

IN Diplomacy

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Published by Sun Media Pte Ltd
www.sunmediaonline.com

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DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR CORPS SINGAPORE

Issue 47 February 2019
www.indiplomacy.com



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MCI (P) 078/06/2018



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Front Cover and Photos appearing in this issue courtesy of:

- Singapore Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
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Czech PM Would Like to Re-Open Embassy in Singapore

Prime Minister Andrej Babiš first official visit to Singapore in January

During his official visit to Singapore on 14th and 15th January 2018, Czech Prime Minister, HE Andrej Babiš, was feted with a Welcome Ceremony, followed by a dinner later on at the Istana, which was hosted for him by Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong. PM Lee thanked the Czech Republic for its strong support for the European-Union Singapore Free Trade Agreement signed last October. Mr Babiš also called on President Halimah Yacob and they reaffirmed the warm and friendly relations as well as the growing economic exchanges between the two countries.

The next day the Czech Prime Minister delivered the keynote address at the Singapore-Czech Republic Business Forum and had visited

the Centre of Excellence for Testing & Research of Autonomous Vehicles – Nanyang Technological University (CETRAN) and had an orchid named in his honour during his visit to the Singapore Botanic Gardens.

During his visit he gave an interview to the press expressing his wish to see the Czech Embassy re-open here as Singapore is a major regional trade and financial hub. Another area of interest is the re-establishing of direct flights between both countries. He also had discussed with the Singapore PM more collaborations that included areas such as trade, technology and research as well as ties between both countries' institutes of higher learning. Mr



(Photo source: Singapore PMO)

Babiš was accompanied by the Czech Minister of Industry and Trade, HE Ms Marta Nováková and a 38-member business delegation. The country is the 14th largest trading partner with Singapore in Europe with with bilateral trade to the tune of \$1.15 billion in 2017.

G20 Round Up: Outcomes of the Buenos Aires Summit

Calls for major reforms to the international financial system



The Group of Twenty (G20) Summit held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, from 30 November to 1 December 2018, called for major reforms to the international financial system. While global economic growth is strong, financial vulnerabilities, geopolitical concerns and trade issues, have partially materialised.

The G20 recognized necessary World Trade Organisation (WTO) reformation to improve and update its existing rules and disciplines for the functioning of its multilateral trading system. This response is in addition to the G20 Eminent Persons Group on Global Financial Governance

(EPG) final report, enabling countries to reach their full potential and avert financial damage. The **Global Governance Group** or **3G** (see accompanying box story) voiced support for the Buenos Aires Action Plan, which outlines the G20's policies to strengthen economic resilience and promote inclusive growth. It also reiterated the importance of maintaining and strengthening an open, rules-based multilateral trading system as embodied by the WTO, to sustain free, open trade. The G20 reiterated its commitment to pursuing strong, sustainable, balanced, inclusive growth and pledged to collectively improve a rules-based international order.

The G20 also reaffirmed its commitment to spearheading sustainable development through the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, especially for the benefit of developing countries.

Furthermore, the G20 High Level Principles on Sustainable Habitat through Regional Planning, promote sustainable growth and responding to challenges brought about by urbanisation. In accordance, the 3G reaffirmed their commitment to the Paris Agreement and pledge, noting the G20 members' different approaches in addressing climate change. They recognised South-South and triangular cooperation are crucial to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Who are the 3G?

The Global Governance Group (3G) is an informal group of 30 smaller and medium-sized countries created with the aim of providing greater representation to its member countries and collectively channeling their views into the G20 process more effectively. Singapore was the Chair of 3G in 2017.

- | | | |
|---------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| ■ Bahamas | ■ Kuwait | ■ Qatar |
| ■ Bahrain | ■ Liechtenstein | ■ Rwanda |
| ■ Barbados | ■ Luxembourg | ■ San Marino |
| ■ Botswana | ■ Malaysia | ■ Senegal |
| ■ Brunei Darussalam | ■ Monaco | ■ Singapore |
| ■ Chile | ■ Montenegro | ■ Slovenia |
| ■ Costa Rica | ■ New Zealand | ■ Switzerland |
| ■ Finland | ■ Panama | ■ UAE |
| ■ Guatemala | ■ Peru | ■ Uruguay |
| ■ Jamaica | ■ Philippines | ■ Vietnam |

Presentation of Credentials

IN Diplomacy welcomes the Kingdom of Spain Ambassador to Singapore, HE Santiago Miralles Huete, following his presentation of credentials to HE President Halimah Yacob on 31st January 2019.



The Ambassador of the Kingdom of Spain
HE Santiago Miralles Huete



Raisina Dialogue, Delhi: India Can Do More...



Singapore's Senior Minister of State Ministries of Defence and Foreign Affairs, Maliki Osman (pictured left), visited New Delhi for the Raisina Dialogue, from 8th to 10th January 2019, where he spoke on a panel on the topic 'A New Delhi Consensus – India's Imagination and Global Expectations'. This is the fourth edition of the Dialogue which is India's flagship annual geopolitical and geo-strategic conference.

The inaugural address was delivered by Prime Minister of Norway H E Ms Erna Solberg in the presence of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and External Affairs Minister Smt. Sushma Swaraj (pictured above). The Dialogue is co-hosted by the ORF

Continued next page...

22nd ASEAN-EU Ministerial Meeting: Relationship Upgraded to Strategic Partnership



Singapore Foreign Minister Dr Vivian Balakrishnan and Federica Mogherini, High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. (Photo: Council of the European Union)

The 22nd EU-ASEAN ministerial meeting was held in Brussels on 21 January and brought together foreign ministers of the European Union and their counterparts from the 10 member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr Vivian Balakrishnan attended and co-chaired this event. They reaffirmed the significant role played by ASEAN and the European Union in shaping the political, socio-economic, and security agenda for both regions and globally,

and agreed in principle to upgrade EU-ASEAN relations to a Strategic Partnership.

"Today, we agreed in principle to upgrade our relation to a strategic partnership. It is a recognition of the strategic partnership we already have in many fields. It is an important signal showing that the two most advanced and most successful integration processes in the world stand firmly behind multilateralism and a rule-based global order," said Federica Mogherini, High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.

Foreign Minister Dr Vivian Balakrishnan and ASEAN coordinator for EU relations said, "We represent two of the most successful regional organisations in the world. We share values and common goals. As we take our partnership to a greater height, we will continue to explore new areas in which we can cooperate and learn from each other, such as cybersecurity, maritime security, connectivity and climate change."

"We represent two of the most successful regional organisations in the world... we will continue to explore new areas in which we can cooperate and learn from each other, such as cybersecurity, maritime security, connectivity and climate change"

EU and ASEAN foreign ministers adopted a joint statement discussing cooperation on regional and international issues, including global challenges such as climate change and strengthening the rule-based multilateral system. They reiterated mutual respect for the independence, sovereignty, equality for all states, and other principles of the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia, the Charter of the United Nations, and international law. The Foreign Ministers discussed the priorities for 2019 such as enhanced counterterrorism, transnational crime, maritime security and cybersecurity cooperation, as well as how to strengthen EU-ASEAN cooperation on connectivity. Minister Balakrishnan also met with Members of the European Parliament to discuss strengthening the ties between Singapore and the EU, including the ratification of the EU-Singapore Free Trade Agreement, EU-Singapore Investment Protection Agreement and EU-Singapore Partnership and Cooperation Agreement.

INTERVIEW H.E. CARLOS RAUL VASQUEZ CORRALES

Singapore Should Prepare to Discover More About Peru in 2019

Excerpts from the interview with Peru's Ambassador to Singapore HE Carlos Raul Vasquez Corrales, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, by Nomita Dhar, Publisher & Editor-in-Chief of *IN Diplomacy*. He speaks eloquently and passionately about the potential ahead for developing the relationship between Singapore and Peru

How has your experience been since your presentation of credentials to Singapore's President Halimah Yacob last September?

The diversity of diplomatic events here has made my experience in Singapore a very vibrant and enriching one. Since September, I have met governmental officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Minister for Trade and Industry, the Ministry of Defence, the Director of the Central Narcotics Bureau, the Dean of the Lee Kuan Yew School on Public Policy and many others. I have made good friends among my colleagues, the Ambassadors of the Latin American Group, the ASEAN Group, the European Group and the African Group and the Middle East Ambassadors. It is really a privilege to be an Ambassador in this country.

What opportunities can be explored between Singapore and Peru during your term?

It is highly probable that economic links between us will experience a boost. From 2019 to 2021, the Peruvian Government is actively promoting investments in infrastructure through private-public partnerships. We hope to receive important, valuable expertise from



Singapore in development of Smart Cities and appropriate water resource management. The Embassy is also interested in getting Singaporeans to know about Peru's rich, diversified heritage through cultural and culinary exhibitions in 2019.

Other opportunities for cooperation have emerged in defence and security, fighting against drug trafficking and the associated crimes, academic exchange programmes and joint research programmes.

Peru has been on the bucket list of many Singaporeans. How will the Embassy build on this and get more tourists to visit?

We are promoting the annual Travel Mart Fair in Peru to Singaporean tour operators. We are also encouraging Peruvian companies to participate in the Tourism Fairs here in Singapore, such as last year's ITB Asia Fair.

There is a Peruvian company with headquarters here in Singapore that promotes sailing along the Amazon River and has been very successful. We are trying to organise joint events with this company this year.

What would you like Singaporeans to know about your country?

We are home to the beautiful snow-capped mountains of the Andean mountains, second highest mountain range in the world, the Amazon River and the Amazon Jungle. We also have 84 microclimates as well as 1,857 identified species of birds. In Peru, you can find one of the highest waterfalls in the world, the deepest canyon in the world, Arequipa, as well as the highest sand hills in the world. We also

have historical monuments on the UNESCO World Heritage List such as Machu Picchu, Kuélap, the Nazca Lines, and the Chavin Temple.

Peru was also recognised as the leading culinary and cultural destination in the World Travels Awards of 2018. The intermingling of the Chinese and Peruvian communities created fusion food that we call "Chifa". According to a UK-based restaurant magazine, Peru is home to three of the 50 Best Restaurants in the World: Central, Maido, Astrid & Gaston, and seven of the top 50 restaurants in Latin America: Maido, Central, Astrid & Gaston, Isolina, Rafael, The Sea, Malabar, Osso, and y Amaz. So there is a very long list of reasons to visit Peru!

Full transcript for interview please visit www.indiplomacy.com

Raisina Dialogue

...continued from previous page.

and the Ministry of External Affairs of India. During the course of the panel discussion, SMS Maliki was asked what role India can play in the Asian region. He replied, "From the region's perspective, we support Prime Minister Modi's vision for India to play a more substantial role. So let me outline some of these in three broad areas: one, the economic opportunities that exist; two, the strategic opportunities; and three, the digital opportunities." He noted from Southeast Asia's perspective, there is certainly much more business to be done. In 2017, ASEAN's

trade in goods with India stood at US\$73.6 billion while the same figure for China, Japan and South Korea ran upwards of US\$150 billion each. So he felt that much more can be done between India and Southeast Asia.

Outside the areas of economics and trade, SMS Maliki said, "We also see India playing a much bigger role on the defence and strategic front. India's continued participation in ASEAN on platforms such as the ADMM-Plus or the East Asia Summit remains crucial in addressing the common threats, like piracy, and opportunities in the region. We look forward to greater practical security cooperation between India and Southeast Asia, particularly through the inaugural edition of the trilateral maritime exercise

among India, Singapore, and Thailand in the Andaman Sea in 2019."

This year's overall theme for the Dialogue was "A World Reorder: New Geometries; Fluid Partnerships; Uncertain Outcomes". The multi-stakeholder, cross-sectoral discussion addressed issues arising from global transitions and the changing world order, triggered by unique leaders, innovative partnerships and disruptive technologies. The welcome address was delivered by Observer Research Foundation (ORF) President Samir Saran followed by opening remarks by ORF Chairman Sunjoy Joshi. Recordings of the panels and dialogues are currently available on YouTube.

Thai Princess' Visit 18th to 21st Jan 2019

HER Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn of the Kingdom of Thailand visited Singapore in January to attend the Global Young Scientists (GYSS) Summit 2019.

The Summit gathering provides an opportunity for young international researchers to interact with eminent scientists and technology leaders where they are able to have conversations on science and research, technology innovation and society, and solutions to global challenges.

The five-day Summit's theme 'Advancing Science, Creating Technologies for a Better World' saw participants take part in lectures, plenary sessions and panel discussions, interactions with speakers in informal small group sessions as well as visiting local

universities, research centres and local agencies to learn more about Singapore's local research and innovation ecosystem. The talks covered topics such as cryptography, cybersecurity and blockchain, the impact of science on modern society, as well as featured speakers such as Michael Levitt, the Nobel-prize winner bio physicist and Ada Yonath, a crystallographer who pioneered work on the structure of the ribosome.

Her Royal Highness attended the GYSS Opening Ceremony and the Welcome Dinner hosted by Deputy Prime Minister and Coordinating Minister for National Security Teo Chee Hean. During her visit, Her Royal Highness visited the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), Northlight



Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn (far left) during her visit to RSIS with Ambassador Ong Keng Yong (centre), Executive Deputy Chairman of RSIS (Photo: RSIS)

School, the Indian Heritage Centre, the Learning Forest at the Singapore Botanic Gardens, the ArtScience Museum and the National University of Singapore.

Sri Lanka 71st Independence Day 4th and 12th Feb 2019

Sri Lanka High Commissioner Official Residence and Shangri-la Island Ballroom



Holding cake knife (from left to right): SMS Dr Janil Puthucheary and Sri Lanka Acting High Commissioner Mr. O.L. Ameer Ajwad. (Above 2nd from right): MPs Mr Patrick Tay and Mr Charles Chong. (Right): Sri Lankan cultural performance at the diplomatic reception. (Photos: Sri Lanka High Commission)

THE diplomatic reception to celebrate the 71st Anniversary of Independence of Sri Lanka was hosted by Mr. O.L. Ameer Ajwad, Acting High Commissioner of Sri Lanka to Singapore and Mrs. Asmiya Ajwad. The Guest of Honour, representing the Singapore government was Dr Janil Puthucheary, Senior Minister of State, Ministry of Transport & Ministry of Communications and Information and his parliamentary colleagues Mr. Charles Chong and Mr. Patrick Tay. The Acting High Commissioner highlighted the immense potential for deepening economic engagement and outlined the investment opportunities unfolding with massive development projects in Sri Lanka, as well as great potential for collaboration in tourism sector.

Minister Janil Puthucheary also emphasized that there is a huge potential for deepening economic engagement, based on the Singapore-Sri Lanka Free Trade Agreement, which he termed as the only modern and comprehensive trade agreement that Sri Lanka has entered into, and capable of bringing a vast array of economic benefits to the country. He also remarked on Singapore's interest for new areas of cooperation in science and technology, research and development involving academic and relevant institutes of the two countries.

The diplomatic reception was held following the the official ceremony on 4th February 2019 at the Sri Lanka High Commissioner's Official Residence.

A Sri Lankan Food Festival was also organised by the High Commission at Hotel Mandarin Orchard, Singapore from 13th to 15th February 2018 as this year's special event to commemorate Sri Lanka's Independence in Singapore.

The Food Festival was jointly inaugurated by Mr. O.L. Ameer Ajwad and HE Mr. S. Chandra Das, High Commissioner of Singapore to Sri Lanka and Mr. Tan Kim Seng, Chief Operating Officer of Meritus Hotels & Resorts.

Sri Lankan celebrity Chef, Desanandhu Dr. Publis Silva of Mount Lavinia Hotel was invited by the Sri Lanka High Commission to showcase the authentic Sri Lankan cuisine in Singapore.



India 70th Republic Day

24th and 26th Jan 2019

Marina Bay Sands Grand Ballroom and India High Commission



INDIA's 70th Republic Day diplomatic reception was held at Marina Bay Sands Grand Ballroom on 24th January 2019. More than 1,500 guests came to mark the occasion together with Guest of Honour, Mr Gam Kim Yong, Minister For Health (*pictured right*) and Members of Parliament Mr. Ang Hin Kee and Mr. Sitoh Yih Pin.

The High Commissioner of India to Singapore, HE Jawed Ashraf (*pictured top left*), in a moving welcome speech that charted the historic, economic, social and emotional ties that exist between both countries; he also highlighted how the present day links will lead to a future that sees India collaborating even closer still with Singapore and the ASEAN region in areas such as trade, investments, defence, skills development, Smart Cities and fintech - just to name a few.

Minister Gan Kim Yong in his speech reiterated how Singapore has always believed in India's potential and is heartened to see that India is contributing to the region and to the world at large. He said, "It is fitting that we celebrate the long standing and deep friendship between our two countries." He noted how Prime Minister Narendra Modi twice visited Singapore last year and Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong visited Delhi in 2018. These high level interactions have prompted significant strides in the countries' strategic partnership.

The reception was followed by another celebration at the India High Commission at Grange Road where a record number - 1,200 members of the Indian community in Singapore - came together on the Saturday morning of 26th January 2019.

The High Commissioner unfurled the National Flag which was then followed by the singing of the National Anthem. He addressed the guests and read out the Address of the Honourable President on the occasion of the Republic Day of India. Students from the several schools based in Singapore presented a cultural performance. Afterwards, High Commissioner presented the students with certificates of appreciation.



COMMUNIQUÉ

DPM Tharman Visit Saudi Arabia



The Ambassador of Saudi Arabia in Singapore H E Saad Saleh I. Alsaleh gave a briefing regarding the recent visit of Singapore's Deputy Prime Minister and Coordinating Minister for Economic Policies Tharman Shanmugaratnam to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia from 19th to 21st January 2019.

During his visit he met His Royal Highness Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz, the Crown Prince, Vice President of the Council of Ministers and Minister of Defence. They reviewed the bilateral relations between the two countries and discussed the promising opportunities for developing cooperation between the two sides in various fields, especially the economic aspect, and the desire of the Singapore government to contribute to the programmes and projects to achieve the Kingdom's Vision 2030, in addition to exchanging views on issues of mutual interest.

The meeting was attended by Minister

of Commerce and Investment Dr. Majed bin Abdullah Al-Qasabi; Minister of Energy, Industry and Mineral Resources Eng. Khalid bin Abdulaziz Al-Falih; Minister of Education Dr. Hamad bin Mohammed Al Al-Sheikh; Saudi Ambassador to Singapore Saad Al-Saleh; Singaporean Senior Minister of State at the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Dr Mohamad Maliki bin Osman; Singaporean Ambassador to KSA Lawrence Anderson and Ambassador Umej Bahtia and a number of officials.



DPM Tharman with (clockwise from top left): HRH Prince Mohammed Salman; with Ambassador H E Saad Saleh; with Ambassador Saad Saleh and members of the Singapore delegation

Uzbekistan Tourism News: Visitors from Singapore Tripled in 2018

On 19th February 2019 the **Uzbek-Singapore Centre for Tourism Development** was opened at the Uzbekistan Embassy in Singapore. This came about from the implementation of the cooperation agreement signed in 2018 between the embassy, Uzbekistan's State Committee for Tourism Development and Singapore-based company SEA Business Center Pte Ltd.

Uzbekistan's Ambassador to Singapore HE Kakhramon Shakirov in his welcome speech said the Centre will go a long way to tap the full potential of the country's tourism market and that thanks to the joint efforts of tourism stakeholders here in 2018 the number of tourists from Singapore had tripled from 611

in 2017 to 1,842!

Other travel news on Uzbekistan include:

■ With effect from 1st Feb 2019, the nationals of 64 countries visiting Uzbekistan for up to 30 days do not have to apply for a visa. They join Singaporeans who already enjoy this privilege since February 2018.

■ From 22nd to 24th February, 2019, the Embassy of the Republic of Uzbekistan in Singapore, together with the representative office of the national airline Uzbekistan Airways, participated in a separate national stand at the largest international tourism exhibition in the region, NATAS Travel 2019. At the opening ceremony, a creative dance



team performed the 'Andijan Polka' and 'Lazgi'. In addition, Ambassador Kakhramon Shakirov, made a presentation of the country's tourism potential and reminded visitors of Uzbekistan's ancient history, rich culture and unique traditions and how the country presented ample opportunities for Singaporean travellers to explore its diverse attractions.