as its applicability in everyday life in public and private sectors as well as in education, PM Wong assured Singaporeans of the government’s focus on a “Singaporean-first, AI-driven future”. He assuaged concerns about AI replacing jobs and affirmed the government’s commitment to working with unions and workers to redesign jobs and empower workers (Shafeeq, 2025a).

PM Wong also assured Singaporeans that schools would guide students to use but not over-rely on AI; to exhibit digital resilience. He recognised that AI could not replace human qualities such as character, empathy and a sense of purpose, and that schools would place greater emphasis on character and citizenship education to develop these values (W. K. Ng, 2025a).

Jobs and workers

Amidst economic uncertainty, PM Wong reaffirmed the government’s commitment to ensuring Singaporeans’ employment, describing the government’s economic strategy as being “about jobs, jobs and jobs” which would include schemes to support new and mid-career jobseekers.

For jobseekers, PM Wong announced there would be community development council (CDC)-led job-matching initiatives and career fairs as well as a continuation of government-funded traineeship programmes first offered during the COVID-19 pandemic to help graduates find work in the unstable and uncertain job market.

To ensure that workers continued to be adequately skilled and competitive, PM Wong announced enhancements to the SkillsFuture Level-Up Programme with expanded course offerings and applicability to part-time studies (Tay, 2025b).

Youth

Vape crackdowns

PM Wong addressed the rise in vaping-related offences in recent years, including the growing trend of vapes laced with etomidate being used among teenagers and said that stiffer penalties would be imposed. Framing vaping as a drug issue, his declaration marked a decisive shift towards a hardline stance and stricter enforcement against its use (Chan & Foo, 2024; Lee, 2024).

The purchase, possession and use of vapes has been illegal in Singapore since February 2018 (Health Sciences Authority, n.d.). Prior to PM Wong's address, the maximum penalty for possession, use, or purchase of vapes was a maximum fine of \$2,000. An amnesty, titled "Bin the Vape" was launched by the Health Sciences Authority (HSA) to encourage users to voluntarily dispose of their vapes and to quit vaping without the legal repercussions that had been introduced earlier in the year (C. Tan, 2025).

PM Wong announced jail sentences and more severe punishments for vape distributors, acknowledging that "[treating vapes] like tobacco... [was] no longer enough." Supervision and rehabilitation would also be provided to help vape users quit, solidifying the government's firmer stance on the issue (N. Chua, 2025).

The tougher stance led to vape manufacturers leaving Singapore as well as mixed international reactions from other governments and advocacy groups alike. Health experts in Malaysia lauded the move and called for policymakers in Malaysia to move likewise, while New Zealand-based Coalition of Asia Pacific Tobacco Harm Reduction Advocates (Caphra) deemed Singapore's vape policies "fearmongering" (Yusof, 2025; Sun, 2025b).

Disconnecting and online safety

PM Wong also addressed the impact of technology—in particular, the internet and social media — on children and youth, citing concerns that young people were becoming increasingly socially isolated and disconnected with reality. He emphasised the need to restrict screen time for children and that the government is observing the effects of new laws in Australia to that effect and consider further action here (Tushara, 2025).

Seniors

Singapore's ageing population continued to be an enduring concern, with seniors being a focal group in Budget deliberations and PM Wong's National Day Rally speech. With Singapore projected to become a "super-aged" country by 2035, the sense of urgency within government to help seniors remain healthy and engaged was evident.³

³ Per [the United Nations' 2022 Asia-Pacific Report on Population Ageing](#), a country is defined as "super-aged" if 20 per cent or more of its population is aged 65 and above.

In PM Wong's speech, he announced the launch of Age Well SG to complement the extant Healthier SG campaign to help seniors lead more active and fulfilling lives in better living environments. This would entail the establishment of "Age Well Neighbourhoods" to provide seniors with more accessible healthcare, services, and activity centres (Tan & Devaraj, 2025).

Developing the North

Estate development in the northern regions of Singapore which were part of the URA Draft Master Plan 2025 were featured in the speech as well. The region would benefit from greater connectivity, accessibility and expanded and revitalised living spaces in Woodlands, Kranji and Sembawang. For instance, Woodlands Checkpoint would be redeveloped and expanded, with flexible industrial spaces and new homes near the Johor Bahru–Singapore RTS link station to take advantage of the connection between Johor Bahru and Singapore.

"We-First" Society

Unity emerged as a prevailing theme in the speech. Emphasising the Singapore spirit and the importance of nurturing a "we-first" society, PM Wong urged Singaporeans to embrace the spirit of collective action and social solidarity — a keen reflection of Forward Singapore's initiatives to increase and enhance government-citizen partnership (Kok, 2025b).

Through three anecdotes of Singaporeans and their efforts in social initiatives, PM Wong stressed the necessity of citizen participation in solving problems and helping each other. He urged Singaporeans to move past reliance on the state and work with the government through youth panels, citizen panels and the like, to give feedback, propose policy changes and raise prominent issues on the ground.

Singapore Economic Resilience Taskforce

Following the announcement of the "Liberation Day" tariffs on 2 April, the Singapore Economic Resilience Taskforce (SERT), chaired by Deputy Prime Minister (DPM) and Minister for Trade and Industry Mr Gan Kim Yong was established on 8 April to help Singapore navigate the economic uncertainties generated by the tariffs (S. F. Chin, 2025a; MTI et al., 2025). Much like some of Singapore's neighbours, the SERT exemplifies Singapore's commitment to mitigating rather than retaliating against the tariffs.

The SERT comprises three workstreams. "Sensemaking and Communication" will focus on communications between the government, businesses and workers in the wake of the tariff developments; "Addressing Immediate Challenges" will identify and respond to challenges faced by businesses and workers; and "Longer-Term Strategies and Responses" will focus on developing strategies to strengthen resilience among

businesses and workers in the new economic landscape (MTI et al., 2025). On 4 August, the final workstream was replaced by the Economic Strategy Review.

Economic Strategy Review

Comprising five committees (i.e., global competitiveness; technology and innovation; entrepreneurship; human capital; and the impact of restructuring), the Economic Strategy Review focuses on charting an economic blueprint to keep Singapore globally competitive (Ministry of Digital Development and Information, 2025). The committees are expected to publish a report detailing their recommendations by mid-2026 (S. K. Tang, 2025a).

Housing and the URA Draft Master Plan 2025

The perennial issue of housing and urban development continued to be in focus this year with the release of the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA)'s Draft Master Plan 2025 on 25 June by Minister for National Development Mr Chee Hong Tat. Expanding on URA's 2019 Master Plan, the URA Draft Master Plan 2025 proposes a sharp increase in housing availability, the integration of urban living with heritage and climate resilience, reflecting greater emphasis on flexibility, community input and sustainable urban growth.

To raise housing supply, Mr Chee also announced that 55,000 Build-To-Order (BTO) units would be launched between 2025 and 2027 to moderate HDB resale prices (K. G. Ng, 2025b).

The waiting time for available housing supply was to be shortened with HDB announcing a launch of 3,800 flats with waiting times of less than three years in the year, and two Sale of Balance Flats exercises. HDB indicated that around 12,000 flats with shorter waiting times would also be released by 2027 (Ganesan, 2025).

Alongside increasing housing availability, the URA Draft Master Plan also seeks to develop and redevelop different parts of Singapore. As had been mentioned at the National Day Rally, the northern region of Singapore would be redeveloped with a focus on revitalisation and accessibility for economic development; the Paya Lebar Airbase would be redeveloped to create space for residential and mixed-use districts (Urban Redevelopment Authority, n.d.).

Housing grants and schemes were also implemented or enhanced to make housing more affordable, especially for lower-income families. The Fresh Start Housing Scheme, which helps ComLink+ families with young children living in public rental flats, was enhanced. These families would receive \$75,000 in grants to support their purchase of a 2-room Flexi or Standard 3-room flat (Liew, 2025).

The government has also been implementing resale price cooling measures since 2021, with then-Minister for National Development Mr Desmond Lee noting in January

2021 that the government was “not averse” to implementing further cooling measures to ensure long-term housing affordability and sustainability (S. K. Tang, 2025b).

Minimum Effective Tax Rate

PM Wong first announced Singapore’s alignment with OECD’s Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS) 2.0 framework in 2023, with Pillar Two on minimum corporate tax rates to be implemented in phases beginning in 2025 (Ang, 2023). In aligning with OECD’s standards, Singapore seeks to play its role as a responsible global financial hub and to create a more transparent tax environment for local and regional businesses.

Pillar Two of OECD’s BEPS 2.0 framework introduces Global Anti-Base Erosion Model Rules (GloBE) (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, n.d.). Under these rules, the Multinational Enterprise (Minimum Tax) Act (MMTA) was enacted with effect from 1 January. The MMTA introduces the Multinational Enterprise Top-up Tax (MTT) and the Domestic Top-up Tax (DTT), which ensures a minimum effective tax rate (ETR) of 15 per cent is imposed on large multinational enterprises operating in Singapore (Inland Revenue Authority of Singapore, 2024; Ministry of Finance [MOF], n.d.). Amendments to the MMTA were enacted on 6 November to clarify the definitions and rules in the MMTA and provide regulation-making powers required to operate the GloBE rules (Amendment of Multinational Enterprise (Minimum Tax) 2024, 2025). Disruptions from these new rules would be short-term, opined the Ministry of Finance and observers alike (MOF, n.d.; Wee, 2021).

Employment and CPF

Previously announced changes to employment and CPF also took effect this year to provide a greater sense of assurance about jobs and retirement adequacy to local workers. This included the changes to the minimum qualifying salary for the Employment Pass, increases to the CPF contribution rates for senior workers (Ministry of Manpower, n.d.; Central Provident Fund Board, n.d.), and the imposition of CPF on certain categories of platform workers (Kok, 2024).

Enhancements to the quality of employment for employees were also discussed through the year. The Workplace Fairness Act, first tabled in January, aimed at protecting workers against discrimination based on from age, gender, nationality, race and disability with actionable penalties against employers who did not abide (Chew & Ng, 2025). The Workplace Fairness (Dispute Resolution) Bill was subsequently passed on 4 November and would be due to take effect in 2027. The bill provides for mediation of workplace fairness disputes as well as civil actions for a statutory tort of discrimination.

Opposition politicians expressed concern about time limits and potential rejection of late submission. Minister for Manpower Dr Tan See Leng responded saying that the time limits would account for extenuating circumstances and were intended to encourage timely submission of valid claims.

Politicians from both sides also noted that outsourced workers — often older and in lower-income jobs — were excluded in the Bill. Dr Tan said that the Tripartite Guidelines on Fair Employment Practices would be revised to reflect such concerns so that platform workers would not discriminate against based on “non-job-related characteristics”. Other concerns raised included the asymmetry of power in the control of evidence, the challenges of implementation faced by small-to-medium enterprises (SMEs) and frivolous claims (Mohan & Tang, 2025).

Defence

On SAF Day on 1 July, new Defence Minister Mr Chan Chun Sing reminded Singaporeans of the challenges of navigating current global geopolitical uncertainties in order to secure itself and its economic prosperity (W. K. Ng, 2025d). In that vein, developments in Singapore’s defence systems continued throughout the year, with an emphasis on extending defence partnerships with major global players such as the US, China and France, as well as measures against cyber-threats.

Singapore’s defence partnerships with major powers continued in the year, with Minister Chan making a visit to China in September to meet with senior leaders there, reflecting “longstanding, warm and friendly” Singapore-Chinese defence relations (Cheng, 2025b). Singapore’s “excellent and longstanding bilateral defence relationship” with the US was also re-affirmed through a Strategic Security Policy Dialogue in November, as well as a 12-day bilateral exercise held in Guam between the Singapore and US navies (Ministry of Defence, 2025; Yasmine, 2025). Singapore signed a Memorandum of Understanding to enhance defence cooperation with Australia (Ministry of Defence Australia, 2025; Y. Wong, 2025a). Singapore procured defence equipment through these partnerships, such as fighter jets from the US and submarines from Germany (Yeo, 2025b; Cheng, 2025a).

The annual Shangri-La Dialogue, which was held between 30 May and 1 June underscored these partnerships (P. T. Wong, 2025a). Minister Chan highlighted that evolving security challenges had opened up new avenues for building on long-term partnerships and cooperations. The dialogue, however, also reflected ongoing geopolitical tensions. The Chinese defence minister was notably absent from the event (P. T. Wong, 2025b). Additionally, US Secretary of Defence Mr Pete Hegseth warned of China’s interests in Asia, describing China’s actions as aspiring to “become a hegemonic power in Asia”, to “[harass] its neighbors”, and “steal technology and attack critical infrastructure” (U.S. Department of War, 2025). Mr Hegseth invited Asian countries to follow European countries in raising defence spending to 5 per cent of

their GDP (Fernandez, 2025). Observers noted that Secretary Hegseth's speech indicated US's interests in "promoting a bigger defence market, one it can profitably penetrate" (Velloor, 2025).

Notably, cybersecurity emerged as an increasing point of concern for Singapore through the year. The Singapore Armed Forces looked towards enhancing measures against cyber threats with the launch of the Defence Cyber Command and SAF C4 and Digitalisation Command under SAF's Digital and Intelligence Service (Yeo, 2025a). Singapore also faced attacks by UNC3886, a cyber espionage group that has been linked to China (Devaraj, 2025a). These attacks on Singapore's critical infrastructure could be harder to repel as cyber-attackers leverage agentic AI in their attacks (Jaipragas, 2025).

MRT breakdowns

Between August and September, the Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) system saw a rise in service disruptions, public concern and scrutiny. With the appointment of new officeholder Mr Jeffrey Siow as Acting Minister for Transport during the post-election Cabinet reshuffle, the uptick was an early litmus test for the new leader.

Since July 2025, 15 MRT service disruptions were recorded within three months where six of these occurred in the first week of September alone (Zachariah, 2025). President of public transport operator SMRT Corporation, Mr Lam Sheau Kai stated the rail disruptions were isolated issues and not systemic faults (Kok & Chelvan, 2025).

In parliamentary sessions, Mr Siow received 18 questions from fellow MPs on rail reliability as well as measures to ensure operators' accountability. He acknowledged public frustration surrounding train service disruptions and pledged to minimise them and to share data on train disruptions publicly and transparently (Ong, 2025d).

To address the rise in service disruption frequency, the Land Transport Authority, SMRT Corporation, as well as SBS Transit formed a Rail Reliability Taskforce. The task force was expected to develop solutions to the disruptions improve rail reliability through rail renewal programmes and improved service recovery measures (H.S. Ng, 2025). On 30 December, the Taskforce submitted its findings and recommendations. Whilst the series of MRT service disruptions were largely unrelated, the Taskforce recommended additional bypass or backup systems and procedures for speedy resumption of operations after minor faults. The Taskforce also recommended prioritising the renewal of trains, signalling and power systems, closer monitoring of the condition of the rail network, as well as improving manpower standards among the rail workforce (Land Transport Authority, 2025).

Online Harms and Safety

Online spaces and their potential harms were a lingering point of concern throughout the year, as reflected in PM Wong's call for better management of screen time for youths in his NDR 2025 speech. To strengthen digital trust and online safety, the government took further steps to recognise different types of online harms and provide redress to victims of online harms.

Through public consultations, the government recognised that existing laws only covered a narrow set of online harms. The Online Safety (Miscellaneous Amendments) Act enacted in 2022 allowed the Infocomm Media Development Authority (IMDA) Singapore to issue takedown notices for harmful online content to websites, but did not cover cyberbullying, harassment and other similar online harms (C. Goh, 2022).

A survey conducted by SG Her Empowerment found that victims of online harms struggled to navigate formal processes for reporting harm and were often left without clear ways to seek resolution (SG Her Empowerment, 2025). The Online Safety Assessment Report conducted in 2024 also suggested that Designated Social Media Services (DSMSs) took an average of five days or more to act on user reports of harmful content (Infocomm Media Development Authority, 2025).

To tackle online harms and to offer quick recourse to victims, the Online Safety (Relief and Accountability) (OSRA) Bill was tabled in March and passed in November (Chia, 2025; L. Y. Lee, 2025b). Drawing from experiences of Australia's eSafety Commissioner, the Online Safety Commission would target to start operations in the first half of 2026 to issue takedowns of harmful content on online platforms and allow victims to pursue legal action against webpage administrators and online platforms for harmful and offensive content (Chia, 2025).

Opposition politicians proposed five amendments to the OSRA Bill, noting that constructive comments on "matters of public interest" could be classified as harassment, and recommended that the Online Safety Commission's work should cover materials that promote sexual grooming, self-harm and suicide (Low, 2025). These amendments were voted down, with Minister of State at the Ministry of Digital Development and Innovation Ms Rahayu Mahzam arguing that some of these concerns would be better addressed through other legislation in Singapore's online safety framework (L. Y. Lee, 2025b; Mahzam, 2025).

Developments in Energy

Singapore took further steps towards sustainable energy development in the year, urged by heightened energy requirements from technological developments as well as sustainability goals. These steps included enhanced regional cooperation as well

as explorations into alternative capabilities and safety to ensure that Singapore has viable sources of clean energy.

By 2035, natural gas is expected to continue to contribute to more than 50 per cent of Singapore's energy, with hopes of capturing and storing carbon from the exhaust gas produced (H. S. Chin, 2025a). To bolster the transition away from imported natural gas, the ASEAN Power Grid would ensure energy security for Singapore (ASEAN Centre for Energy, n.d.). This included deals to import clean energy from other parts of ASEAN such as wind energy from Vietnam through subsea cables (Teoh & Lu, 2025). The government also appointed Singapore Energy Interconnections to develop cross-border power infrastructure to enable such energy trades (H. S. Chin, 2025c).

Alternative energy sources such as geothermal and nuclear energy were discussed. The discovery of high underground temperatures in northern Singapore led to explorations into using geothermal energy to generate electricity in Singapore, with considerations of cost and potential scalability (Z. Lim, 2025).

PM Wong mentioned the use of nuclear energy in his Budget statement (Begum, 2025a). Singapore would continue to study its potential through the Singapore Nuclear Research and Safety Institute (SNRSI) which also examines the issues of nuclear safety, waste management, rapid detection of radioactivity and the impact of radioactivity. The SNRSI seeks to improve public understanding of nuclear energy to shift public perceptions would have been coloured by past nuclear incidents elsewhere (Begum, 2025b; H. S. Chin, 2025b).

New Trade Agreements

Singapore inked trade agreements, enhancing its strategic partnerships worldwide. These include regional agreements such as the Johor-Singapore Special Economic Zone Agreement with Malaysia in January, the EU-Singapore Digital Trade Agreement with the European Union in May, and the EFTA-Singapore Digital Economy Agreement with the European Free Trade Association in September (European Free Trade Association, 2025; European Commission, 2025).

The Pacific Alliance–Singapore Free Trade Agreement, signed in 2022 between Singapore and Pacific Alliance countries (Chile, Colombia, Mexico and Peru) came into effect in May (Ministry of Trade and Industry, 2025).

Management of Child Abuse

The rise in high-profile child abuse cases in recent years have led to increased public outcry for better, more efficient and speedier management of child abuse cases.

These included the death and mutilation of two-year-old Umaisyah in 2023 and the abuse and murder of four-year-old Megan Khung in 2020. Public outcry was especially

strong in the latter as a review panel conducted in 2025 reported multiple systemic failures to act against the abuse Khung faced months her passing (Ministry of Social and Family Development [MSF], 2025). Minister-in-Charge of Social Services Integration, Mr Desmond Lee, acknowledged the inadequacy of responses from all parties involved in a Parliamentary sitting in November 2025 and pledged to enhance frontline capabilities for better and earlier identification of child abuse, as well as improved protocols in dealing with cases of missing children. He proposed regular audits of agencies managing child abuse cases as well as more centralised coordination and data integration (D. Lee, 2025).

MSF reported an uptick in child abuse reports following a news report about Meghan Khung's case on 23 October. Additionally, there seemed to be an increase in reported high-risk child abuse cases. MSF indicated that the increase in cases could reflect "greater awareness and a growing willingness" to report abuse cases, allowing quicker allocation of support resources (Jacob, 2025).

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

General Elections (GE) 2025

GE2025 marked the first GE to be held in the post-COVID 19 pandemic era after the transition in leadership in the incumbent PAP and government — from Lee Hsien Loong to Lawrence Wong. Alongside uncertainties in geopolitics and the global economy, it was a test of the public's confidence in the fourth generation (4G) of leaders (Iau & Lim, 2025).

Electoral Boundary Changes

The formation of the Electoral Boundaries Review Committee (EBRC) on 22 January signalled the formal start of the general election process with its review of the electoral map (F. Koh, 2025b; Tham & Chin, 2025). The extensive changes made to the electoral boundaries in response to the shifts in population with the emergence of new estates and the desire to target the stable average member of parliament to constituents ratio, raised concerns among the opposition parties as they had to change their campaign strategies but they also questioned the EBRC review process.

The EBRC report was released 11 March after its recommendations were approved by the prime minister. The total number of constituencies rose to 33 with an additional group representation constituency (GRCs) and a single member constituency (SMCs) compared to GE2020, and an increase in the number of MPs to 97 from 93 (F. Koh, 2025c). There were 18 GRCs and 15 SMCs. Six new SMCs were carved out from existing GRCs, and five previous SMCs were absorbed into neighbouring GRCs. These changes were made due to "significant growth in the number of electors" in certain electoral divisions (Electoral Boundaries Review Committee, 2025).

WP Secretary-General Mr Pritam Singh described the EBRC's process as “opaque”, while the People's Power Party (PPP) Secretary-General Mr Goh Meng Seng released a statement describing the move as “massive gerrymandering in plain sight” (Channel NewsAsia, 2025d; People's Power Party, 2025; Wan, 2025).

Contesting Parties

Across 11 political parties and two independent candidates, GE2025 saw the greatest number of first-time candidates so far in Singapore's history. With 38 of 90 new faces contesting in the election under the age of 40, political participation, especially among alternative voices, was also younger (Teo, 2025).

The trend of younger candidates was exemplified among the major contesting parties — the PAP fielded 32 new candidates — its largest slate in recent history and an increase from 27 new candidates at GE 2020 — with Secretary-General Mr Lawrence Wong leading the party in a General Election for the first time (Baharudin & Chin, 2025; “Singapore GE2020: Profiles of PAP's new candidates”, 2020). The WP similarly fielded 14 new candidates—five more than in GE 2020 (Tham, 2025; “Singapore GE2020: Profiles of Workers' Party's new candidates”, 2020).

GE 2025 was also the first general election for Red Dot United (RDU) after it left the National Solidarity Party (NSP) coalition in April. The election was also the first general election for the People's Alliance for Reform (PAR) coalition after its formation in 2023 from four parties: People's Voice (PV), Reform Party (RP), People's Power Party (PPP) and the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) (Ang, Ng, & Ong, 2025). PPP withdrew from the coalition on 23 February due to “irreconcilable strategic differences”, and RP withdrew after the GE on 7 July 2025 (Wong & Sun, 2025; Y. H. Goh, 2025b).

Marine Parade-Braddell Heights walkover

The WP was expected to contest in Marine Parade-Braddell Heights GRC in GE 2025 against PAP. However, no WP team registered as candidates for the GRC on Nomination Day (23 April) even though the ward had been contested in previous elections, leading to the PAP winning the constituency in a walkover.

This was the first walkover since GE 2011, which led to disappointment among residents who felt that it denied them the opportunity to exercise their right to vote, as well as friction with other opposition parties that thought it was regrettable WP had not informed other parties ahead of its decision (Ang & Shafeeq, 2025; K. G. Ng, 2025a).

PPP's Secretary-General, Mr Goh Meng Seng, described WP's decision as a “[willingness] to sacrifice 130K voters' right [*sic*] in Marine Parade just to get into a four corner [*sic*] fight”, referring to the latter's decision to contest Tampines GRC (Loi, 2025). Like other opposition leaders, PAR Secretary-General Mr Lim Tean said that WP should have discussed their plans so that other opposition parties could contest the GRC (H. M. Ang, 2025a).

WP chief Mr Pritam Singh responded that the WP was not obliged to share their decision-making with other opposition parties (Loh, 2025). He further explained that the move was a difficult decision on how the party could best deploy their resources given the changes in electoral boundaries (Lay, 2025).

Key Issues

Like previous GEs, bread-and-butter issues such as cost-of-living, housing and jobs stood at the forefront of GE2025, but what was different was the heightened concern about the impact of Trump's "Liberation Day" tariff policy on Singapore ("GE2025: Where political parties here stand", 2025). The parties offered alternative approaches to these issues.

Cost of living

To tackle the high and rising cost of living, the PAP relied on providing short-term schemes of vouchers, payouts and rebates as well as new solutions to managing other costs like improving healthcare affordability, accessibility, and capacity (People's Action Party, 2025). The party's long-term strategy was focused on enhancing human capital and providing good job opportunities to Singaporeans.

Opposition parties generally disagreed with the PAP's approach, with PSP declaring that the PAP's approach was a "Band-Aid approach of ad-hoc gifts and handouts". Parties such as the WP, PSP, SDP and PPP called for a reduction of GST, and exemptions from GST for essentials (S. F. Chin, 2025c). In addition to that, the WP proposed tiered pricing models for water utilities and energy and the establishment of a Standing Parliamentary Committee to ensure greater transparency and accountability in the management of cost-of-living issues (The Workers' Party, 2025).

Housing

To keep public housing affordable and attractive, the PAP's manifesto reflected a continuation of existing schemes including the redevelopment of HDB towns, the development of new ones, an increase in Shorter Waiting Time flats, and the Voluntary Early Redevelopment Scheme (VERS).

Rather than housing supply, opposition parties focused on increasing accessibility of housing to more Singaporeans. Parties such as the WP and PSP proposed lowering the age limit for singles to apply for BTO to 28 years of age from the existing 35 years of age, and for HDB flats to be more affordable specifically for this demographic. Notably, the WP further proposed for the Ethnic Integration Policy for HDB resale flats to be reviewed, stating that the policy had made it challenging for racial minorities to sell their flats, causing the cost of the policy to be disproportionately borne by the lower and middle-income flat sellers and minority races (S. F. Chin, 2025b).

Labour, jobs and foreign manpower

Concerns over foreign manpower rose significantly over the recent years, and such concerns were key talking points during GE 2025. Overall, most major parties agreed that there was a need for foreign talent in Singapore but differed on the number of foreign talent there should be in the country, the types of jobs they should be allowed to take up, and the sort of safeguards that should be in place to prioritise Singaporeans in the workforce.

The WP and PSP called for tracking of skills-related underemployment as well as for greater transparency in key labour statistics. This would ease Singaporeans' concerns about their livelihoods being replaced by foreign workers. Both these parties also called for greater social spending and contributions from foreigners (Tay, 2025a).

Then Senior Minister Mr Teo Chee Hean commented that the PSP was pedalling "anti-foreigner rhetoric" that would deter businesses from coming to Singapore. He highlighted the need for social cohesion in times of uncertainty (Ng & Shafeeq, 2025).

Hotly Contested Constituencies

A few constituencies emerged as electoral hotspots in GE2025, signalling the growing importance of candidate perceptions among voters. Candidates' profiles, actions, reputations and perceived relatability (or lack thereof) to citizens became points of contention in these constituencies, reflecting a broader shift in voter priorities towards more nuanced evaluations of political candidates. This indicated greater political awareness and appeal of political pluralism among Singaporeans at large.

Jalan Kayu SMC

At Jalan Kayu SMC, PAP fielded NTUC Secretary-General Mr Ng Chee Meng against debuting candidate Mr Andre Low from the WP. Both candidates were the subject of scrutiny: Mr Ng, regarding his role in the NTUC-Allianz deal as well as previous comments made during his stint as Acting Minister for Education; and Mr Low, regarding his inappropriate language and criticism of local businesses in a series of leaked Telegram messages (Yeap, 2025).

NTUC-Allianz Deal

A major point of scrutiny for Mr Ng Chee Meng's candidacy in GE 2025 was his perceived role in the 2024 abortive attempt to sell NTUC's Income Insurance to German insurer Allianz. Mr Ng, who had been Secretary-General of the National Trades Union Congress (NTUC) Central Committee since 2018, was expected to have oversight capacity over Income Insurance and endorsed the \$2.2 billion proposal for Allianz to acquire a 51 per cent stake in Income Insurance since NTUC is its key stakeholder (National Trades Union Congress, 2024).

Mr Ng Chee Meng and NTUC President Mr K Thanaletchimi explained in a joint statement on 5 August that the proposed deal was required to help Income Insurance

to remain financially stable. However, concerns were raised that the proposal would conflict with NTUC's goal of providing affordable insurance to low-income workers, and that the deal would cause a shift of focus from social good to maximising profits (Ang & Ganesan, 2024; A. Ng, 2024). The deal was called off on 14 October 2024, but the issue resurfaced during the GE 2025 campaigns due to Mr Ng's candidacy at Jalan Kayu SMC as well as the "symbiotic relationship" between NTUC and the PAP (Lim & Chong, 2025; Tan & Kwek, 2025; Kok, 2025a).

Andre Low's leaked Telegram messages

WP candidate Mr Andre Low faced public scrutiny when screenshots of Telegram messages from him were leaked on 29 April. In these messages, Mr Low criticised TraceTogether, Singaporean brands SecretLab and Prism, media personalities and some residents he met at a Meet-the-People Session, using profanities in doing so. Mr Low quickly apologised for his use of inappropriate language as well as for the disparaging comments made in his messages (Wong & Tan, 2025).

Tampines GRC

High proportions of Malay/Muslim voters in Tampines GRC meant that Malay/Muslim issues were salient in the constituency. With prominent Malay/Muslim politicians contesting in a four-cornered fight for the GRC, commentators saw Tampines GRC as a "battleground constituency" (Sun & Hamzah, 2025; Pei, 2025).

Tampines GRC saw a four-way fight between PAP, WP, NSP and PPP. Observers anticipated a face-off between the PAP and WP due to previous clashes in Parliament between PAP's Mr Masagos Zulfiki and WP's Mr Faisal Manap over Malay/Muslim community issues that would be pertinent in securing the vote in Tampines GRC.

Further spotlight was cast on Tampines GRC due to allegations of attempted foreign interference, with two Malaysian politicians and a former Internal Security Act detainee criticising Mr Masagos who led the PAP team, and calling on voters to vote for WP's Malay/Muslim candidate.

Punggol GRC

The Punggol GRC of GE2025 was freshly carved out from the previous Pasir Ris-Punggol GRC and boasted a strong demographic of young voters. Observers expected Punggol GRC to be an unpredictable and hotly contested constituency, with tough competition between the PAP and WP (Wong, Chua, et al., 2025; Q. Ang, 2025).

WP's candidate line-up for Punggol GRC comprised entirely of new faces, with Mr Harpreet Singh dubbed as the team's "star catch" in the election. PAP's Mr Gan Kim Yong was deployed at Punggol GRC at the last minute, despite being expected to contest at Chua Chu Kang GRC where he was the incumbent MP (Ong & Lee, 2025).

At Mr Lawrence Wong's Fullerton lunchtime rally on 28 April, he emphasised Mr Gan's importance and dubbed him as Singapore's "task force man" who would manage trade

negotiations with the US in light of the “Liberation Day” reforms, and warned voters not to weaken PAP as there would be fewer PAP ministers in Cabinet (Raguraman, 2025; F. Koh, 2025a). WP chief Pritam Singh questioned Gan’s importance, noting that he was no longer in the PAP’s central executive committee despite his stated importance (Abdullah et al., 2025).

Foreign Interference

Allegations of foreign interference and attempts to urge Singaporeans to vote along racial and religious lines surfaced during the campaigning period of the election. The incident prompted collective rejection of foreign interference in domestic politics. There was a visible refocus on issues of unity as well as racial and religious tensions following the election. Questions of what constituted foreign commentary and foreign interference arose in this period.

During the campaigning period, the national treasurer of Parti Islam Se-Malaysia (PAS), Mr Iskandar Abdul Samad, made a post on Facebook in support for WP candidate Mr Faisal Manap, praising Mr Manap for having “the courage to explain to Parliament that in Islam religion must not be separated from politics” (Channel NewsAsia, 2025f).

On the same day, Malaysia’s Selangor PAS youth chief Mr Mohamed Sukri Omar reposted a Facebook post by Australian citizen and former Internal Security Act detainee Mr Zulfikar bin Mohamad Shariff. The post criticised PAP Malay-Muslim MPs for failing to represent the interest of the Muslim community.

Mr Noor Deros, a religious teacher based in Malaysia, claimed in a series of Facebook posts that he had spoken with all of WP’s Malay candidates and that WP had accepted his suggestions for the Malay/Muslim community in Singapore (L. Lee, 2025).

The IMDA issued directives to Meta to block Singaporean users’ access to these posts (Baharudin & Mustaffa, 2025). The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) and the Elections Department Singapore released a joint statement against foreigners’ interference and a reminder that religion should not be mixed with politics as Singapore is a secular state (Channel NewsAsia, 2025a; Elections Department Singapore & Ministry of Home Affairs, 2025). WP also issued a statement, denying the veracity of Mr Noor Deros’ claims about meetings with WP’s Malay candidates, and reaffirming their commitment towards a secular, multi-racial and multi-religious society (L. Lee, 2025).

The issue re-emerged after the election, signalling its lasting nature throughout the year. Despite initially distancing itself from their members’ statements, PAS, the Malaysian party that the politicians were associated with, released a statement on 15 October describing their members’ comments as “ordinary cross-border commentary”. From the perspective of Singapore’s Ministry for Home Affairs, the PAS’ statement

was interpreted as its official party stance with an intent to influence Singaporean voters (Ministry of Home Affairs, 2025).

In the same period, WP chief Mr Pritam Singh reaffirmed the WP's stance per their statement during the GE and acknowledged that WP "could have been clearer" in their statement about its interaction with Mr Noor Deros (S. F. Chin, 2025d). He claimed that Mr Noor Deros had "gatecrashed" a meeting between Mr Faisal Manap and Muslim religious leaders (Tham, Ang, & Ong, 2025). In a November parliamentary session, Mr Singh attempted to revise his earlier statement, stating that he was unaware at the time of his previous statement that Mr Noor Deros had actually been invited to the meeting by a religious teacher. He added that Mr Manap had been told likewise about the invitation via a WhatsApp message only an hour before the meeting (L. Y. Lee, 2025a).

WP MP Mr Kenneth Tiong asked if the PAP would apply similar standards to the PAP's alleged engagement and endorsement of Mr Michael Petraeus, a Polish national who runs *Critical Spectator* and had published "racially charged commentary" on Singapore politics. Coordinating Minister for National Security Mr K. Shanmugam said in response that various outlets run commentaries on Singapore and that it was not the government's business to censor articles unless they were specific attempts to interfere in Singapore's elections (S. F. Chin, 2025d). The question highlighted a pervasive concern about how the concept of "foreign interference" was being applied, particularly in cases where foreign commentators were perceived as supportive of different political actors.

Social Media Campaigning

Politicians of all stripes used social media for outreach in GE2025 as they had in previous campaigns. This included use of social media websites and applications and alternative online media to address key issues in the election. With politics and the elections now reaching a younger demographic, the shift towards online spaces was only to be expected.

TikTok became a popular medium for political engagement and digital campaigning (E. Koh, 2025). Candidates also appeared on podcasts such as *The Daily Ketchup*, *Front Row*, *Yah Lah But* and *Teh Tarik with Walid*, a move observers considered as efforts to engage with younger demographics in an open and relatable way (Y. Wong, 2025b). Commentators noted that podcast listeners tended to be "young, more networked and more likely to share what they hear", that podcasts were likely to have an increasing role in politics (K. P. Tan, 2025).

A post-GE 2025 study indicated that voters tended to use social media more than traditional party channels to learn about political parties and its candidates. Notably, "expressive engagement" — inclusive of commenting about a candidate or a political party or participating in an online discussion — saw an uptick among respondents

(Devaraj, 2025b). With the online spaces as a viable arena for political participation, trends in political participation may continue to shift in this direction in future GEs.

Results

On Polling Day, 3 May, 2,438,610 ballots were cast with 42,945 rejected ballots. At 92.5 per cent, GE2025 recorded Singapore's lowest voter turnout since 1968 in spite of voting being compulsory (Y. Kok, 2025c). The PAP retained a supermajority of 87 seats and improved their vote share to 65.6 per cent in GE2025 from 61.2 per cent in GE2020. The WP retained 10 seats and secured two Non-Constituency Member of Parliament (NCMP) seats.

Other election hotspots

Other election hotspots included Sembawang West SMC, PAP's Ms Poh Li San won Sembawang West SMC with 53.2 per cent of the votes. However, SDP's Dr Chee Soon Juan managed to make significant moves with 46.8 per cent of the votes, just missing out on an NCMP spot by 1 percentage point as WP candidates in Tampines GRC outperformed him (Davie et al., 2025; L. Tang, 2025b).

Following the EBRC report, West Coast GRC absorbed parts of Jurong GRC. Due to the extensive changes in electoral boundaries surrounding the new West Coast-Jurong West GRC, observers anticipated a tough contest in the constituency for the PSP which had been "best losers" in GE2020 and secured two NCMPs. This time, PSP lost parliamentary representation altogether. The party's vote shares among contested constituencies decreased from 40.9 per cent to 36.3 per cent, and the total vote share also decreased to 4.9 per cent from 10.2 per cent in the previous GE (Elangovan, 2025; H. S. Chin, 2025e; Ong & Mohan, 2025; Elections Department Singapore, 2025).

Cabinet reshuffle

The post-GE2025 Cabinet reshuffle announced on 21 May saw the emergence of a number of new faces take up Cabinet and other junior ministerial positions. The entrance of new blood on the scene reflected continued transition to the fourth-generation leadership in Singapore to lead the country through uncertain and turbulent times.

The Cabinet reshuffle came into effect on 23 May, with 15 full ministers and two acting ministers, including nine new political office holders (Prime Minister's Office, 2025). Mr Gan Kim Yong was announced as the only Deputy Prime Minister. Three acting ministers were also announced: Mr Muhammad Faishal Ibrahim was named as Acting Minister-in-Charge of Muslim Affairs "to refresh the [Malay/Muslim] leadership and let new and younger office holders take over", Mr Jeffrey Siow was named as Acting Minister for Transport, and Mr David Neo was named Acting Minister of Culture, Community and Youth (Koh & Ang, 2025; H. M. Ang, 2025b). One notable absence

from the ranks of cabinet ministers was Mr Ng Chee Meng who had lost his seat in GE2020 and had now returned to Parliament in GE 2025. He had stated earlier that he requested not to be assigned a cabinet position to “focus on [his] duties as the MP in Jalan Kayu and [his] role as secretary-general of NTUC”. He added that the needs of Jalan Kayu’s residents and the workers in Singapore were his priorities and had “asked the prime minister not to assign [him] any position in government” (Channel NewsAsia, 2025e).

15th Parliament of Singapore

The uncertainties of the geopolitical situation as well as the need for Singapore to remain united were the main themes at the opening of the 15th Parliament of Singapore. Speaker of Parliament Mr Seah Kian Peng urged parliamentarians to avoid “playing to the gallery” in their speeches, emphasising constructive engagement and responsibility in political discussions (F. Koh, 2025e).

President Tharman Shanmugaratnam delivered an address at the opening of the 15th Parliament on 5 September, emphasising various themes in public discourse through the year such as the need for resilience against foreign threats and disinformation, the government’s focus on inclusive growth by adapting economic changes, technology and ensuring that every citizen benefits.

Echoing PM Wong’s call for a “we-first” society in his National Day Rally speech, President Tharman urged Singaporeans to “put ‘we’ before ‘me’”, emphasising social mobility and unity in Singapore above social divisions. He added that the government needed to go against the grain as public trust in state institutions was eroding everywhere (Lai, 2025).

Race, religion and identity politics

Identity politics — in particular regarding issues centred around race, religion and nationality — emerged as an important concern in public discourse, particularly after the alleged foreign interference in GE2025. The recurrence of identity politics in public consciousness reflected heightened awareness and acknowledgement of the tensions in Singapore’s social fabric, as well as the changing views of social and identity-related issues in Singapore.

In a Parliamentary speech made on 14 October, Minister of Home Affairs and Coordinating Minister for National Security Mr K. Shanmugam stated that there were some “worrying trends” of politicians playing identity politics, and later also urged opposition parties to “immediately, clearly” reject foreign interference and identity politics (Ong, 2025c; Ang & Tham, 2025). He noted that while Singapore had been “broadly stable”, future political leaders’ engagement in identity politics would be a “one-way street to ruin” (Ong, 2025b). President Tharman made similar comments on

multiculturalism and identity politics in June, stating that socioeconomic uncertainties had turned identity and culture into divisive political tools, aided by the alienating effects of social media (Y. H. Goh, 2025c).

The issue of adjusting the approach to fostering racial and religious harmony was broached by opposition politicians such as WP chief Mr Pritam Singh and WP NCMP Mr Andre Low. In response to these queries, Mr Shanmugam noted the government would consider “workable” ideas on how to better approach these issues (Ong, 2025b). He added that utilising models from other parts of the world that had failed would simply not work, and that shifting away from the current approach of curated safe spaces for discussion would lead to identity politics (S. F. Chin, 2025d).

Gaza Crisis

The Gaza war continued to be an important issue among Singaporeans with the government’s calls for cessation of hostilities and return of hostages, and its efforts to provide humanitarian support efforts. Among Singaporeans, views towards the crisis varied in perspective and intensity, leading to concerns that the Gaza crisis may trigger identity-based politics in Singapore.

The government’s response to the Gaza crisis has largely been focused on calls for an end to the war and continuous provision of humanitarian aid (Mujibah, 2025). By September, 10 tranches of assistance totalling to over \$23 million in aid had been sent to affected Gaza civilians (Devaraj, 2025c). The Palestinian Scholar Initiative (PSI) raised over \$510,000 to support four Palestinian students’ studies in Singaporean universities with the support of the government (Channel NewsAsia, 2025c).

The Gaza crisis resounded strongly within the Malay/Muslim community. A fundraiser was held at M3@Town, a Malay/Muslim community platform, with a target of \$600,000 to be raised for the Gaza crisis (Shafeeq, 2025b). Reflecting the crisis’ strong resonance with the community, the fundraiser raised \$266,000 of its \$600,000 goal in its first two weeks (Osman, 2025).

Acting Minister-in-Charge of Muslim Affairs Dr Faishal Ibrahim stated that the issue of the Gaza crisis required careful management to avoid triggering identity-based politics. After all, it was inaccurate to view it as a purely religious or ethnic matter (“Gaza through our lenses,” 2025). Foreign Minister Dr Vivian Balakrishnan and Senior Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Ms Sim Ann reflected similar concerns in separate ministerial statements referring to the Gaza war, stating that Singapore “cannot allow external events and actors to cause fissures” domestically. At the same time, they reaffirmed Singapore’s support for a two-state solution in the region and recognition of Palestine’s statehood in tandem with Israel (Balakrishnan & Sim, 2025).

Pritam Singh's Appeal

The legal case of Leader of the Opposition and WP Secretary-General Mr Pritam Singh's two charges of lying on oath to the Committee of Privileges (COP) ended in his conviction on 17 February and the loss of his appeal against that ruling on 4 December (Lam, 2025; Sun, 2025a).

Given Mr Singh's position as the Leader of the Opposition, uncertainties arose about that designation which is neither required or provided for in the Standing Orders of Parliament nor the Constitution. The Leader of the House, Indranee Rajah indicated that it was time to deal with the ruling and its implications in Parliament, which was to be expected after the Committee of Privileges had found that to be in case in 2024.

Following COP investigations into Mr Singh's involvement into the case of ex-WP MP Ms Raeesah Khan, he was charged for wilfully providing false answers under oath before the COP in March 2024 (W. T. Koh, 2024). Analysts noted that the case as well as the loss of his appeal cast a negative light on him, but that there was likely to be little political cost for Mr Singh as the general election had been held with the conviction hanging over him (W. T. Koh, 2025).

In a statement, the WP stated that it had initiated "internal processes" in light of the outcome of the appeal and that updates on Mr Singh's status would be provided in due course. Parliament itself was looking towards discussing an "appropriate response" when the House reconvened in January 2026. Leader of the House, Ms Indranee Rajah, stressed that lying under oath was a serious matter and reminded all MPs of their duty to maintain honesty and integrity in their conduct (W. K. Ng, 2025b).

38 Oxley Road

The 38 Oxley Road saga was once again brought to the fore of public consciousness when the government confirmed its decision to gazette the site as a national monument. The move drew mixed responses and re-ignited debates over national interests, respecting the late Mr Lee Kuan Yew's wishes, and what constituted national or political significance.

On 12 December, the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth (MCCY) and the National Heritage Board (NHB) announced that the site at 38 Oxley Road was to be gazetted as a national monument. Their joint statement noted that the site was "worthy of preservation as a National Monument for its historic significance and national importance" as it was "the venue for conversations, activities and decisions by our founding leaders... which profoundly shaped the trajectory of Singapore's independence movement and our subsequent national history."

MCCY and NHB added that all traces of the Lee family's living spaces would be removed from the site to respect the wishes of the late Mr Lee Kuan Yew and the

family's privacy (Channel NewsAsia, 2025b). Acting Minister for Culture, Community, and Youth Mr David Neo stressed that the entire site at 38 Oxley Road was the focus of the preservation, and that as such, the government would “keep an open mind as to the treatment of buildings and the structures within the site” (S. K. Tang, 2025c).

Responding to WP NCMP Ms Eileen Chong's query if a heritage park at the site would arguably provide more “heritage value or visitor experience” than what the upcoming Founders' Memorial, Mr Neo stated that the Oxley Road site was provided a sense of authenticity and could “augment the Founders' Memorial to give Singaporeans a fuller understanding of what it means to be Singaporean” (See, 2025). Minister Neo highlighted how it was a unique site that housed all the critical events that were part of Singapore's independence story, the confluence of “people, place and events”; it would not memorialise a single leader alone.

In response, Mr Lee Hsien Yang, the sole owner of the property, submitted a written objection to the government proposal, stating that “the PAP government can honour Lee Kuan Yew on a matter of deep importance to him, or trample on his wishes and create a monument to that dishonour”. Mr Lee Hsien Yang reminded in his objection that the late Mr Lee Kuan Yew had been “clear and unambiguous that he wanted his home at 38 Oxley Road demolished” (H. M. Ang, 2025c). Opposition politician and former NCMP Mr Leong Mun Wai of the PSP that Mr Lee had been associated with previously, concurred, posting on Facebook that “much public resources have been expended on this topic” (Leong, 2025).

For residents near 38 Oxley Road, the decision to gazette the site generated concerns about traffic and congestion in the area, as well as potential future redevelopment in the area that may affect property prices. While some residents shared the government's sentiment that the space was important for national interests, others were uncertain about its value beyond what the Founders' Memorial would provide, especially due to the limited available details about the planned works (F. Koh, 2025d). Further information about the development of the 38 Oxley Road site was expected to emerge in due course when the government provides details on how it would be preserved and used.

Publication of the Albatross File

To commemorate Singapore's 60 years of independence, the government fully declassified and released the Albatross File. The file — a set of documents relating to discussions between Singapore and Malaysia in the lead-up to the separation of both countries in August 1965 — was compiled by the late Dr Goh Keng Swee. It provided a different look at the complexities behind Separation.

In 2023, the Singapore government agreed to declassify the Albatross File, a move praised by Leader of the Opposition and WP Secretary-General Mr Pritam Singh (Ong,

2023). Subsequently, on December 8, 2025, a permanent exhibition on the Albatross File opened at the National Library Building along with the launch of a book that comprised all the documents of the file (S. K. Tang, 2025d).

The file's contents challenge a prominent narrative that paints Singapore's separation from Malaysia in 1965 as an "expulsion" (E. Lim, 2023). The documents reveal that Dr Goh was the "architect of the separation", having pursued complete separation of Singapore and Malaysia, different from Mr Lee Kuan Yew's instructions to seek a "looser federation" within Malaysia (L. Tang, 2025a; E. Lim, 2023). The file's revelations underscore a continuing examination of Singapore's foundational history and builds an ongoing national conversation about Singapore's statehood.

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