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Fourth Indonesia-Singapore Retreat



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Business & Investment Summit**

Featuring

**Brazil Ambassador
HE Flávio Soares
Damico**





PUBLISHER Sun Media Pte Ltd

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF Nomita Dhar

EDITORIAL Ranees Sahaney
Sumita Mehta
Jenny Tan
Syed Jaafar Alkaff

ADVERTISING Swati Singh

PRINTING Times Printers Pte Ltd

PHOTOGRAPHERS Martin Lukas
Michael Ozaki

Contact

Sun Media Pte Ltd
20 Kramat Lane #01-02 United House,
Singapore 228773.
Tel: (65) 6735 2972 / 1907 / 2986
Fax: (65) 6735 3114
Email: edit@sunmediaonline.com

Website www.indiplomacy.com

For Advertising enquiries contact:
Swati Singh m: (65) 9082 9590
Email: business@sunmediaonline.com

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DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR CORPS SINGAPORE

Presentation of Credentials

IN Diplomacy welcomes the new Heads of Mission following their presentation of credentials to the President of Singapore Her Excellency Halimah Yacob

31st October 2019



*The High Commissioner of Rwanda
HE Jean de Dieu Uwihanganye*

Why Diplomacy Matters

Singapore is home to 70 resident foreign High Commissions and Embassies, 43 Consular Posts and 11 International Organisations. They act as a conduit between Singapore and their respective countries. Diplomatic missions are headed by influential newsmakers who open doors for business, trade, investment, education, the arts and culture.

IN Diplomacy has a mission to communicate and be a bridge between the diplomatic community and Singaporeans.



DCC Singapore: Welcomes & Goodbyes

Singapore bids goodbye to two diplomats hailing from Portuguese-speaking countries Portugal and Brazil - HE Luís Lorrvão and HE Flávio Damico respectively. During the Diplomatic & Consular Corps reception held at The Fullerton Hotel Singapore, on 30th October 2019, the Dean of the Corps and Ambassador of Chile to Singapore, HE James Sinclair, also welcomed new arrivals to the Island Republic's diplomatic community (pictured above l to r) Excellencies: Dean Sinclair (Master of Ceremony), Jean de Dieu Uwihanganye (Rwanda), Ms Zeenaz Fahmee spouse of (next to her) Dr. Abdulla Mausoom (Maldives), Mdm Indira Babayeva spouse of (next to her) Arken Arystanov (Kazakhstan), Sagi Karni (Israel), Rafik Mansour (USA), Antti Vanskä (Finland) and Agustín García-López Loaeza (Mexico).



(From l): Dean Sinclair, Ambassador Luís Lorrvão (Portugal), Mrs Rosa Damico and Ambassador Flávio Damico (Brazil)

VISITS

Official



(Source: MCI)

Cuban Vice-President Robert Morales Ojeda

The Vice President of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Cuba, Roberto Morales Ojeda was on an Official Visit to Singapore from 24th to 27th October 2019, at the invitation of Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr Vivian Balakrishnan.

During the visit he called on Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong. He reaffirmed the warm bilateral ties and the strong cooperation between Singapore and Cuba at multilateral fora such as the United Nations and welcomed Singapore companies to continue exploring opportunities in Cuba, especially in the tourism, biopharmaceuticals, logistics and biotechnology sectors. Both sides also welcomed further cooperation on education, including between their tertiary institutions.

Vice President Morales and Minister Balakrishnan discussed efforts to facilitate people-to-people exchanges and businesses, including the signing of a Visa Abolition Agreement in 2015. Both sides also agreed to step up the exchange of knowledge and best practices in the areas of education, biotechnology and research.

Cuba and Singapore established diplomatic relations on April 18, 1997, and both countries have economic-commercial ties, especially in the biotechnological field.



(Source: MFA)

Indonesia-Singapore Fourth Leaders Retreat



Photo: S. Jaafar Alkaff

Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong met Indonesian President Joko Widodo in Singapore on 8 October 2019 for their fourth Singapore-Indonesia Leaders' Retreat. Apart from reaffirming the excellent state of bilateral relations the Leaders noted with satisfaction that economic links between both countries have steadily expanded over the years, with cooperation in trade, investments and tourism growing from strength to strength. Singapore has consistently been among the top investors in Indonesia, and has been the largest foreign investor in Indonesia since 2014, with realised investments reaching US\$9.2 billion in 2018. Both countries have also consistently been among each other's largest sources of tourist arrivals, with 1.8 million visitors from Singapore arriving in Indonesia in 2018 and over 3 million visitors from Indonesia visiting Singapore in 2018. The Leaders agreed to make progress to update the Avoidance of Double Taxation Agreement, and

affirmed the importance of an early ratification of the Agreement between Singapore and Indonesia on the Promotion and Protection of Investments (Bilateral Investment Treaty). Both agreements would boost investor confidence and further increase two-way trade and investment flows.

Financial Cooperation

The leaders also discussed the importance of financial cooperation between Indonesia and Singapore and agreed to renew the bilateral financial arrangement between the Monetary Authority of Singapore and Bank Indonesia that was concluded last year in Bali, for one year. The arrangement comprises a local currency bilateral swap agreement, and an enhanced bilateral repo agreement, with a combined value of US\$10 billion equivalent. The renewal, on existing terms, will help support monetary and financial stability in both countries, and also in the region.

DPM Heng @ WEF India Economic Summit



Photo: MCI / Fyrol

The theme for the World Economic Forum's India Economic Summit (IES) 2019 was 'Innovating for India: Strengthening South Asia, Impacting the World.' The aim was to accelerate the adoption of Fourth Industrial Revolution technologies and boost the region's dynamism, thus enhancing global growth by promoting collaboration among South Asian countries and the ASEAN economic block. Singapore's Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Heng Swee Keat was the co-chair of the summit held on 3rd to 4th October 2019 in New Delhi. Many ASEAN members are already well advanced on the path to digitalisation and DPM Heng shared insights on Singapore's efforts on its Smart Nation Initiative.

During his bilateral visit he also met India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi as well as its

Minister of Finance and Corporate Affairs Nirmala Sitharaman, Minister of Railways and Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal. According to a Ministry of Foreign Affairs statement, DPM Heng and PM Modi discussed India's social and economic transformation, how technology has changed the way governments provide services and reach out to citizens, and areas for further collaboration, including infrastructure, FinTech, research and innovation, as well as tourism. DPM Heng also called on the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina, who is in New Delhi for the IES. They discussed the deepening of ties between Singapore and Bangladesh, including potential areas for cooperation such as infrastructure development and strengthening connectivity between the two countries.

INTERVIEW HE Flávio Soares Damico

Singapore - A Source of Inspiration and Abiding Friend

Before his departure from Singapore, outgoing Ambassador of Brazil to Singapore, HE Flávio Damico spoke to Editor-in-Chief Ms Nomita Dhar about the lessons he is taking away and how they can benefit his home country



“My challenge was to generate the necessary confidence for us to go to the next level. To accomplish this, we identified two main areas: (a) investment facilitation, which we have done with the signing of the Agreement on the Avoidance of Double Taxation that hopefully will be ratified by the Brazilian Congress by the end of this year, and (b) the negotiation of the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with Singapore”

Brazilian government to developments here. Since 2015, the Brazilian economy has improved a great deal. The risk perception has declined dramatically. In 2015, the annual inflation rate was 10.7%, the interest rate 14.25%, the stock exchange index (IBOVESPA) 38,000 and Brazil's country risk was at 533 points. In 2019, the stock exchange index is 108,000 and Brazil's country risk 117 points – the lowest level in 6 years. Our inflation too is at the lowest: it's about 3% and the interest rates are now likely to drop to 4.5%, historically, its lowest rate. Thus a marked improvement in all indicators!

Prospects for the resumption of a faster pace of growth by 2020 are quite good. There has been

This brings us to the problems facing our manufacturing sector, which has a lot of hard work to do to become fully competitive globally. To redress that, we are moving very fast towards concluding trade deals. Mercosur has closed one with the European Union and also with the European Free Trade Association. We will have the second round of our trade negotiations with Singapore shortly. So now in economic terms we have a lot of clarity on where we are going and the speed at which we can do this. Slowly, the pieces are falling into place and I'm very happy to report the economy has been at its healthiest stage after quite a while.

Your Excellency, you have seen and experienced many things ever since you arrived here in Singapore, three and a half years ago; it has been quite a roller-coaster ride and somehow you've managed to steer the ship of Brazil-Singapore ties in a positive direction. What's happening in Brazil now on the economic front?

In 2016, Brazil was in a very complicated economic and political situation: a deteriorating debt-to-GDP ratio compromising government accounts with serious consequences. Beyond the short-term deleterious macroeconomic situation of fiscal deficits, Brazil was in no position to fund necessary investments in infrastructure to boost the competitiveness of its exports of agricultural and mineral commodities. Since our main markets are in Asia, we are disadvantaged in relation to our competitors. Simultaneously, the domestic political situation was also very serious with enormous revulsion against corruption, which led to important changes. Of course, we could not have addressed this problem unless there was some political change for a country that is one of the largest producers of commodities, both in agriculture and oil and gas.

Being here in Singapore enabled me to consider ways on how a country on the Atlantic could be relevant in a world where the Indo-Pacific is more and more important. My good friend Professor Danny Quah, Dean of the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, has argued convincingly that the centre of economic gravity has slowly moved away from the West to the East. This is a reality we have to be aware of. Much of my job in Singapore entails drawing the attention of the



The Ambassador was awarded the Order of the Rio Branco by the Brazilian government on 30th July 2019 in recognition of his work in “removing the barriers preventing closer ties and cooperation between Brazil and Singapore”

one point about which we are disappointed: the recovery has not been, so far, accompanied by commensurate job creation. The economy is not yet strong enough to support consumer confidence. Besides that, many of the companies were hit hard by the weak performance of the economy in previous years.

Has the US-China trade war, from which we are all suffering, had an impact on the Brazilian economy?

Not directly as yet. Of course, we are worse off every time multilateral rules are brushed aside and countries initiate unilateral action. It does not mean that Brazil will win in every scenario once a truce is reached between the US and China. We are in a very awkward position, since Brazil's productive structure is very dissimilar to the one prevailing in the 'red states' in the US that elected President Trump. Like Brazil, those states are powerhouses in the production of minerals, oil and gas and agricultural commodities. So we are in a situation where we tend to suffer as much as others when the 'elephants' are fighting, but we might also suffer if some level of accommodations is reached between the US and China.

So far, the worst has not happened. Of course, a number of other things might prove to be good for my country, such as the rise in meat exports. Brazil is in a condition to cover the reduction in supply of pork following the outbreak of the African swine fever in some countries. We are also in a good position to export substitute products like chicken and beef.

What have been the lessons you are taking away from Singapore from your time here as Ambassador?

**For the full transcript visit
www.indiplomacy.com**

Brunei Hosts 7th Young Leaders' Programme

Senior Minister and Coordinating Minister for National Security Teo Chee Hean heads the delegation of Singapore's young generation leaders

Senior Minister and Coordinating Minister for National Security Teo Chee Hean led a large delegation of Singapore political office-holders to Negara Brunei Darussalam from 1 to 4 October 2019 for the 7th Young Leaders' Programme (YLP), at the invitation of His Royal Highness Prince Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah, Crown Prince and Senior Minister at the Prime Minister's Office of Negara Brunei Darussalam.

The delegation included Ms Grace Fu (Minister for Culture, Community and Youth), Mr Masagos Zulkifli (Minister for the Environment and Water Resources), Mr Heng Chee How (Senior Minister of State, Ministry of Defence), Mr Edwin Tong (Senior Minister of State, Ministry of Law and Ministry of Health) and Dr Tan Wu Meng (Senior Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Trade and Industry).

Started in 2013, the YLP is an annual exchange of visits that Brunei and Singapore take turns to host. The YLP reflects the long-term commitment of Singapore and Brunei to enhance the special bilateral relationship, including through the strengthening of ties between the younger generation leaders of both countries.



SM Teo and the Singapore delegation visiting KDB Darussalam at Muara Naval Base

SM Teo and the delegation were hosted to breakfast by His Royal Highness Prince Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah, Crown Prince and Senior Minister at the Prime Minister's Office of Negara Brunei Darussalam, and Her Royal Highness Princess Pengiran Anak Isteri Pengiran Anak Sarah. SM Teo and the delegation also visited the Royal Brunei Navy Headquarters at Muara Naval Base, and was hosted to a high tea reception by Minister of Defence II Pehin Datu Lailaraja Major General (Rtd) Dato Paduka Seri Haji Awang Halbi bin Haji Mohd Yusof. SM Teo and Pehin Halbi Yusof reaffirmed the strong bilateral defence relations, and welcomed efforts to explore other mutually beneficial

areas of defence cooperation.

The Singapore delegation also visited Universiti Teknologi Brunei and Universiti Brunei Darussalam. At Universiti Teknologi Brunei, SM Teo delivered a speech entitled "A Special Partnership for a Brighter Future", on Singapore-Brunei relations and how both countries can strengthen cooperation to deal with global challenges.

During the visit, the delegation were also hosted to briefings on Brunei's economic and financial developments, as well as agricultural and aquacultural site visits.

For the full report & more photos
visit www.indiplomacy.com

FM Balakrishnan - Malaysia Trek Continues



Minister Balakrishnan's meetings with ① Negeri Sembilan's State Executive Councillor for Youth and Sports YB Tuan Haji Mohamad Taufek Bin Abd Ghani and State Executive Councillor for Rural Development YB Tuan Haji Ismail Bin Haji Ahmad; ② Pahang Menteri Besar Wan Rosdy Wan Ismail; ③ Negeri Sembilan Menteri Besar Aminuddin Harun and ④ PAS president Abdul Hadi Awang in Terengganu

Foreign Minister Dr Vivian Balakrishnan continues engagement with visits to Negeri Sembilan, Pahang and Terengganu from 1st to 3rd October 2019. These are a follow-up on his earlier visits to Kedah and Penang in August. The visits are part of Singapore's continued efforts to strengthen its longstanding and close relations with the Malaysian states, and to deepen its engagement with Malaysia at all levels. Apart from the Malaysian leaders shown in the photos here, in Negeri Sembilan, Minister Balakrishnan also had an audience with the Yang di-Pertuan Besar of Negeri Sembilan Duli Yang Maha Mulia Tuanku Muhriz Ibni Almarhum Tuanku Munawir; in Pahang the



Yang Amat Mulia Tengku Muda Pahang Tengku Abdul Rahman Al-Haj Ibni Almarhum Sultan Haji Ahmad Shah Al-Musta'in Billah and in Terengganu the Menteri Besar of Terengganu YAB Dato' Seri Dr Ahmad Samsuri Mokhtar.

SM Teo Bilateral Working Visit to Moscow

Senior Minister and Coordinating Minister for National Security Teo Chee Hean was on a bilateral working visit to Moscow from the 15th to 20th of October 2019 where he met Special Presidential Representative for Environment Protection, Ecology and Transport Mr Sergei Ivanov. According to a statement issued by the Singapore Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the visit both expressed satisfaction with the good progress in bilateral relations and welcomed the recent signing of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU)-Singapore Free Trade Agreement. They also had a wide-ranging discussion in areas such as smart city development, urban transportation, sustainable development, climate change, and cooperation in the Arctic.

SM Teo also met Deputy Mayor of Moscow for Regional Security and Information Policy Mr Alexander Gorbenko and discussed the use of new urban solutions, digital technology and data analytics to improve urban transportation and city management.

For the full report visit
www.indiplomacy.com

COMMUNIQUE



Photos: Royal Embassy of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Singapore

Tourism Visas for Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia Ambassador HE Saad Saleh Al-Saleh announces new tourist visa open to 49 nationalities

Since September this year, visitors from 49 nationalities - including Singapore - are now able to get a one-year, multiple entry visas that allows them to spend up to 90 days in the KSA. The cost of the e-Visa or Visa on arrival is 440 SAR or approx.. S\$160 (including VAT). On 1st October 2019, Saudi Ambassador to Singapore, HE Saad Saleh Al-Saleh, together with officials from Saudi Arabia's national airline Saudia, announced the launch of the new visa system at a press conference held in Singapore.

He said: "It is a historic milestone in

the implementation of Vision 2030. It will continue the ongoing process of opening and connecting the Kingdom to the world and will help to diversify the country's economy in line with Vision 2030 objectives to reduce its dependence on oil."

The Ambassador also said that opening the Kingdom to tourism will provide visitors an opportunity to discover the warm hospitality of its people; its rich heritage and vibrant culture; and the beauty of its landscapes, from (pictured above) the shifting sands of the Empty Quarter, the beaches of the Red

Sea to the mountains of Abha to the KSA's unique heritage attractions which include the UNESCO World Heritage Site at Al-Diriyah, the Al-Ula and Jeddah Historical District. The Kingdom expects to increase international and domestic visits to 100 million a year by 2030, attracting significant foreign and domestic investment and creating a million jobs.

According to a brief statement issued recently by the Saudi Ministry of Foreign Affairs, since the launch in September the Kingdom has received more than 77,000 visa applications.

The First Philippines - Singapore Business & Investment Summit

The Philippine Embassy brought in the top guns and authorities of the country's economy to share its business outlook and national development strategy

The Philippines Embassy here organised its First Philippines-Singapore Business & Investment Summit on 1st October 2019 at the Shangri-la Hotel. Philippines Ambassador to Singapore, HE Joseph Del Mar



(pictured above right), welcomed an almost full capacity ballroom of business leaders and potential investors (picture below) who wanted to know more about the current and potential prospects of the country as well

as identifying in which sectors and regions are opening up for growth. The Summit started by tackling that exact issue as the Embassy assembled a formidable team that included Cabinet Secretaries and high-level officials. They included HE the Governor of the Central Bank of the Philippines Benjamin Diokno, HE Ernesto M Pernia, the Secretary for Socioeconomic Planning. Insights were also gleaned from specific areas of infrastructure development, transportation and the digital economy with presentations by HE Arthur P. Tugade, the Secretary of the Department of Transportation. Enterprise Singapore also



(Seated middle to r): Secretary Ernesto M Pernia and Central Bank Governor Benjamin Diokno

weighed in with a talk by Mr Darren Lee, its Regional Director, Southeast Asia Division, who expressed confidence and recommended potential investors to look at the Philippines if they are considering expanding overseas. Several entrepreneurs and representatives from SMEs, corporations and as well as Singapore companies currently operating there were also represented on panels that endorsed the view that the Philippines more than qualifies as a preferred destination for doing business.



Singapore Congratulatory Letters - People's Republic of China's 70th Anniversary

President Halimah Yacob has written to President Xi Jinping to convey her best wishes on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China on 1 October 2019. Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong has also written to Premier Li Keqiang to congratulate him. Following are excerpts from their letters.

President Halimah's letter included important milestones in the area of economic cooperation: "Singapore and China enjoy excellent relations that have continued to deepen and progress over time. Our three Government-to-Government projects have continued to advance. This year marks the 25th anniversary of the China-Singapore Suzhou Industrial Park, and we commemorated the 10th anniversary of the Sino-Singapore Tianjin Eco-city last year. The China-Singapore (Chongqing) Demonstration Initiative on Strategic Connectivity (CCI)-New International Land-Sea Trade Corridor has developed into an important platform to enhance connectivity between China's Western Region and Southeast Asia. Singapore is also supporting China's regional development strategies such as in the Yangtze River Delta and the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area through initiatives such as the Singapore-Shanghai Comprehensive Cooperation Council, the China-Singapore Guangzhou Knowledge City, and smart cities twinning between Singapore and Shenzhen. Our two countries are pursuing cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative through the four platforms of infrastructural connectivity, financial connectivity, third party collaboration, as well as professional services, including legal and judicial cooperation.

Singapore and China share a common interest to promote free trade. Singapore looks forward to working closely with China and other ASEAN Member States to advance cooperation between ASEAN and China to further enhance regional peace and prosperity.



Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong: "Singapore and China enjoy excellent relations, built on a foundation of strong people-to-people ties and frequent high-level exchanges. Generations of our leaders have had close working relationships. Our robust economic ties have been further strengthened by the upgrade of the China-Singapore Free Trade Agreement last year. I am very happy that our three Government-to-Government projects have made substantial progress. We have also achieved substantial results through our four platforms of bilateral cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative, namely infrastructural connectivity, financial connectivity, third party collaboration, as well as professional services, including legal and judicial cooperation.

In addition, we have been strengthening mutually beneficial cooperation in support of China's regional development strategies. The newly established Singapore-Shanghai Comprehensive Cooperation Council is a key platform for Singapore to support the development of the Yangtze River Delta Region. Meanwhile, the upgraded China-Singapore Guangzhou Knowledge City and smart cities twinning between Singapore and Shenzhen will complement the development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area. Singapore has also worked well with China in regional and multilateral fora, including in promoting closer ASEAN-China cooperation. We look forward to the expeditious conclusion of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, which will signal our strong commitment towards free trade and promoting regional development.

As you mark this important occasion, I wish the People's Republic of China many more years of peace, progress and prosperity. I also look forward to our commemoration of the 30th anniversary of the establishment of our diplomatic relations next year. It will be an opportunity to further enhance our friendship and take it to new heights."



Nigeria 59th Independence Anniversary Celebrations

4th October 2019

Grand Residence 1 & 2 Ballroom, Grand Hyatt Hotel

The Head of Mission of the Republic of Nigeria High Commission HE Mr Akinremi Alade Bolajo and Mrs Foluso Aina Bolaji welcomed guests who included the Guest of Honour representing the Singapore government, Minister of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Ministry of Social and Family Development Mr Sam Tan. He was accompanied by Members of Parliament, Mr Lim Biow Chuan and Mr Murali Pillai. Also gracing the occasion was Mr Gabriel Aduda, the Permanent Secretary, Political and Economic Affairs in the Office of the Secretary to the Government of Nigeria. The Nigerian head of mission highlighted how

Nigeria is a key regional player in West Africa and has the largest economy with 200 million people and pointed out that there has been more than a few Singaporean companies who have successfully penetrated this market. He also said that a key objective of his work here is to create a better understanding and awareness of the enormous potential of the country's economy as well as the cultural potential of Nigeria. He also shared that in conjunction with Nigeria's 59th Independence Day, the Nigeria High Commission in Singapore, together with Singapore Business Federation organised the Nigeria-Singapore Business Investment Forum 2019 which was well attended by the Singapore business community, with a delegation from Nigeria and its diaspora.