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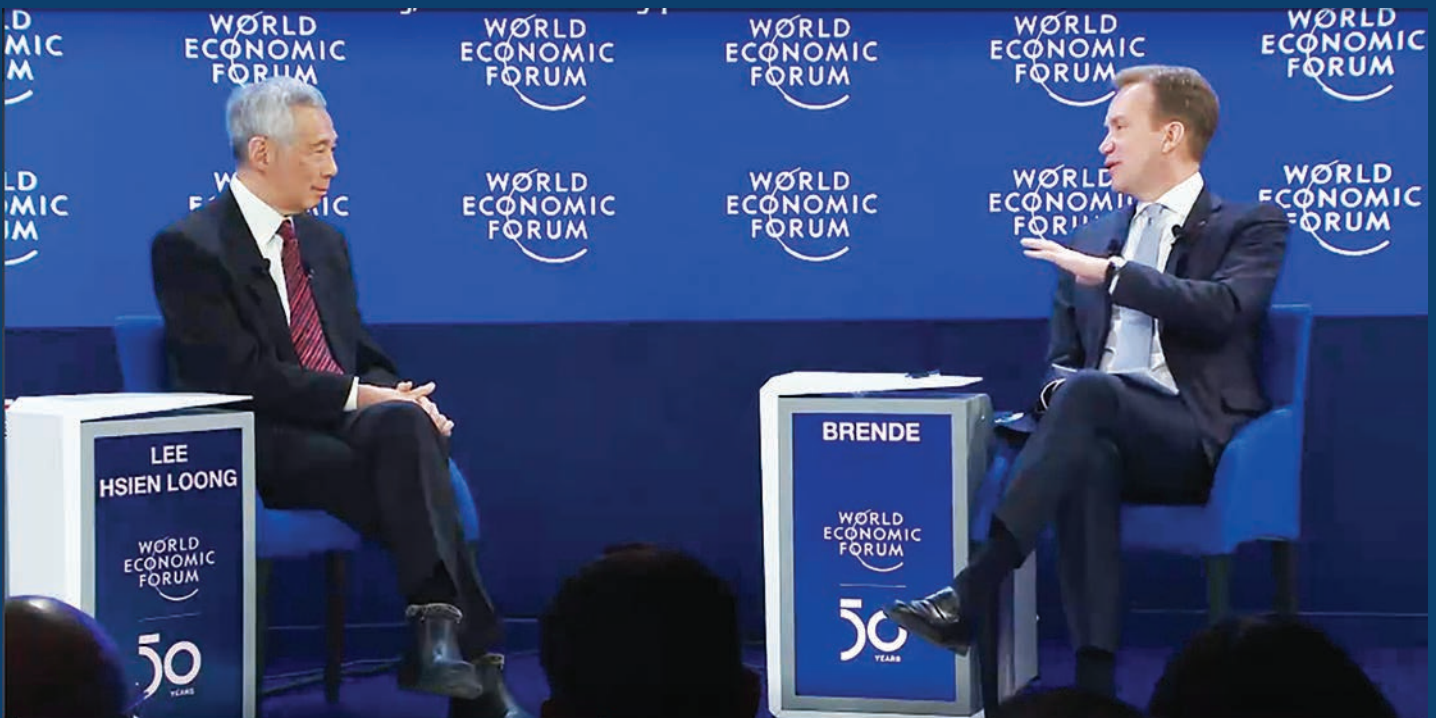


DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR CORPS SINGAPORE

Issue 58 January 2020

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PM Lee Hsien Loong in Davos



Inside

**President Halimah Yacob -
First State Visit to
Federal Republic of Germany**

**Official Visit:
Ukrainian Foreign Minister
HE Vadym Prystaiko**

**Minister of State Sam Tan -
Why Arctic Frontiers Conference
Matters**

Featuring



**The New Dean:
HE Tumor
Lkhagvadorj
Ambassador of
Mongolia**



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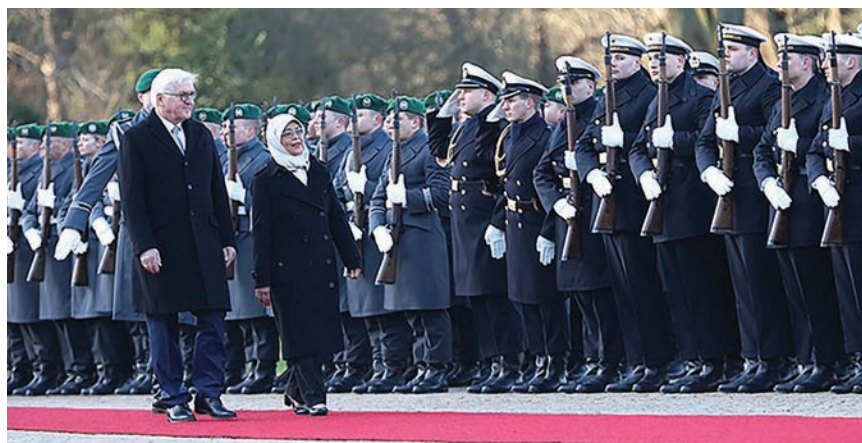
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CONTENTS **ISSUE 58**



3 VISIT: OFFICIAL
■ **Ukraine FM Vadym Prystaiko**

Page 4

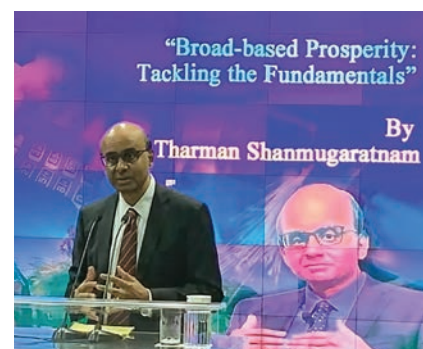
3 Singapore Bids Farewell to Ambassador James Sinclair

VISIT: STATE

**4 ■ President Halimah Yacob - First
State Visit to Federal Republic
of Germany**

**4 ■ Caronavirus Outbreak: China MFA
Briefing on 5th February 2020**

5 ■ PM Lee @Davos WEF Interview



Page 5

VISIT: Working

5 ■ SM Tharman @ India

**6 ■ Message Singapore Brings to 14th Arctic
Frontiers Conference**

**6 ■ Dr V Balakrishnan on 'Staying Together
in a Turbulent World'**

7 INTERVIEW
**HE Tumor Lkhagvadorj: Mongolian
Ambassador is New Dean**

8 EVENTS
■ **India's 71st Republic Day**

Page 8

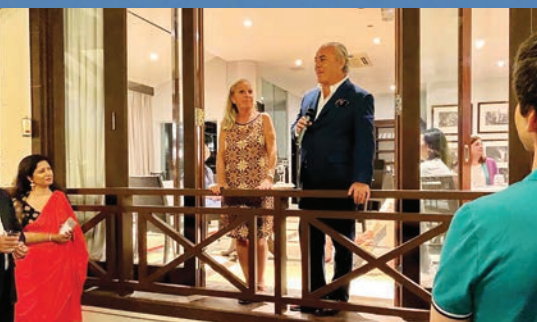


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DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR CORPS SINGAPORE

Singapore Bids Farewell to Ambassador James Sinclair



The outgoing Chilean Ambassador has served with distinction as the Dean of the Diplomatic and Consular Corps here since 2018 and leaves in February 2020

He was the tanned, rugged and dashing face that represented the voice of the foreign diplomatic community in Singapore for the last two years. Many will miss his company on Singapore's diplomatic circuit as well on the links (he and his wife Maria Eugenia Mackenna are avid golfers).

At a farewell gathering, the Dean and his wife (pictured above) said, "I only have words of thanks to all officials at the Singapore Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Singapore Government, my colleagues and buddies in the diplomatic circle. Thank you for all you have done for us."

The career diplomat has had postings in Korea, Egypt, Argentina, Peru, Washington and Jakarta. He has been based here for six years and one of his most satisfying professional career highlights in the Island Republic was when he organised the donation of the Mapuche Sculptures to Singapore at Gardens by the Bay last September. Foreign Minister Dr Vivian Balakrishnan who unveiled the two very special sculptures donated by Chile said, "I have to pay tribute to the generosity, the hard work and the energy, especially of Ambassador Sinclair. I think without your special efforts, we would not be celebrating this special occasion today."



VISITS

Official

Ukraine FM HE Vadym Prystaiko: Promoting Strategic Business Alliances and Cooperation in Science & Education

Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine Vadym Prystaiko made an official visit to Singapore from 12th to 14th January 2020. During his visit he paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong. Both leaders welcomed the strengthening of bilateral ties between Singapore and Ukraine, and had a wide-ranging discussion on regional and international developments.



Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong with Ukrainian Foreign Minister Vadym Prystaiko (Photo: PMO).

Minister Prystaiko was also hosted to breakfast by Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr Vivian Balakrishnan where they reaffirmed the warm and friendly bilateral ties between both nations, and discussed ways to strengthen and broaden relations. They also exchanged views on developments in Asia and Europe.

The Ukrainian Foreign Minister also met with Senior Minister of State, Ministry of Trade and Industry, Dr Koh Poh Koon to discuss economic collaboration. They witnessed the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCCI) and the Ukraine Council of Exporters and Investors to promote strategic business alliance, as well as a MOU between the Science Centre Board (SCB) and the Junior Academy of Sciences of Ukraine (JASU) to facilitate cooperation in the implementation of best practices for the development of science and educational infrastructure. SMS Koh and Minister Prystaiko welcomed the signing of both MOUs, which will pave the way for closer bilateral cooperation. Minister Prystaiko was also hosted to lunch by Minister for Home Affairs and Minister for Law K Shanmugam before departing Singapore.



Ministers for Foreign Affairs: Dr Vivian Balakrishnan, Singapore and Vadym Prystaiko, Ukraine. (Photo: MFA)

While in Singapore, Foreign Minister Prystaiko also held a regional conference with Ukrainian heads of foreign diplomatic missions of the countries of Southeast Asia. He also spoke to political analysts and experts at the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS-Asia).

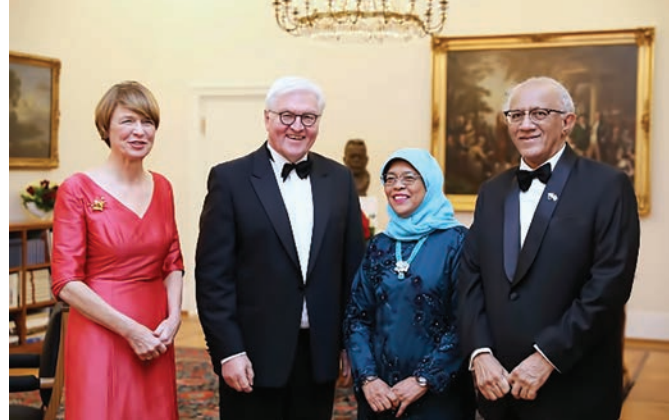


SMS Koh and Minister Prystaiko witnessed the signing of a MOU between the Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCCI) and the Ukraine Council of Exporters and Investors, as well as a MOU between the Science Centre Board (SCB) and the Junior Academy of Sciences of Ukraine (JASU).

VISITS

State

First State Visit to Federal Republic of Germany: Enhancing Cooperation in Education and R&D



It was historic as it was the first State Visit by a Singapore President to Germany. President Halimah Yacob landed in Berlin on 9th December 2019 for a 5-day visit and called on German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier who hosted a State Banquet in the President's honour. She also had meetings with Chancellor Angela Merkel and Governing Mayor of Berlin Michael Mueller.



The next stop was the Federal State of Hesse where she met Minister-President Volker Bouffier, who hosted a banquet for President; she also visited German companies in Berlin, Frankfurt and Heidelberg that have strong skills and training practices. Finally, the President met with overseas Singaporeans in Frankfurt. A business delegation organised by the Singapore Business Federation also visited Germany in conjunction with the State Visit.

According to a media release by Singapore's Ministry of Foreign Affairs

President Halimah and President Steinmeier had a bilateral meeting where they discussed common challenges and scope for more bilateral collaboration in the areas of education as well as research and development. Both leaders also had a wide-ranging discussion on international and regional developments. In her meeting with Chancellor Angela Merkel, the leaders reviewed the excellent and multifaceted cooperation

enjoyed by both countries in many areas including education, economy, defence and culture. They also welcomed the entry-into-force of the EU-Singapore Free Trade Agreement which will further deepen the strong economic links between Singapore and Germany.



(Far left): President Halimah met with Chancellor Merkel at the Federal Chancellery (Top): President Halimah and spouse Mr Mohammed Abdullah Alhabshee at the State Banquet hosted by President Frank-Walter Steinmeier and Mrs Elke Büdenbender (Above): President Halimah Yacob watches a robotic arm in action at the facility of German electrical equipment company ABB Stotz in Heidelberg (Source: istana.gov.sg)

CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK

China's MFA Briefing on Novel Coronavirus Outbreak 5th January 2020

On the afternoon of 5 February, Vice Foreign Minister Ma Zhaoxu gave a second briefing for diplomatic missions in China. He said, "Acting under the guidelines of staying confident and united and following a science-based and targeted approach, we are racing against time to fight the ferocious disease and taking decisive steps to cut off the spread of the outbreak. With the firm and strong Party leadership, with our great mobilization capacity and institutional advantages, and with our rich experience in responding to public health emergencies, China has full confidence, capability and determination to win this battle."

Ma said that China is not fighting on its own, but with the international community on its side. The UN Secretary General and WHO Director-General have applauded China's

forceful measures and expressed confidence in the ability of the Chinese government to prevail over the epidemic. Leaders of many countries have expressed their support and sympathies for China. Virus knows no borders. China is contributing to global public health through concrete actions. We call on all other countries to make their assessments of this outbreak in a comprehensive, impartial and science-based way.

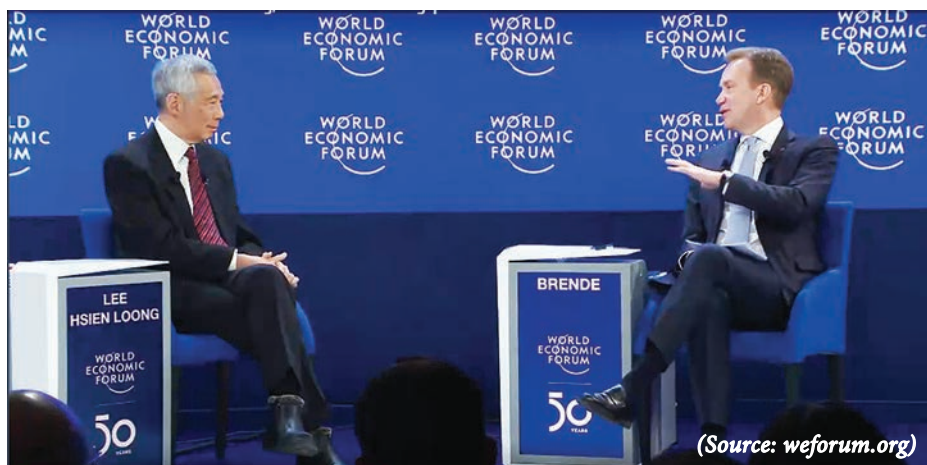
Ma reassured the diplomatic envoys that the Chinese government would protect the safety and health of foreign nationals in China like its own.



(Source: China MFA)

The diplomatic envoys and representatives participating in the briefing spoke positively of China's organization of another briefing in such a short space of time, commended the open, transparent and responsible attitude of the Chinese government about the outbreak, and expressed support for the decisive measures taken by the Chinese government. Many representatives reaffirmed their position of standing firmly with the Chinese people in this trying time, coordinating with China's prevention and control efforts, and tackling the challenge through solidarity. They wished the Chinese government and people an early success in fighting the epidemic.

PM Lee @ Davos WEF Interview: Concerns about US, China and Globalisation



In the dialogue with the World Economic Forum (WEF) President Borge Brende, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong said some of his main concerns centred around US, China and Globalisation

In his introduction, WEF President Borge Brende said for the first time 50% of the global GDP is coming from Asia and that, "Singapore's leadership is crucial. So I think all the people coming here are looking forward to hearing your views, Prime Minister, on the geopolitical outlook aspirations for Singapore."

PM Lee said that while Singapore has done reasonably well over the last half century there were external factors that are very important to the Island Republic: the US, China and globalisation: "Now we are at a turning point as all three factors are changing." He went on at length to explain what can be done to mitigate and overcome these challenges.

On the international front the Prime Minister commented on future prospects with the signing of the first part of the trade agreement by US and China in Washington in January 2020. He said: "We are relentlessly optimistic but not that much so. I do not think it (geopolitical confrontations and competition) has peaked at all. It is a very serious issue. How does an incumbent hyper power like the US accommodate a rising new power - China - which is going to grow as a percentage of the world's GDP, which is going to grow and develop in terms of the sophistication of its economy, and which in absolute size is going to become larger than the US, although not more advanced than the US for many years to come? But it will become larger very soon, if it has not already."

The wide ranging interview covered issues that also touched on the potential of technology for future growth as well as the impact on it in a world with increasing geopolitical competition, as also lessons garnered from the last global economic slowdown and societal and democratic effects from growth of social media.

For video & transcript links visit
www.indiplomacy.com

VISIT

Working

SM Tharman @ India

Meeting with PM Modi and Lecture at Reserve Bank of India

Singapore's Senior Minister and Coordinating Minister for Social Policies, Tharman Shanmugaratnam, was on a working visit to India and Mumbai from 5th to 8th January 2020. He paid a call on Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other government leaders. In Mumbai, he delivered the Third Suresh Tendulkar Memorial Lecture at the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and also called on Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, and met with business leaders.

In New Delhi, PM Modi and SM Shanmugaratnam expressed satisfaction at the rapid pace of bilateral relations. They discussed several matters of mutual interest in the sphere of economic cooperation, including infrastructure, skills, India-Singapore Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA), and digital economy. Mr. Shanmugaratnam lauded Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's leadership in social transformation of India and in encouraging digital economy.

Prime Minister also expressed his desire to strengthen further cooperation between India and Singapore in the areas of infrastructure, tourism, digital payment systems, innovation and governance.

At the lecture in Mumbai, SM Tharman who is also the Chairman of the Monetary Authority of Singapore spoke

on "Broad-based Prosperity: Tackling the Fundamentals" focusing on problems and challenges in social and economic transformation that are critical to achieve broad-based prosperity. A RBI media release said he further emphasised that both social and economic transformation should go hand in hand. Jobs growth and productivity growth were emphasised as prerequisites for social transformation. In the context of India, he highlighted the need for structural reforms in the areas of human capital and developing cleaner and smarter cities. On human capital, he noted reforms on education, health care, skill matching and labour market reforms. He also noted that new cities could serve as crucibles of inclusive growth. He highlighted that fintech and green finance could play a critical role in achieving inclusive growth and broad-based prosperity.



(Photo: Prime Minister's Office, India)

According to Shri Shaktikanta Das, the Governor of RBI, the theme of "Broad-based Prosperity: Tackling the Fundamentals", chosen by Mr. Shanmugaratnam is relevant globally and also for the Indian economy: "The importance of broad based prosperity has been well recognised for a long time and there is a consensus on the need to ensure that the benefits of economic growth reach the populace at large. As an idea and a policy objective, it is similar to the concept of inclusive growth. While there is consensus on the need to achieve a more egalitarian social and economic order globally as well as within a country, it is equally important to focus on the fundamentals and create an eco system that facilitates greater inclusion. The underlying theme has to be structural reforms."

Message Singapore Brings to 14th Arctic Frontiers Conference

Singapore's Minister of State Sam Tan highlights interconnectedness between the Arctic and Arctic Ocean with Singapore



(Above left): MOS Sam Tan and Non-Resident Ambassador to Norway Tan Wah Yeow with Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs Ine Eriksen Søreide (Source: MFA). (Above right): MOS Sam Tan intervening in the Arctic Frontiers Conference Plenary Session IV – 'Sustainable Arctic Ocean'. (Photo: Dag Rune Olsen)

Singapore's Minister of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Social and Family Development, Sam Tan was in Tromsø, Norway, for the 14th Arctic Frontiers Conference (AFC) in January 2020 to underpin the serious issue of sea-level rising. His message at the conference was that this issue was one of survival for Singapore and the Island Republic has undertaken measures to reduce its carbon emissions by one third by introducing a carbon tax. (See edited text of his intervention at AFC on this page).

On the sidelines of the AFC, MOS Tan met Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs Ine Eriksen Søreide, United States Ambassador to Norway Kenneth Braithwaite, and Deputy Minister for Development of the Arctic and the Peoples of the North of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) Mikhail Pogodaev. MOS Tan also met representatives from the Arctic Council Indigenous Peoples' Secretariat and senior Arctic officials from the Icelandic Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

"I think the most important message that I want to bring to the audience is that what happens in the Arctic, does not stay in the Arctic. The converse is also true – what happens outside the Arctic, does not stay outside the Arctic. Singapore is a small island state, and we are surrounded by seas and oceans. On the eastern side, we have the South China Sea; on the western side, we have the Indian Ocean. We have a very small land area of only 720 square kilometres, and one third of this is actually very low-lying. We have 5.7 million people living on this tiny island, and we have literally built our city to the brink of the land. Our people live next to the water. Thus, we are very, very careful with our water management. If we are not careful and we pollute our water bodies, seas and oceans, the consequences will be disastrous for us."

With climate change, a melting Arctic and rising sea levels, Singapore is also in trouble. We have always heard that sea levels will rise by 1 metre within this century. If this happens, our future Prime Minister will have to conduct Cabinet meetings in a scuba diver suit, for we will be submerged underwater! For our survival, we have embarked on an ambitious programme to deal with rising sea levels. We will raise our peripheral and low-lying areas by 2100, and we have decided to set aside more than S\$100 billion for all kinds of infrastructure projects to deal with rising sea levels."

We are doing a lot to make sure that we do not contaminate the oceans. We have also been doing a lot to control and reduce our carbon emissions. Even though we are going to have an election either this year or next year first quarter, we introduced a carbon tax that covers all industries with no exemptions. Come 2030, we want to reduce our emissions intensity by 36% from 2005 levels. This is a very painful process. But compared to the pain of Singapore being overrun by seawater, it is a price we think we should pay."

Dr V Balakrishnan on 'Staying Together in a Turbulent World'

The Singapore Foreign Minister's speech to teachers at Singapore Management University promised a "frank and open exposition" of how he sees things developing in the world

It is not often one gets some insights into what is preoccupying the mind of Singapore's Foreign Minister, Dr Vivian Balakrishnan. In a speech to educators from the Singapore Management University (SMU) on 22nd January 2020 he gave an extensive overview of the issues that concern the island's policy makers in the field of diplomacy and how they affect Singapore. He listed three main factors he wanted his audience to take away from the talk: "The first point is that we are living in a very turbulent world. Second, that foreign policy begins at home. Third, that it is absolutely crucial for us to have national unity, for us to be able to act collectively and decisively so that our tiny, precious city-state called Singapore can survive and thrive in such a turbulent world." Following are some extracts from his speech and link to the full text: <https://www.mfa.gov.sg/Newsroom/Press-Statements-Transcripts-and-Photos/2020/01/22012020-SGT>



(Photo: Dr V Balakrishnan FB)

On Return of Great Power Competition

"From the point of view of Singapore, we are in a specially vulnerable place. We do not want to be pressured, we do not want to be forced to take sides, because in fact, this will put us in a very uncomfortable, very difficult place. The

United States is the biggest foreign investor in Singapore. In fact, I regularly remind President Trump that the United States has more in stock total investments invested in Singapore than it has in India, China and Japan combined. I say this to remind him that they have got skin in the game.

But at the same time, if I ask you who is our largest trading partner. The answer? China. In fact, if you want another surprising factor, who is the largest foreign investor in China – excluding Hong Kong and Taiwan? You end up with Singapore. So do you see that if the two big elephants, or if the eagle and the dragon do not get along, we can be in a lose-lose position. You understand now why my hair is grey, and why we have to be so careful in the way we maintain links with both these major players.

INTERVIEW **HE Tumor Lkhagvadorj**

Mongolian Ambassador is New Dean

The Ambassador of Mongolia to the Republic of Singapore, HE Tumor Lkhagvadorj, shares his plans with In Diplomacy's Editor-in-Chief, Nomita Dhar, on taking charge as the new Dean of Diplomatic Corps in Singapore

Excellency! It's my pleasure to congratulate you on becoming the new Dean of the Diplomatic Corps here in Singapore? What are your thoughts on this new position?

It's an honour to become the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps. The diplomatic community in Singapore is a very close knit one. The previous Dean, James Sinclair, the Ambassador of Chile, has been an outstanding Dean in connecting everybody here in the diplomatic community, making them feel very comfortable and engaging them in various activities. It's such a big honour for me to fill his very big shoes, and I have to say that I have felt the very warm support given by my colleagues to continue this role. I'm excited but at the same time it's a big responsibility to take on this role, I must admit.

For the benefit of the readers who are not just diplomats and people who read our publication, can you share with us how the deanship works?

Basically it's the role of the co-coordinator between the ambassadors of various countries to Singapore to engage in various diplomatic, government and non-government activities. Its role is also to say farewell to the old ambassadors and welcome the new ambassadors and general counsels to the country— and try to coordinate the best ways to represent Singapore to the world, and at the same time to engage with various representatives of international organizations of various countries and see how to engage them in the most efficient way.

How long have you been in Singapore?

It's my fifth year now. It seems like a long time, but for me it feels like I just arrived yesterday— but along the way I've learned quite a lot about Singapore— but it's still a work in progress

So for 2020 what will be your plans as Dean? How will you keep the diplomatic community engaged and bring more opportunities for them?

It will be the usual engagement between the ambassadors in Singapore. I'm also working on what are the various interests of the ambassadors here and the embassies, to learn what Singapore's achievements are in the areas of Science and Technology, Education and Healthcare, so that everybody can learn from each other — and maybe some embassies are keen to represent them and engage with various embassies here. I will need the support of all the ambassadors and also the various organizations to learn from each other.

So right now it's one umbrella. Are you going to promote interest groups?

I will be working mostly with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs here in Singapore as to what are



There's also a women's wing to this diplomatic dean's role. How does it operate? Will your wife be involved?

Yes the spouses are a very important part of the diplomatic community. The head of missions' spouses group is involved in a lot of the engagements and various activities planned. They have their own network for tea and coffee mornings and lunches. My wife has been

"Singapore is a very important spot. You call it 'the little red dot', but now it's a big presence not only in S.E.Asia but for the whole world; it's such a melting pot— diverse culture, diverse religions, diverse business areas— so that becomes very interesting."

the key areas which the embassies should be interactive with and of the interest groups and organizations which represent Singapore interests— and what we can do together

As you shared earlier with us, you have been here for five years now. What do you like about Singapore?

Singapore is a very important spot. You call it 'the little red dot', but now it's a big presence not only in S.E.Asia but for the whole world; it's such a melting pot— diverse culture, diverse religions, diverse business areas— so that becomes very interesting. Every day we learn something new from each other. Singapore is a very important spot, not just for business, but also for culture and tourism — It's a fantastic place.

Internationally we are facing a lot of challenges— climate change is showing its face everywhere, and also in terms of business — the trade wars and the like. So how do you think diplomacy is relevant in such a situation and how can it change things on the ground?

All these challenges are not unique to one country or one region. They have become such a global issue that everyone is concerned. Different governments make their statements and come up with initiatives. For diplomacy the best approach is through the soft approach— dialogues and the cultural route such as art and music. Through all these ways you can make your voices visible. The work of our embassies is to make it visible to everybody. I think every embassy has its own plan as to how to make this all visible. I think the diplomatic community needs to come together even more closely in this effort.

a very active member and I think she will be co-ordinating with all the spouses as the Dean's wife now.

When the new diplomats arrive, how does the Dean's office assist them in settling down?

We organize a diplomats' luncheon at which we introduce the newcomer to the others. Sometimes it's not right away on the diplomat's arrival, but it does happen in due course. Those who have been in Singapore longer also reach out to the newcomers.

There are all these events that are arranged ...like the lunches, the ball, the regatta and the Ambassador's Cup. There used to be a Charity Bazaar also, which was very good. Are you considering having it this year?

We will consider it by consulting with our groups.

Tell us something about your country.

Mongolia has a long history, but this year has been a milestone year for us. It's been 50 years since we signed diplomatic relations with Singapore. So 2020 is our 50th anniversary. Our embassy is working to promote Mongolia-Singapore relations with art and culture fiestas, there will be an official visit, business forums, cultural exchanges etc. There will be lots of announcements coming up about all these.

Last year we had a very successful World Opportunity Forum, in which your country participated as well. By popular demand we are having it again in the month of May this year. So this is an invitation for you to invite investors from your country to participate again.

Thank you for the invitation. We look forward to it.

EVENTS

ISSUE 58



(From l to r): MP Mr Gan Thiam Poh; H.E. Jawed Ashraf, Minister Ong Ye Kung and MP Ms Jessica Tan

India 71st Republic Day 22nd January 2020

Swissotel the Stamford, Singapore

In his welcome address India's High Commissioner to Singapore, HE Jawed Ashraf, also highlighted that "ASEAN will be in the centre of our vision for the Indo-Pacific region. and that Singapore will always be integral for every endeavour of ours." He said this was most evident when last September "We hosted here the region's first business and innovation summit in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's second term with 4,000 participants, more than a hundred speakers and a very large startup exhibition from India and Singapore." Another sign of the closeness in ties was in the last six months there have been 12 ministerial visits by Singapore to India. These included two visits by Singapore's Minister for Education Mr Ong Ye Kung who was also the Guest of Honour, representing the Singapore Government for the Republic Day reception. He was accompanied by his parliamentary colleagues Ms Jessica Tan and Mr Gan Thiam Poh. Rear-Admiral Lew Chuen Hong, Chief of Navy was also among the 1,500 friends of India, the Indian diaspora and Singaporeans who came to celebrate the event. This year's Republic Day also marks the last time the Indian High Commissioner will be hosting the event as he is slated to move to his new post as India's Ambassador to France later this year.

In Prime Minister's Lee Hsien Loong's letter to Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the occasion of India's 71st Republic Day of India,



Minister Ong and High Commissioner Jawed Ashraf admiring rangoli floor art considered auspicious during special occasions

he congratulated the Indian leader and paid tribute: "India has and continues to take great strides forward under your leadership. Your efforts to transform India, with her immense size and complexity, should fill every Indian citizen with pride and hope for the future. "I am happy to note that our bilateral relations are strong. We have kept up high-level exchanges with ministerial visits across different portfolios. Collectively, these point to a robust relationship, which we should build on."