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FEATURED COVERAGE

ASEAN MALAYSIA 2025: A UNIFIED VISION FOR PEACE, TRADE, AND SUSTAINABILITY
PRIME MINISTER LAWRENCE WONG'S
VISIT TO THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA (ROK) & NEGARA BRUNEI DARUSSALAM

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

HIS EXCELLENCY AHMED MOSTAFA
THE AMBASSADOR OF THE ARAB REPUBLIC OF EGYPT

Contents



02

ASEAN Malaysia 2025: A Unified Vision for Peace, Trade, and Sustainability

04

Prime Minister Lawrence Wong's Official Visit to Korea

05

Prime Minister Lawrence Wong's Visit to Brunei for the 11th Young Leaders' Programme

06

Working Visit by Prime Minister of Canada Mark Carney to Singapore



07

Interview with H.E. Ahmed Mostafa: Egypt's Global Rise and Singapore Connection

09

Cybersecurity and the Global Commons: Singapore's Call for Cooperative Digital Governance

10

A Week of South African Spirit



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EDITOR'S NOTE

Singapore's Diplomatic Pulse—Bridging Continents, Building Trust



Diplomacy remains the quiet architecture of peace, and in recent months, Singapore has continued to shape that architecture with purpose and poise. This edition of IN Diplomacy reflects the Republic's active engagement across continents—affirming its role as a trusted partner in a rapidly evolving world.

We begin with Singapore's participation at the 47th ASEAN Summit in Kuala Lumpur, where Prime Minister Lawrence Wong joined regional leaders to reaffirm ASEAN's unity, resilience, and shared prosperity. The series of ASEAN-related meetings—including the East Asia and RCEP Summits—spotlighted collective efforts toward sustainable growth and regional stability.

Beyond Southeast Asia, Singapore's diplomatic reach extended to Africa and the Middle East. President Tharman Shanmugaratnam's state visit to Egypt marked a new chapter in bilateral ties, and our exclusive interview with H.E. Ahmed Mostafa, Egypt's Ambassador to Singapore, offers insights into the growing momentum of collaboration. Canada's Prime Minister Mark

Carney's working visit further reinforced shared goals in green transition, digital innovation, and inclusive trade.

Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr Vivian Balakrishnan's keynote at the Singapore International Cyber Week underscored the importance of trust and cooperation in the digital era—principles that are increasingly central to global security and connectivity.

Meanwhile, South African Focus Week 2025 celebrated a century of enduring friendship through vibrant business, cultural, and educational exchanges. It was a tribute not only to history, but to the promise of continued partnership.

As always, IN Diplomacy captures more than headlines—it chronicles the spirit of engagement, the continuity of relationships, and the quiet strength of diplomacy that defines Singapore's place in the world.

Happy reading—and onward in friendship.

Sun Media Honoured by the South African High Commission in Singapore

Sun Media Pte Ltd, led by Ms. Nomita Dhar, CEO and Editor-in-Chief, has been recognised by the High Commission of South Africa in Singapore for its contribution to fostering international understanding and cooperation through media. During the Freedom Day 2025 Diplomatic Reception, hosted by the High Commission, H.E. Madiepetsane Charlotte Lobe, High Commissioner of South Africa to Singapore, presented the Friends of South Africa Award to Sun Media. The recognition celebrates the company's continuous efforts in promoting South Africa-Singapore relations, encouraging cultural exchange, and supporting public diplomacy through its publications and editorial initiatives.



Saudi Embassy Honours Sun Media for Support on Saudi National Day

The Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia in Singapore, headed by Mr. Salem Mokhef S Alshammari, Counsellor and Deputy Head of Mission, presented an award of appreciation to Ms. Nomita Dhar, CEO and Editor-in-Chief of Sun Media Pte Ltd, during a ceremony held at the Embassy premises. The recognition was given in appreciation of Sun Media's valued support for the 95th National Day of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and its ongoing partnership with the Embassy in promoting the Kingdom's culture, achievements, and bilateral relations with Singapore. Mr. Alshammari expressed gratitude for Sun Media's professionalism and long-standing cooperation, noting that the media plays a vital role in fostering mutual understanding and friendship between nations.



ASEAN Malaysia 2025: A Unified Vision for Peace, Trade, and Sustainability

ASEAN Leaders, alongside the United Nations and regional partners, convened in Kuala Lumpur to reaffirm their shared commitment to inclusivity, sustainability, and regional cooperation under the ASEAN 2045 vision



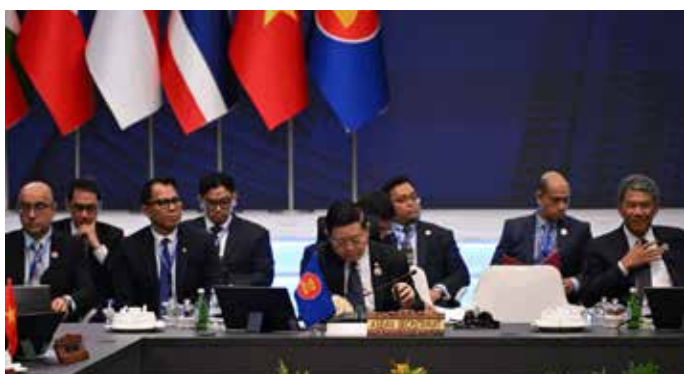
The 47th ASEAN Summit and Related Summits were held from 26 to 28 October 2025 at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre, Malaysia. Under the theme “Inclusivity and Sustainability,” ASEAN Leaders, dialogue partners, and guests gathered to strengthen regional cooperation and integration.

The meetings included the 47th ASEAN Summit, seven ASEAN Plus One Summits with Australia, China, India, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Russia, and the United States, as well as the ASEAN Plus Three Summit, the East Asia Summit, the ASEAN-United Nations Summit, and the ASEAN-New Zealand Commemorative Summit celebrating 50 years of dialogue relations.

Singapore's Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Lawrence Wong, attended the



Summits, engaging in productive discussions with partners including Australia, China, Japan, and the United States. Key outcomes included progress on trade agreements such as the Upgraded ATIGA and ACFTA 3.0. The summit also marked Timor-Leste's admission



as ASEAN's 11th Member State. As PM Wong remarked, "ASEAN's strength has always come from working together, not just among ourselves, but with our partners who share our vision for a peaceful and prosperous region."

The Opening Ceremony on 26 October was a landmark event attended by all ASEAN Leaders and distinguished guests. The 47th ASEAN Summit, chaired by Prime Minister Dato' Seri Anwar Ibrahim, featured Plenary and Retreat Sessions. Leaders, joined by Canada, the EU, and the IMF, discussed regional integration, economic growth, and connectivity, while the Retreat addressed pressing issues, including Myanmar's Five-Point Consensus. Prime Minister Anwar noted, "It has been a privilege to host leaders here in Kuala Lumpur for these intense and illuminating exchanges."

Among the summit's key highlights was the 13th ASEAN-United States Summit, attended by U.S. President Donald J. Trump and ASEAN Leaders. Secretary-General Dr Kao Kim Hourn joined discussions reviewing the ASEAN-U.S. Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. President Trump reaffirmed U.S. support for ASEAN unity and prosperity, calling the partnership a "key driver of peace

and economic dynamism" and expressing optimism for collaboration on infrastructure, supply chains, and climate adaptation.

The ASEAN Plus One Summits reviewed progress on trade, investment, digitalisation, renewable energy, and green growth. The ASEAN-New Zealand Commemorative Summit marked 50 years of dialogue and announced the ASEAN-New Zealand Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.

On 27 October, the 28th ASEAN Plus Three Summit brought together ASEAN, China, Japan, and the Republic of Korea to discuss the digital economy, maritime cooperation, energy, health, and education. Briefings by AMRO and the East Asia Business Council highlighted the region's economic outlook.

The 20th East Asia Summit, also on 27 October, reflected on two decades of strategic dialogue. Leaders from ASEAN, partner countries, and Singapore reaffirmed the EAS's role in promoting regional peace and stability. The Presidents of Brazil and South Africa attended as Guests of the ASEAN Chair, representing BRICS and the G20, adding global perspectives to the discussions.

Prime Minister Lawrence Wong's Official Visit to Korea

Prime Minister Lawrence Wong concluded an Official Visit to Seoul, where Singapore and the Republic of Korea (ROK) upgraded bilateral relations to a Strategic Partnership and advanced cooperation across emerging sectors



Prime Minister and Minister for Finance Lawrence Wong completed an Official Visit to the Republic of Korea (ROK) today. During the visit, Prime Minister Wong met ROK President Lee Jae Myung at the Yongsan Presidential Office, where the two leaders commemorated 50 years of diplomatic ties and reaffirmed the strong and growing relationship between Singapore and the ROK. President Lee also hosted an official luncheon in honour of Prime Minister Wong.

The leaders held substantive discussions on regional and global developments, underscoring the importance of free trade, multilateralism, and the rules-based international order. Prime Minister Wong welcomed the ROK's commitment to deepen engagement with ASEAN, including the upgrading of the ASEAN-Korea Free Trade Area. Both leaders also emphasised the need for constructive dialogue to support peace, stability, and prosperity on the Korean Peninsula.

Prime Minister Wong and President Lee announced the establishment of the Singapore-ROK Strategic Partnership, setting a comprehensive long-term roadmap across five

pillars: political, security and public sector cooperation; trade and economic collaboration; sustainability and green transition; advanced technology and research and development; and people-to-people exchanges. The Strategic Partnership aims to unlock new areas of growth, enhance regional cooperation, and deliver tangible benefits for businesses and citizens.

Both leaders witnessed the exchange of four Memoranda of Understanding to expand collaboration in public personnel administration, the establishment of a Green and Digital Shipping Corridor, digital cooperation, and culture and sports. These agreements complement earlier initiatives under the Strategic Partnership, reflecting strong momentum and a shared commitment to deepen cooperation in future-oriented sectors such as AI, cybersecurity, clean energy, and talent development.

Prime Minister Wong departed Seoul for Singapore today, marking a successful visit that strengthened bilateral ties, reinforced shared regional priorities, and set the foundation for a deeper and more resilient partnership between Singapore and the Republic of Korea.

Prime Minister Lawrence Wong's Visit to Brunei for the 11th Young Leaders' Programme

Prime Minister Lawrence Wong travelled to Brunei for the 11th Young Leaders' Programme to further strengthen longstanding ties and explore new areas of collaboration



Prime Minister and Minister for Finance Lawrence Wong conducted an official visit to Negara Brunei Darussalam from 3 to 4 November 2025 to participate in the 11th Singapore-Brunei Young Leaders' Programme (YLP). The visit was made at the invitation of His Royal Highness Prince Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah, Crown Prince and Senior Minister at the Prime Minister's Office of Brunei.

The YLP, launched in 2013, has served as a key platform for fostering close relations and deepening mutual understanding between the next generation of leaders from Singapore and Brunei. The programme reflects the enduring friendship and special bilateral relationship between both countries and supports ongoing efforts to strengthen cooperation across strategic sectors. This year's discussions also took place in the context of significant upcoming milestones, including the 50th anniversary of bilateral defence relations in 2026 and the 60th anniversary of the Currency Interchangeability Agreement in 2027.

During the visit, Prime Minister Wong had audiences with His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah and His Royal Highness Crown Prince Billah. The Sultan hosted Prime Minister Wong to lunch, while the Crown Prince hosted a welcome dinner. Prime Minister Wong also visited a range of health-related facilities in Jerudong to observe developments in Brunei's healthcare ecosystem. Prime Minister Wong was accompanied by Minister for National Development Chee Hong Tat, Senior Minister of State for Health and Manpower Dr Koh Poh Koon, Minister of State for Digital Development and Information and Education Jasmin Lau, Senior Parliamentary Secretary for Culture, Community and Youth and for Sustainability and the Environment Goh Hanyan, and Senior Parliamentary Secretary for Education and National Development Dr Syed Harun Alhabsyi, along with officials from the Prime Minister's Office and relevant agencies.

The visit reaffirmed Singapore and Brunei's deep-rooted friendship, underpinned by regular high-level exchanges, strong defence cooperation, and extensive economic and people-to-people ties. In Prime Minister Wong's absence, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Trade and Industry Gan Kim Yong served as Acting Prime Minister.



Working Visit by Prime Minister of Canada Mark Carney to Singapore

Prime Minister Mark Carney met with Singaporean officials to strengthen bilateral cooperation and explore trade and investment opportunities



Singapore welcomed Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney on his first official visit to the Republic, marking a new chapter in the longstanding relationship between Singapore and Canada. Prime Minister Carney, who had previously interacted with Singaporean leaders in his earlier roles, was warmly received as both countries reaffirmed their commitment to renewing friendship and deepening bilateral cooperation.

During their meeting, Prime Minister Lawrence Wong, who also serves as Singapore's Minister for Finance, and Prime Minister Carney held wide-ranging discussions on key global developments and regional dynamics. Both leaders exchanged views on economic resilience, the importance of maintaining an open and rules-based trading system, and their shared support for free trade and multilateralism in an increasingly complex global environment.

Prime Minister Wong welcomed Canada's interest in establishing a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with ASEAN, noting that such a partnership would further enhance economic ties and create new opportunities for collaboration across the Asia-Pacific region. The leaders agreed that deeper engagement between Canada and ASEAN would contribute to regional stability and inclusive growth. In addition to official talks, Prime Minister Carney met with Singaporean business representatives and international investors, exploring trade and investment opportunities in areas such as innovation, sustainability, and digital transformation. These engagements highlighted the potential for increased cooperation between Canadian and Singaporean companies, particularly in sectors aligned with both countries' economic priorities.

Singapore reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening ties with Canada through continued dialogue, business exchanges, and strategic cooperation across key areas. The visit underscored the shared values and forward-looking partnership between both nations, grounded in mutual respect and a collective pursuit of global progress.

Venezuela's participation in Singapore Coffee Week

Venezuela participated in Singapore Coffee Week 2025, making its debut at Southeast Asia's leading coffee industry event. Showcased in the Origin Village, Venezuela presented nine high-altitude Arabica varieties from the Mucucay Estate in Mérida state, highlighting its specialty coffee heritage. Organised by the Singapore Coffee Association, the event drew global producers, baristas, and manufacturers. Speaker of Parliament Mr. Seah Kian Peng visited the exhibition and sampled coffees from Latin America, including Venezuela's. Ambassador Jessica López met with organisers to acknowledge support from Venezuela's Ministry of People's Power for Foreign Trade and Country Brand, and Cafe y Ciencia. Business meetings and private tastings of Venezuelan coffee and cocoa attracted strong interest from Singapore's culinary sector, marking a promising step for Venezuela's reemerging coffee industry.



Interview with H.E. Ahmed Mostafa: Egypt's Global Rise and Singapore Connection

In an exclusive interview with IN Diplomacy, H.E. Ahmed Mostafa, Egypt's Ambassador to Singapore, reflects on Egypt's transformation over the past decade, its growing role as a trade and investment hub, and the deepening ties between Cairo and Singapore, culminating in an exceptional presidential visit and renewed cooperation across sectors



“Geographical distance is no longer an obstacle. Countries like Singapore and Egypt can cooperate extensively, especially in promising fields such as financial services. We must engage more deeply and seize global opportunities.”

- H.E. Ahmed Mostafa



alone, Egypt attracted over US\$46 billion in investments, and our exports—especially agricultural goods like dates and strawberries—continue to rise. We have also built strong ties with regional partners and are steadily expanding our global reach.

Why should international companies and investors look towards Egypt?

Egypt offers a powerful mix of opportunity and access. We are developing IT, digital industries, and logistics, supported by 11 maritime ports and over 20 airports. Our infrastructure, skilled workforce, and 100-million-plus domestic market make us a prime investment destination in Africa and the Middle East.

We also serve as a natural gateway to Africa—Egyptian banks and firms already operate across the continent, providing a trusted entry point for partners from Asia and Europe.

You recently accompanied the Singaporean delegation during the state visit. Could you tell us about its significance?

It was a historic visit—the first by a Singaporean President to Egypt since 2016—and lasted almost five days. Fourteen MoUs were signed, covering trade, technology, water, waste management, and fintech. It was also the first time a head of state opened a bilateral business forum in Egypt, giving great momentum to our economic partnership.

Your Excellency, how would you describe Egypt today, and what would you like our readers in Singapore to know about your country?

Egypt is living a defining moment in its modern history. Over the past decade, we have strengthened our national capabilities and diversified our economy. Despite global and domestic challenges, we've achieved strong growth through infrastructure development, capacity building, and investment in human resources. In 2024



As Egypt and Singapore celebrate 60 years of diplomatic ties, where do you see the relationship heading next?

Our two nations share a long-standing friendship—Egypt was the first in Africa and the Middle East to recognise Singapore's independence. Despite the distance, our cooperation continues to deepen in education, technology, and investment. The next phase should focus on expanding these practical partnerships.

What opportunities do you see as the “low-hanging fruit” for collaboration?

Education and investment stand out. A major US\$500 million Singaporean project is expected soon in Egypt. In education,

cooperation is growing—over 320 Singaporean students are studying at Al-Azhar University, and scholarships have been increased from 15 to 50. Al-Azhar is also supporting Singapore's new College of Islamic Studies, and we are expanding exchange programs between Egyptian institutions and Singapore's Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy.

Singaporean investors are already present in Egypt. Could you tell us more about this economic partnership?

Singapore's investments in Egypt amount to around US\$1.4 billion, with companies like Tolaram, Olam, Meinhardt, and PSA active in key sectors. These collaborations reflect strong mutual trust. Our priority now is to connect business leaders directly to deepen cooperation and identify new opportunities.

Finally, congratulations on the opening of the Grand Egyptian Museum. Could you tell us about this landmark project?

Thank you. The Grand Egyptian Museum officially opened on 4 November 2025, in a ceremony attended by 49 heads of state. It's the largest museum in the world dedicated to a single civilisation, showcasing 100,000 artefacts—including the complete Tutankhamun collection.

This project, nearly two decades in the making, reflects Egypt's resilience and vision—honouring our ancient heritage while projecting our modern ambitions to the world.

Cybersecurity and the Global Commons: Singapore's Call for Cooperative Digital Governance

At the Singapore International Cyber Week (SICW) 2025, Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr. Vivian Balakrishnan delivered an insightful opening address that underscored the urgency of strengthening global cooperation, building capacity among developing nations, and adapting governance frameworks to rapid technological change. Speaking on 23 October 2025, he described cyberspace as a “borderless fabric” that connects societies but also demands shared responsibility, strong safeguards, and collective resilience



Dr. Vivian Balakrishnan opened his remarks by comparing cybersecurity to the brakes of a high-speed car—an essential safeguard that enables progress without compromising safety. Referring to the recent Formula 1 race in Singapore, he said that just as drivers need rules of the road and quick reflexes to avoid collisions, societies need cybersecurity frameworks and digital norms to ensure safety and trust in the digital realm. He emphasised that cybersecurity today represents a new domain of the global commons—a shared space beyond national borders that requires international cooperation. Much like climate change or pandemics, cyber threats affect all nations, and no single country can address them in isolation.

Dr. Balakrishnan highlighted the importance of multilateralism and the central role of the United Nations in developing international norms and governance mechanisms for cyberspace. He commended Singapore's Permanent Representative to the UN, Ambassador Burhan Gafoor, for successfully chairing the UN Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) on ICT security. Despite global political divisions, the OEWG achieved consensus on several significant initiatives, including the creation of a Global Points of Contact Directory for cyber emergencies, the adoption of Global Confidence-Building Measures, and the establishment of a new UN Global Mechanism on ICTs Security to sustain ongoing norm-building efforts. The Minister's third key message focused on capacity building, especially for smaller and developing nations that remain more vulnerable to cyber risks. He warned that the digital divide could widen if these states lack the infrastructure and knowledge to safeguard their systems. “Cybersecurity is

only as strong as its weakest link,” he said, calling for greater international support to enhance resilience. Singapore is actively addressing this through initiatives such as the UN-Singapore Cyber Programme, launched in collaboration with the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs. Since 2022, the programme's Cyber Fellowship has benefited 140 participants from 97 countries, strengthening the global network of cyber professionals and policymakers. Regionally, ASEAN member states have also taken a major step forward by agreeing to establish the ASEAN Regional Computer Emergency Response Team (ASEAN CERT), hosted and funded by Singapore. This initiative will coordinate cyber incident responses, promote knowledge-sharing, and bolster collective defence against threats across the region.

Embassy of Cuba in Singapore Celebrates Cuban National Culture Day

The Embassy of Cuba in Singapore hosted the closing ceremony of its Cuban culture celebrations, featuring the launch of the Rueda de Casino dance group, a vibrant performance by Havana Social Club at Cool Cats Club, and the unveiling of the ODAC Cuban Salsa Festival 2025 video. The Embassy also inaugurated its official Instagram account. Ambassador Lisbet Quesada Luna dedicated the event to the centennial of Fidel Castro and the 95th anniversary of Armando Hart Dávalos, alongside tributes to other cultural icons. A special book exhibition on Fidel Castro was unveiled, honouring his legacy of justice and education. Guests included H.E. Jessica López, Ms Aleena Tan, Nora Tann, and Cuban Salsa students. Traditional Cuban cuisine, dance, and dominoes added festive flair. The upcoming Salsa Festival in Havana (Feb 26–Mar 1), celebrating Elito Revé's 70th anniversary, was also announced.



A Week of South African Spirit

South Africa Focus Week in Singapore (SAFWS 2025) gathered leaders, innovators, and cultural figures to dive into sustainable farming, urban development, and the rich cultural heritage of the Rainbow Nation. Through lively roundtables, art exhibitions, wine tastings, and youth-focused initiatives, the event showcased South Africa's creativity, resilience, and collaborative spirit, highlighting its diversity and strong connections on the global stage



Singapore came alive with the sights, sounds, and spirit of South Africa during the South Africa Focus Week (SAFWS 2025) from 6 to 11 October. Over six days, delegates, industry leaders, and culture enthusiasts explored the country's innovation, resilience, and rich heritage, creating a unique mix of knowledge, culture, and connection.

The week began with a deep dive into food security and sustainable agriculture. Delegates joined a roundtable to discuss how extreme weather and greenhouse gas emissions are shaping the future of farming. Experts from government, industry, and research shared innovative Agri-tech solutions, emphasising collaboration across sectors to create a more sustainable food system. The day ended with a hands-on farm visit, bringing theory to life and highlighting practical approaches to nurturing the land.

The focus shifted on day two to infrastructure and urban planning, as delegates visited the Centre for Infrastructure and Tunnel Engineering and the Urban Redevelopment Authority. Singapore's long-term planning, forward-thinking investments, and integrated approach to urban development were on full display. Delegates saw how careful planning, innovative engineering, and visionary leadership transformed the city-state into a thriving, modern metropolis, balancing growth with quality of life.

Day three explored transport and sustainable business practices. A visit to the Land Transport Authority showcased Singapore's connected, inclusive, and greener transport system, while a roundtable in partnership with the Tata Group highlighted how resilience, innovation, and collaboration drive sustainable economic growth. The day concluded with a National Day Reception, celebrating South Africa's 31 years of democracy and the strides made under its Government of National Unity, a reminder of the country's journey toward unity in diversity.

On day four, delegates ventured into Singapore's water and maritime systems, visiting the Marina Barrage and the Maritime and Port Authority. They witnessed firsthand how long-term planning, technological innovation, and sustainability intersect to support Singapore's urban and maritime success, offering lessons for both nations in building resilient and efficient systems.

Day five celebrated South Africa's legacy and creativity. Delegates marked 30 years of the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund, championing initiatives for children and youth from disadvantaged backgrounds. Later, the Asia Meets Africa Art Fair showcased the vibrancy of African and Asian art, from music and dance to fashion and crafts, highlighting the power of culture to bridge continents and foster understanding.

The week concluded with a Taste of South Africa festival, where delegates savoured the country's culinary and vinicultural treasures. From traditional dishes to South Africa's signature Pinotage wines, the festival offered a feast for the senses. Live performances, a braai competition, and interactive experiences brought the Rainbow Nation's energy and warmth to life, leaving guests with unforgettable memories.

SAFWS 2025 was more than an event; it was a celebration of connection, creativity, and collaboration. By blending dialogue, culture, and experiences, the week deepened ties between Singapore and South Africa, offering a colourful snapshot of a nation that thrives on diversity, innovation, and heritage.