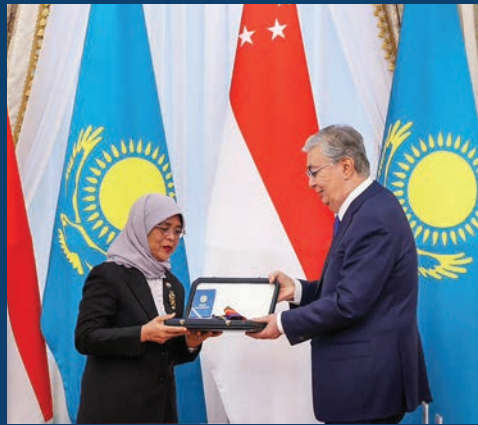


## HISTORIC VISITS: OPEN NEW CHAPTERS



**UZBEKISTAN**



**KAZAKHSTAN**



**SOUTH AFRICA**



**KENYA**

### 42nd ASEAN Summit Labuan Bajo



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- In Conversation with New Dean H.E. Agustin García-López Loaeza
- Aime-23 ASEAN-India Maritime Exercise
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# New Dean Agustín García-López Loaeza Shines Spotlight on the DCC

H.E. Agustín García-López Loaeza, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Mexico to the Republic of Singapore, in conversation with *IN Diplomacy* Editor-in-Chief Nomita Dhar, shares his thoughts on becoming the new Dean of Singapore's Diplomatic Consular Corps



AMBASSADOR Agustín García-López Loaeza, Mexico's ambassador to the Republic of Singapore, has taken over the deanship of Singapore's Diplomatic Corps. A career diplomat, Ambassador García-López has enjoyed an exceptional range of experiences since he joined the Mexican Foreign Service in 1991 and served in various positions at the Secretariat of Foreign Affairs, Secretariat of Finance and Public Credit, and Overseas Representations.

Prior to his appointment in Singapore in 2019, Ambassador García-López Loaeza, served as Mexican Ambassador to France and Canada and

Mexican government. In that context he shares that he was part of the Executive Board of the Inter-American Development Bank and the Inter-American Investment Corporation representing Mexico and the Dominican Republic (2000-2007). It was while he was posted there that he was appointed as dean of the Council of such a Regional Bank. Elaborating further he says: "That entailed being a functional dean. I was also the head of the committee of committees. I also headed the Ethics Committee as a dean. That was a great experience."

When Ambassador García-López Loaeza was serving as the Permanent Representative of Mexico to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, OECD (2007-2013) he was also given the deanship of the ambassadors to the OECD. "That was also a strategic role within the organisation because as Dean I represented all ambassadors to establish a direct coordination with the Secretary General and his team before the Council meetings," he says.

## His outlook on Singapore:

*"It is a very open country. International relations are vital for Singapore's trade, for economics, for its social life, for its cultural and political endeavors. Singapore thrives in the international scene with increasing relevance and vision and it's building more and more mutually enriching bilateral relationships but also, it is enhancing its multi-lateral presence in today's global issues."*

as the Executive Director of the Mexican Agency for International Development Cooperation, AMEXCID, from 2017 to 2019, equivalent to the rank of an Undersecretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mexico.

Returning to the matter of his deanship of the Singapore Diplomatic Corps, he reaffirms his commitment to shine the light on how important the role of the diplomatic corps is in a city state like Singapore.

Smilingly accepting congratulations on the new appointment from Ms Dhar he says: "It's an honour and a privilege because the Diplomatic Corps in Singapore is an outstanding one."

While sharing the way forward for him as dean, he speaks of the steps taken by the prior deans, and is of the belief that they have done a wonderful job. He hopes to continue on that path they have walked and bring in fresh inputs as a representative of Singapore's diplomatic community.

His Excellency the ambassador is really pleased in the turn of events as he is no stranger to deanships. In his career path this is his third deanship.

His outlook on Singapore is that "It is a very open country. International relations are vital for Singapore's trade, for economics, for its social life, for its cultural and political endeavors. Singapore thrives in the international scene with increasing relevance and vision and it's building more and more mutually enriching bilateral relationships but also, it is enhancing its multi-lateral presence in today's global issues."

He recalls that he has also served in a number of finance-related roles in the

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# South Africa Visit Celebrates 30 Years of Partnership

Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong's official visit marked 30 years of diplomatic relations, and explores new avenues of cooperation, including ICT collaboration and Skills Development, while engaging with Singaporeans abroad and immersing in South Africa's rich cultural heritage

PM Lee met with South African President Cyril Ramaphosa to reaffirm the enduring friendship between the two nations as the visit from 14th to 16th May 2023 marks the 30th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Singapore and South Africa. During their delegation meeting at the distinguished Tuynhuys, the Presidential Office in Cape Town, both leaders expressed their appreciation for the long-standing bilateral cooperation while exploring new avenues for collaboration. Prime Minister Lee and President Ramaphosa focused on several key areas, including air connectivity, economic and people-to-people linkages, and the emerging field of information and communications technology (ICT).

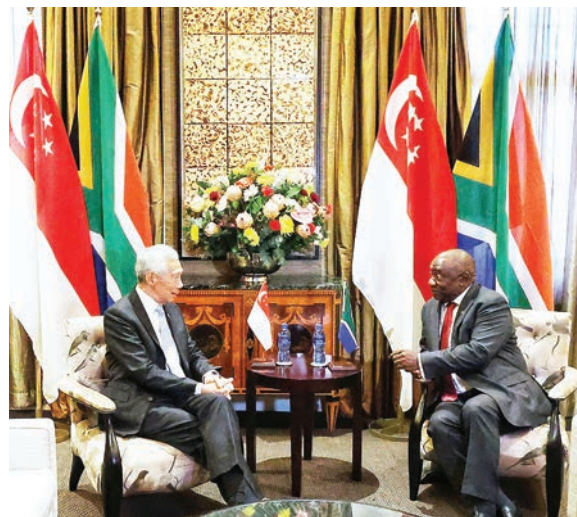
The discussions also encompassed regional and global issues, with Singapore expressing its support for South Africa's application for ASEAN Sectoral Dialogue Partnership, further indicating the strengthening ties between the two nations.

A significant highlight of the visit was the signing of two essential Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) between Singapore and South Africa. The first MOU, centered on ICT, aims to deepen the existing bilateral partnership while facilitating the exchange of best practices and fostering collaboration in

both established and emerging aspects of ICT. The second MOU, focusing on Skills Development, seeks to enhance cooperation between the two countries in areas such as leadership and governance, education, and digitalization. Through knowledge exchange, capacity-building courses, and various activities, Singapore aims to contribute to South Africa's progress in skills development.

Prime Minister Lee and President Ramaphosa also participated in a joint press conference where they highlighted the historical ties between Singapore and South Africa, dating back to the visits of Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew and President Nelson Mandela in 1992 and 1997, respectively. They expressed their shared commitment to deepening the partnership and exploring new opportunities for collaboration.

In addition to official engagements, Prime Minister Lee also met with the Singaporeans based in South Africa and the surrounding region during an evening reception. The vibrant community of Singaporeans, who have successfully established themselves far



*PM Lee in discussions with South African President Cyril Ramaphosa at the Tuynhuys, the office of the President of South Africa in Cape Town*

from home, showcased the enduring spirit of the nation and its people. Prime Minister Lee expressed his admiration for their achievements and was pleased to see fellow Singaporeans flying the flag high in a foreign land.

The visit concluded with a productive business roundtable, where companies from both Singapore and South Africa had the opportunity to explore potential partnerships and foster economic growth. The discussions focused on expanding trade and investment opportunities, promoting innovation and technology transfer, and strengthening business networks between the two nations. Prime Minister Lee emphasized the importance of economic cooperation and expressed his confidence in the potential for mutually beneficial collaborations.

As the visit drew to a close, Prime Minister Lee expressed his gratitude for the warm hospitality extended by Deputy President Paul Mashatile, who hosted a dinner for the Singapore delegation. The evening provided an informal setting for further strengthening the bonds between Singapore and South Africa and fostering deeper personal connections between the leaders.



*(Above left): PM Lee and President Ramaphosa witnessed signing of two bilateral cooperation MoUs on Skills Development and ICT. (Above right): Working lunch with business leaders from South Africa. (Below): Meeting dynamic overseas Singaporean community from South Africa and further afield (Photos: MCI)*





# Singapore Expands Collaboration with Kenya in Green Economy and ICT

Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong's official visit to Kenya from 17th to 19th May 2023 cements bilateral relations, fosters collaboration in the green economy, digitalization, and climate change, unlocking new avenues for mutual progress and development



PM Lee in discussion with Kenya's President William Samoei Ruto at the State House (above) and (left) in delegation discussing amongst other matters economic cooperation. Bilateral trade in 2021 increased by almost 25% year-on-year despite COVID-19, making Kenya one of Singapore's important trading partners in Sub-Saharan Africa. (Below): three MOUs were signed focusing on ICT, climate change, and human capital development (Photos: MCI)



PM Lee arrived in Nairobi, Kenya where he was warmly received by Kenyan President William Samoei Ruto at the State House where both leaders reaffirmed the longstanding friendship between Kenya and Singapore. They emphasized the importance of fostering strong trade and investment ties, as well as exploring new areas of cooperation. Prime Minister Lee and President Ruto engaged in discussions regarding geopolitical developments and the need for bilateral collaboration in addressing cross-cutting issues like climate change and sustainable development.

During the meeting, Prime Minister Lee and President Ruto discussed the expansion of bilateral cooperation in key areas. They both recognized the significance of the green and digital economies, climate change mitigation, and human resource development. These areas were identified as essential components for the future growth and progress of both nations.

To solidify their commitment to collaboration, Prime Minister Lee and President Ruto witnessed the signing of three Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) between Singapore and Kenya. These agreements further reinforced the partnership and outlined specific areas of cooperation:

- The first MOU focused on Carbon Credits,

promoting collaboration under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement. This MOU aimed to facilitate the exchange of best practices and foster joint efforts in reducing and removing greenhouse gas emissions, benefitting both Singapore and Kenya.

- The second MOU emphasized ICT cooperation, expanding bilateral collaboration to include areas such as cybersecurity and the digitalization of government services. This partnership aimed to enhance information sharing, capacity building, and the development of secure digital infrastructure, promoting mutual progress and resilience.

- The third MOU highlighted Skills Development, aiming to strengthen human resource capacity in leadership and governance, climate change, and urban development. Through this agreement, Singapore and Kenya aimed to exchange expertise, foster skill-building programs, and address critical challenges together.

Following the signing of the MOUs, a Joint Press Conference was held by Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong and President William Samoei Ruto. During the conference, both leaders expressed their satisfaction with the outcomes of their discussions and the collaborative agreements. Prime Minister Lee highlighted the importance of the green and digital economies, climate change mitigation, ICT, and human resource development in the bilateral



relationship. He expressed his optimism about the significant potential of East Africa and extended an invitation for President Ruto to visit Singapore in the near future. President Ruto, on the other hand, invited Singapore's private sector to invest in Kenya's under-exploited transport, housing, and logistics sectors. He recognized the potential of Singapore becoming a gateway for Kenyan agricultural products to the ASEAN market, comprising 10 member states in Southeast Asia with a population of about 670 million.

## NEW Sun Media ONE Africa Podcast Series



*"This vast continent is a haven of opportunities for smart businessmen who do their due diligence to reap rich dividends from their endeavours"*

**Johan Burger**, Research Fellow at Singapore's Center for African Studies as well as the Institute of Futures Research in South Africa

Since 1999 Sun Media Singapore has been working with African missions in Singapore publishing for Angola, Egypt, South Africa, Nigeria and Rwanda. Presently we have the ONE Africa publication and MADE in AFRICA conferences. We are honoured to kick off the podcast series with Mr Johan Burger in this introductory episode, where he talks about the Big Picture of Africa. Visit [www.indiplomacy.com](http://www.indiplomacy.com) for the latest podcasts



## Singapore State Visit to Kazakhstan Heralds New Era of Cooperation

**First Singaporean President to visit Kazakhstan, President Halimah was also honoured with the Order of Dostyk (Friendship) of the First Class by President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev and was a positive step on strengthening bilateral relations**

PRESIDENT Halimah Yacob concluded her State Visit to Kazakhstan on Wednesday, 23rd May 2023. During her visit, she met with President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, Prime Minister Alikhan Smailov, and other senior government officials. She also visited the Astana Grand Mosque, the Friendship House of Astana, the Astana International Financial Centre, and the Nazarbayev University.

In her meetings with President Tokayev and Prime Minister Smailov, President Halimah discussed ways to strengthen bilateral relations between Singapore and Kazakhstan. The two sides agreed to cooperate in areas such as trade, investment, education, and culture. They also discussed the importance of working together to address regional and global challenges.

President Halimah also met with representatives of the business community in Kazakhstan. She encouraged them to explore business opportunities in Singapore. She also spoke about Singapore's experience in developing a knowledge-based economy and urged Kazakhstan to adopt a similar approach.

President Halimah's visit to Kazakhstan was a success. It helped to strengthen bilateral relations between the two countries and pave the way for further cooperation in the future.

Highlights of President Halimah's visit included:

- She was conferred the Order of Dostyk (Friendship) of the First Class by President Tokayev.
- She witnessed the signing of several MOUs, including the Agreement on Trade in Services and Investment.
- She met with representatives of the business community in Kazakhstan and encouraged them to explore business opportunities in Singapore.
- She spoke about Singapore's experience in developing a knowledge-based economy and urged Kazakhstan to adopt a similar approach.

President Halimah has also welcomed President Tokayev to make a State Visit to Singapore next year and she also welcomed the plans by Air Astana to launch direct flights to Singapore in the future to facilitate more business and tourist traffic.



*The President witnessed the signing of several agreements and MOUs, including the Agreement of Trade in Services and Investment under the framework of the Eurasian Economic Union-Singapore Free Trade Agreement which will further strengthen economic ties. (Photos@: MCI)*

## State Visit to Uzbekistan: Boosting Bilateral Trade, Investment and Interfaith Ties



A wide range of discussions on several areas of cooperation were held during the State Visit that aside from trade and investment included cultural exchanges, tourism promotion, parliamentary exchanges, education, and counter-extremism

PRESIDENT Halimah Yacob of Singapore visited Uzbekistan from 23rd to 25th May 2023, to strengthen bilateral ties between the two countries. The Presidents of both countries reaffirmed the warm bilateral relations as demonstrated in the exchange of State Visits in 2023 following President Shavkat Mirziyoyev's visit to Singapore in January 2023.

They discussed ways to boost trade and investment, and signed several agreements to promote cooperation in a number of areas, including tourism, education, cultural, and security. Both sides also

agreed to explore the possibility of deepening cooperation in agri-food export to Singapore. President Yacob and President Mirziyoyev also held talks on the importance of interfaith dialogue and cooperation. Both leaders stressed the need to promote understanding and tolerance between different faiths, and they agreed to work together to combat extremism and violence. In addition to her meetings with government officials, President Halimah also attended a Uzbekistan-Singapore Business Forum and also visited the Academy of Public Administration in Tashkent, where she met



*(Clockwise from above left): President Halimah met with industry leaders at the Singapore-Uzbekistan Business Forum where she encouraged them to consider the opportunities in Uzbekistan. Religious leaders representing different faith-based groups and attended a dinner hosted by Chairperson of the Senate of the Oliy Majlis Tanzila Narbayeva which turned out to be an insightful conversation with the female parliamentarians said the President (Photos: MCI)*

with students and faculty. She spoke about the importance of good governance and the role of women in public life. She was hosted to dinner by H.E. Tanzila Narbaeva, Chairperson of the Senate of the Oliy Majlis, and meet several female Uzbek parliamentarians.



## Postcards from the 42nd ASEAN Summit: Singapore Fully Supports Regional Cooperation



Source: Dr V Balakrishnan Twitter

THE 42nd ASEAN Summit, held from 10 to 11 May 2023 in Labuan Bajo, Indonesia is the first of two Summits to be hosted by Indonesia as the 2023 ASEAN Chair. Indonesian President Joko Widodo, aimed to promote ASEAN unity and growth and themed it "ASEAN Matters: Epicentrum of Growth," putting the spotlight on economic integration, community-building efforts, and unity and growth within ASEAN.

Over the two days, candid discussions were held on several key issues affecting the region and the world. "While the worst of the pandemic is over, we must now focus on rebuilding our economies and creating more opportunities for our peoples. The current global situation is concerning, which will affect ASEAN. We must stay united in order to best respond," PM Lee Hsien Loong maintained. Singapore, as a small state, has remained committed to upholding ASEAN centrality and unity. PM Lee in a post shared that: "We will continue to work with fellow ASEAN members to upgrade our regional cooperation, build strong relations with all partners, and advance our shared priorities."

During the course of the Summit, ASEAN leaders exchanged viewpoints on the progress of the region and sought ways to further enhance collaboration in digital and green economies. Pointing out that Singapore strongly supports Indonesia's efforts to develop the ASEAN Digital Economy Framework Agreement, PM Lee said: "We can reap tremendous economic gains by improving the digital connectivity and literacy of our peoples."

While sharing his thoughts on the success of the Lao PDR - Thailand - Malaysia - Singapore Power Integration Project, PM Lee indicated that it was quite feasible for more examples of multilateral power trading in the region to surface. Singapore started sourcing renewable energy from Laos via Thailand and Malaysia in 2022. He was happy about the synergies between Indonesia and Singapore regarding the strengthening of energy interconnectivity under the former's chairmanship of ASEAN.

The global situation also remained a major concern, and it was determined that ASEAN needed to stay united to respond best to these challenges. Apart from economic matters PM Lee was of the view that ASEAN should aim at cooperation on transnational

issues. This would include protecting the region's people from the burgeoning sophisticated cross-border threats. Singapore, he shared, actively supported Indonesia's initiative for a Declaration on Combating Trafficking in Persons Caused by the Abuse of Technology.

PM Lee also shared his happiness on developments in enhancing cyber security cooperation, while mentioning the good progress made on the ASEAN Regional Computer Emergency Response Team (Cert) proposal.

The leaders at the Summit dwelt upon the geopolitical situation and the need to maintain ASEAN's central role in an open, inclusive, and stable regional architecture. Also, on the agenda was to take up matters regarding international and regional developments, including the status of the situation in Myanmar. Sharing his views on the Post-2025 Vision submitted to ASEAN last year, said PM Lee indicated that this vision was also a clarion call for the Asean community to stay open, transparent, inclusive and rules-based. While the need was imminent for deeper external engagements, the pursuit of new areas of cooperation was intrinsic to this progress.

Underpinning Singapore's appreciation of efforts to review the grouping's capacity and institutional effectiveness PM Lee said: "We should streamline and optimise ASEAN processes, and strengthen the ASEAN Secretariat and the role of the ASEAN secretary-general to enable them to more effectively implement our key priorities."



*On the side-lines of the 42nd ASEAN Summit Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong and his wife Ho Ching joined other leaders embarking on a sunset view Pinisi boat ride (Photo: Singapore Prime Minister's Office)*

## SM & Coordinating Minister for National Security Teo Chee Hean Visit to Phnom Penh



BY 9th of May 2023, Senior Minister (SM) and Coordinating Minister for National Security Teo Chee Hean concluded his working visit to Phnom Penh, Cambodia. On 6th and 7th May 2023, SM Teo attended the 32nd Southeast Asian (SEA) Games in his capacity as an Honorary Life President of the SEA Games Federation Council.

On 8th May SM Teo called on Cambodia's Prime Minister Hun Seng; he also congratulated the PM on Cambodia's well-organised opening ceremony for this year's SEA Games and its successful chairmanship of ASEAN last year. One of the highlights of the discussions was the growing cooperation between both countries in emerging areas such as renewable energy and carbon trading. SM Teo also called on General Hun Manet, and Lieutenant General Hun Manith. He was hosted to lunch by Sec Gen of the Council for Development of Cambodia Sok Chenda Sophea, and met MD of Electricite du Cambodge Keo Rottanak as well.

SM Teo was also pleased with his visit to the SEA Games Athletes' Village where on 7th May 2023 he also had the honour to present Singapore's 1000th Games Gold medal to Singapore's 4X100m Freestyle Relay swimming team (pictured below). Singapore gathered a total of 51 gold medals in the 32nd Southeast Asian Games which took place at first-time host country Cambodia. The top five countries with the highest gold medal tally were Vietnam 136 gold medals, Thailand 108, Indonesia 87, Cambodia 81 and Philippines 58.



Photos: SM Teo Chee Hean FB

## Aime-23 ASEAN-India Maritime Exercise Kicks Off in Singapore

Ships and personnel of several ASEAN countries help promote maritime cooperation and enhancing trust, friendship, and confidence among the navies of the ASEAN region and India



JOINTLY inaugurated by Admiral R Hari Kumar, the CNS, Indian Navy and Rear Admiral Sean Wat, Chief of Navy, Republic of Singapore Navy the opening ceremony of the ASEAN-India Maritime Exercise AIME-23 was held on 2nd May 2023 in Singapore.

Attended by senior dignitaries from other ASEAN nations the ceremony marked the significance of the exercise for promoting maritime cooperation and enhancing trust, friendship, and confidence among the ASEAN and Indian navies.

Scheduled from 2nd to 4th May 2023, the Harbour Phase of the exercise witnessed a range of professional and social interactions between the participating navies. This included cross-deck visits, Subject Matter Expert Exchanges (SMEE), and planning meetings. The Sea Phase, scheduled from 7th to 8th May 2023, provided an opportunity for the navies to develop closer links in the coordination and execution of operations in the maritime domain.

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## Dr VB's Presence at Second EU-Indo-Pacific Ministerial Forum a Major Diplomatic Milestone for Singapore

Interfaces at the Forum underpin Singapore's ongoing efforts to push openness and sustainable prosperity through enhanced international diplomacy



Photo: Magnus Liljegen/Regeringskansliet

SINGAPORE'S Foreign Minister Dr Vivian Balakrishnan was invited to attend the 2nd Indo-Pacific Ministerial Forum by Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden Tobias Billström (pictured above standing fourth from left) and European Union (EU) High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission Josep Borrell Fontelles. The Minister's recent trip to Stockholm, Sweden, was a significant event for Singapore as it added fresh zeal to its efforts for international diplomacy. The forum held from 12th to 14th May 2023, brought together around 60 foreign ministers from the European Union and the Indo-Pacific, with the aim of strengthening the partnership between

the two regions. Minister Balakrishnan delivered the opening intervention at the Roundtable session themed "Building More Sustainable and Inclusive Prosperity Together" on 13 May 2023. The minister laid great emphasis on Southeast Asia's organizing principle of openness and called for the EU to play a leading role in maintaining the open, rules-based global trading system. He also stressed that the EU has the potential to be a force for stability, inclusion, and sustained prosperity for both the Asia Pacific and the EU.

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## DPM Lawrence Wong Beijing Visit Another Significant Bilateral Milestone

The Beijing visit marks another brick in the wall to cement Singapore-China ties



(From left): DPM Wong with China's Minister of Finance, Liu Kun (Photo: Lawrence Wong's Twitter)

DEPUTY Prime Minister (DPM) and Minister for Finance Lawrence Wong's recent visit to Beijing was aimed at enhancing cooperation in various sectors and build upon the recent upgrade of the Singapore-China relationship to an "All-Round High-Quality Future-Oriented Partnership."

During the course of the visit, he met with high-level officials to strengthen bilateral ties between Singapore and China. His meetings with Premier Li Qiang and Vice Premier Ding Xuexiang, Deputy Prime Minister Wong reaffirmed the strong and longstanding Singapore-China relationship. Both sides discussed expanding cooperation in areas such as digitalization, energy, and sustainability. They emphasized the importance of people-to-people exchanges and restoring flight connectivity.

DPM Wong and Vice Premier Ding focused on deepening collaboration in traditional and emerging sectors, including trade, investments, finance, capital markets, the digital economy, and green development. Discussions also took place on the potential impact of bilateral projects in third countries through initiatives like the Belt and Road Initiative.

The substantive conclusion of the Protocol of the China-Singapore Free Trade Agreement Subsequent Negotiations was celebrated, with the signing expected later this year. Progress in implementing the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) and negotiations for upgrading the ASEAN-China Free Trade Area were also acknowledged.

DPM Wong also showed his support for China's interest in joining the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) and welcomed China's application to the Digital Economy Partnership Agreement (DEPA). DPM Wong also had a meeting with Minister of Finance Liu Kun with an aim to strengthen financial cooperation between the two countries. Together the duo explored opportunities for greater connectivity between their capital markets and discussed cooperation at multilateral platforms such as ASEAN+3 and the G20.

Full report online visit:  
[www.indiplomacy.com](http://www.indiplomacy.com)



## Europe Day 2023: EU-Singapore Relations Flourish as Ambassador Iwona Piorko Highlight Achievements

9th May 2023



THE European Union and Singapore joined together in celebrating Europe Day on 9th May 2023, reaffirming their shared values of diversity, unity, and peace. This momentous occasion marked the 71st anniversary of the historic Schuman Declaration, which played a pivotal role in fostering political cooperation after WW II. Under the gracious hosting of H. E. Ambassador Iwona Piorko, the event welcomed S. Iswaran, Singapore's Minister of Transport, as the esteemed guest of honor. Ambassador Piorko's speech highlighted the robust economic

relations between the EU and Singapore, with Singapore serving as the EU's primary trade and investment partner in Southeast Asia, facilitating a flourishing bilateral trade exceeding 100 billion euros annually.

The Europe Day celebrations in Singapore showcased an array of cultural performances and captivating exhibitions, serving as a vibrant tribute to the unity, diversity, and peace that Europe has achieved. The event exemplified the EU's unwavering commitment to strengthening partnerships and collaboration with Singapore and likeminded nations.

Ambassador Piorko's speech seamlessly wove together the various dimensions of EU-Singapore relations, emphasizing the importance of digital cooperation, sustainability, and security. The EU's appreciation for Singapore's steadfast support in upholding the rules-based international order was reiterated, further solidifying their shared commitment to global initiatives.

The Europe Day celebrations in Singapore underscored the EU's dedication to fostering strong partnerships and collaboration, shaping a brighter future together with Singapore and other nations. The event served as a testament to the enduring friendship and shared aspirations between the European Union and Singapore.

## Norway's National Day Sparks Joy and Solidarity

17th May 2023

**Norway proudly celebrates its constitution and national day on 17th May 2023, fostering unity, solidarity, and a commitment to peace both at home and abroad.**

ON May 17th, 2023, Norwegian Ambassador Eivind S. Homme proudly raised the Norwegian flag to commemorate Norway's Constitution and National Day. This significant occasion marks the adoption of Norway's Constitution on 17th May 1814, a document that has continuously evolved to protect human rights, democracy, and social security.

Norway's National Day, also celebrated on 17th May, holds deep historical significance, symbolizing the nation's journey towards full independence, achieved in 1905, except for the occupation by Nazi-Germany during World War II. On this special day, Norwegian children across the country joyously participate in parades, waving their flags with fervor, and are greeted by the King and Queen in Oslo. Even in Singapore, the celebrations continue in the traditional way at the Norwegian Seamen's Mission, uniting Friends of Norway and fostering a sense of national pride.

At the heart of Norway's national day celebration lies a strong focus on the young generation. Norwegians aspire to pass on and develop the rich heritage bestowed upon them, a society built on values of justice, equality, solidarity, and compassion for all. The nation believes that by upholding these principles both at home and abroad, they can forge robust partnerships and extend solidarity to the rest of the world.



(Photo: Norwegian Embassy in Singapore)

## May Revolution Day Message: Argentina Striking a Balance for Territorial, Social and Economic Development

25th May 2023



H.E. Mauricio Nine, Ambassador of Argentina to Singapore

**Possessed of enormous natural resources and a deep pool of human talent Argentina seeks to engage investors to spur fresh impetus to local productive capacities, value chains and employment opportunities**

On this date, which commemorates the 213th anniversary of the May Revolution of 1810, and in this year in which Argentina celebrates 40 years of uninterrupted democracy, I wanted to talk about some of the many investment opportunities my country presents for investors from countries like Singapore.

In a global context shaken by a series of crises, Argentina is set to play a determining role as a possessor of fundamental resources for plans governed by both food and energy security. This position is all the more valuable as the country is located in a region of peace, devoid of geopolitical conflict, with a long tradition of ties with the rest of the world, and fundamentally with a valuable path of regional integration.

Endowed with natural resources and human capacities for their transformation, Argentina seeks to insert itself into global value chains, giving a relevant place to foreign direct investment that is aimed at developing local productive capacities, creating chains that add value and generate sufficient employment to achieve balanced territorial, social and economic development.

Full report online visit: [www.indiplomacy.com](http://www.indiplomacy.com)



## Africa Day 2023: Singapore's Investment In Africa's Future 25th May 2023

African diplomatic missions in Singapore celebrate Africa Day 2023, highlighting the strategic importance of Singapore's relations with Africa and urging Singaporean businesses to explore new opportunities on the continent.



On May 25th, the African Diplomatic Missions in Singapore gathered together to celebrate Africa Day 2023, commemorating the Diamond Anniversary of the founding of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), the predecessor of the current African Union (AU). This momentous occasion provided an opportunity

to reflect on the strong and fruitful relations that many African countries enjoy with Singapore. The recent visit of His Excellency Lee Hsien Loong, Prime Minister of the Republic of Singapore, to South Africa, Kenya, and Rwanda in June 2022 underscored the strategic importance that Singapore places on the African continent. These visits demonstrated Singapore's commitment to strengthening ties and deepening cooperation with African nations. During his recent visit to Kenya and South Africa, Prime Minister Lee rightfully emphasized the significance of Africa as a continent that Singaporeans should pay attention to as they strive to explore new frontiers. In light of this, the African Diplomatic Missions in Singapore urged the Singaporean business community to heed this call by actively pursuing business opportunities and fostering long-term partnerships in Africa. The African Diplomatic Missions in Singapore consist of the Embassy of the Republic of Angola, the High Commission of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the Embassy of the Arab Republic of Egypt, the High Commission of the Republic of Rwanda, and the High Commission of the Republic of South Africa. These missions serve as vital channels for promoting dialogue, cooperation, and mutual understanding between Singapore and African nations.

## Georgia Independence Day: Outstanding Investment Destination 26th May 2023

Along with its accessibility its extensive economic reforms, down-sized tax burdens and long-term investment, have transformed Georgia into an emerging powerhouse of stability for doing business



*Panorama of Tbilisi, capital city of Georgia (Photo: Georgia Embassy, Estonia)*

Straddling the intersection that binds Europe to Asia on the ancient Silk Road, Georgia, formerly a Soviet republic in the South Caucasus, has evolved into a flourishing independent entity. Given its exceptionally strategic geographic location it offers access into Europe for landlocked Central Asian countries trading minerals, machinery and transport equipment. Its trade agreements too have been an advantageous component for providing access to these markets.

**Tourism:** Leveraging on its stunning natural beauty, its deep-rooted cultural heritage and ethnic richness as a tourist destination. It even has its own unique alphabet and language, which is spoken only in Georgia.

**Economy:** The subtropical region of the Kolkhida Lowland near the shores of the Black Sea is of prime importance for cultivation of subtropical and other cash crops. The Georgian economy is largely driven by agricultural pursuits and a mature industrial sector. Agriculture accounts for at least half its GDP. Georgia's machine-building industry is a huge powerhouse of production with a wide spectrum of products. The chemical industry is involved in producing mineral fertilizers, synthetic materials and fibres, and pharmaceutical products. Construction developments support local raw materials, supplies the country with cement, slate, and many prefabricated reinforced-concrete structures and parts.

**Investment:** Since the government's anti-corruption campaign in the early 2000s, the country has created a favourable business environment that is conducive to conducting business with low risks. Georgia has plenty to offer to foreign investors. Foremost, the country has one of the lowest taxes globally.

Coupled with a strong national infrastructure, including easy access to financial and global markets, the country is generally considered attractive to foreign companies.

**International Trade:** Georgia offers easy access to most major European, Central Asian and Middle Eastern markets. As a result of targeted trade liberalisation efforts, Georgia has free trade agreements with the European Union (DCFTA), the United Kingdom, Turkey, China (including Hong Kong), Ukraine, the EFTA (European Free Trade Association) and Commonwealth of Independent States countries, which have opened up customs and import tariff-free access to consumer markets with a 2.3 billion population. Georgia also enjoys Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) regimes with the USA, Canada and Japan, which provide an additional 490-million consumer market.

**Opportunities:** Georgia's economy also has great growth potential for foreign investors. Some of these industries include manufacturing, agriculture and food processing, hospitality and real estate, logistics, and information technology (IT), amongst others. A sector that has been identified for huge growth potential is energy. In particular, the country's renewable energy sector holds great promise: it can generate considerable power from myriad renewable sources, including hydro, solar and wind.

**SOME HIGHLIGHTS:** The Georgian government has unveiled its ambitious aspirations to become one of the best investment locations in the world. These have been reflected in various international rankings, as follows:

- Georgia ranks 7th in Doing Business 2020 report by the World Bank.
- The Heritage Foundation, list Georgia's economy as the 12th freest in the "Index of Economic Freedom 2021".
- Latest ranking of Kerney's Global Services Location Index (GSLI 2021), Georgia is number 19th among 60 countries.
- "Economic Freedom of the World 2021" report by Frazer Institute, Georgia's position is 5th amongst 165 countries.
- The "Corruption Perception Index 2020" by Transparency International, Georgia ranked 45th place amongst 180 economies with the score of 56.
- The World Bank and PriceWaterhouseCoopers (PwC) report, Georgia has one of the lowest tax burdens. The effective tax rate amounts to 99%, one of the lowest globally and ranks 3rd in the world.
- In February 2022, Standard and Poor's Global Ratings reaffirmed Georgia's credit rating at BB and outlook to stable from negative and Fitch affirmed Georgia's credit rating at BB and stable credit outlook.
- Last September, Moody's affirmed Georgia's sovereign credit rating at Ba2 with stable outlook.
- Fitch, S&P and Moody's states Georgia has a track record of cooperation and strong support from international financial institutions, which support policy credibility, continued reform momentum and reduce financing risks.

For the full report online visit: [www.indiplomacy.com](http://www.indiplomacy.com)





## One World International School (OWIS) Digital Campus\* in Punggol Opening in August 2023

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EC to Grade 8

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S828649

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✉ [admissions.pg@owis.org](mailto:admissions.pg@owis.org)



\*Proposed site for an international school that will open in August 2023 subject to regulatory approvals.

**Please scan the QR code**  
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or to join a school tour.

#### OWIS NANYANG CAMPUS<sup>1,2</sup>

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📍 21 Jurong West Street 81,  
Singapore 649075

☎ +65 6914 6700

✉ [admissions@owis.org](mailto:admissions@owis.org)



#### OWIS SUNTEC CAMPUS

EC to Grade 5 (Candidate School for the IB PYP)

📍 1 Raffles Blvd, Suntec City, Level 3,  
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✉ [admissions@owis.org](mailto:admissions@owis.org)



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Source: Dr Maliki Osman FB

## Sixth Indian Ocean Conference in Bangladesh

12th - 13th May 2023

The Sixth Indian Ocean Conference in Bangladesh offered an opportunity to strengthen bilateral ties and deepen cooperation through education and trade within the region with Singapore, which was represented there by Dr Mohamad Maliki Osman, Singapore's Minister in the Prime Minister's Office, Second Minister for Foreign Affairs, and Second Minister for Education. The Minister accepted an invitation for bilateral discussions from Bangladesh's Foreign Minister Dr AK Abdul Momen at the Conference; he also met with Bangladesh Education Minister Dipu Moni to discuss a potential collaboration in Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET). He also had a fruitful discussion with Adviser to the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Salman Fazlur Rahman (pictured here standing on the right), on opportunities for collaboration between Singapore and Bangladesh in areas such as agriculture, shipping, and trade.

Full report online visit:  
[www.indiplomacy.com](http://www.indiplomacy.com)

## Singapore - Indonesia Six Bilateral EWG Meeting 16th May 2023

Indonesia and Singapore strengthen economic ties as officials discuss progress in various sectors, from investment and employment to transportation and tourism, at the Singapore-Indonesia Six Bilateral Economic Working Groups Meeting



THE Six Bilateral Economic Working Groups Senior Officials' Meeting held on the 16th of May, 2023 had a significant impact on the economic ties between Indonesia and Singapore. Indonesian Ambassador to Singapore, Mr. Suryo Pratomo, graced the occasion which saw a prestigious gathering of officials and representatives from both nations, all eager to discuss and evaluate the progress of their bilateral cooperation in various critical sectors. From investment ventures to labour policies, transportation advancements to the thriving agribusiness industry, tourism initiatives to the development of the special economic zones of Batam, Bintan, and Karimun, no stone was left unturned in the pursuit of stronger ties. Ambassador Suryo Pratomo expressed his deep appreciation for the significant strides made by the six working groups. These groups have played

a pivotal role in nurturing economic growth and prosperity for both Indonesia and Singapore. Under the leadership and guidance of the Indonesian Embassy in Singapore, constant support has been provided to foster the growth of economic relations within the framework of the Singapore-Indonesia Six Bilateral Economic Working Groups. It is undeniable that these bilateral efforts have brought forth countless opportunities for both countries. The investment sector has witnessed a surge in collaboration, enabling the flow of capital and expertise across borders. The employment sector has also seen significant improvements, with policies and initiatives designed to create a conducive environment for workers and job seekers alike.

## Coming Up: Singapore-India Hackathon 2023 Final 14th - 16th July 2023



Past winners of the third edition of the Hackathon  
(Photo: SingaporeIndiaHackathon.com)

The finals of the Singapore-India Hackathon 2023, which will be held at IIT Gandhinagar in Gujarat, India bringing together the best of both countries' startups to showcase their innovative solutions and gain exposure to global policymakers, investors, and potential customers. With a focus on Fintech, Sustainability, and ESG, the event brings together two of the most dynamic ecosystems in the world - India's \$60 billion plus Fintech Market and Singapore, one of the top-tier global Fintech hubs. Additionally, the event provides a platform for startups to align their solutions with the UN Sustainable Development Goals. It is organised by the Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, and the Indian Ministry of Education All India Council for Technical Education in partnership with the Monetary Authority of Singapore, Confederation of Indian Industries, Enterprise Singapore, SGInnovate, Singapore Fintech Festival, Start Up India, and IIT Gandhinagar. The Hackathon fosters bilateral cooperation between students and startups from Singapore and India. The finals will be held as part of India's G20 Presidency in Gandhinagar, Gujarat, under the G20 Finance Ministers' meeting and the event will witness the participation of policymakers from over 20 countries, representing 85% of the world's GDP.

## Visa-Free Travel for Saudi Arabian Nationals to Singapore 1st June 2023

Visa-free entry to Singapore starting from 1st June 2023

THE Singapore government will be granting visa-free entry to Saudi passport holders, making travel to Singapore more convenient than ever before. This new policy applies to all Saudi nationals except for those holding diplomatic passports.

For those planning to visit Singapore **before** 1st June 2023 applying for a visa is still a simple process. You are required to complete **Form 14A** signed by the applicant. Your visa application shall be made based on the information declared in this form. The Immigration and Checkpoints Authority (ICA) may request for the form to be submitted.

A recent passport-sized color photograph taken within the last three months, which meets the Photo Guidelines for information on photo requirements.

Remember to keep handy a photocopy of the passport biodata page (valid for at least six months from the date of your entry into Singapore). Additional supporting documents may be required on a case-by-case basis. The processing fee is S\$30, which is non-refundable, and the application will typically be processed within three working days (excluding the day of submission). Visa applications can be submitted **online** through a strategic partner or local contact in Singapore, or in-person at the nearest Singapore Overseas Mission or authorized visa agent. It's important to note that each visa application will be evaluated on its own merits, and supporting documents required may vary depending on the purpose of the visit and other factors. So, be sure to follow all the requirements carefully to ensure a smooth and hassle-free application process. Remember, it's advised to apply for an entry visa within 30 days prior to your arrival in Singapore.