

# IN DIPLOMACY

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SINGAPORE



**SINGAPORE**  
Celebrates  
58th National  
Day

**SUPPLEMENT**  
66th Malaysia  
Independence  
Day

**INTERVIEW**  
H.E. Dato' Dr Azfar Mustafar  
High Commissioner  
of Malaysia in Singapore



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# SINGAPORE CELEBRATES 58TH INDEPENDENCE DAY



Photo:  
Gary Ng  
www.maphotosg.com  
(fb.com/maphotosg)

SINGAPORE celebrated its 58th National Day on 9th August at the Padang in front of the former City Hall with full pomp and pageantry with a few twists on the traditional programme: There was an enhanced aerial display and a full-dress Defence Parade which was combined with the ceremony that was themed "Defending Our Nation as One", before rounding it all off with a spectacular display of fireworks. This year is also the last time President Halimah Yacob will be officiating at the Parade, as her 6-year term ends in September to make way for the new elected president of Singapore. She spoke to the media after the parade and said that while there was a "terrible sense of sadness, but at the same time, a sense of inspiration when I looked around me and saw how people were standing together celebrating as one."



## EVENTS

# INDIA FIRST TO LAND ON MOON'S SOUTH POLE

INDIA'S Chandrayaan-3 spacecraft successfully landed on the Moon's south pole on 23rd August 2023, making it the first country to do so. The lander, Vikram, touched down at 6:04 PM IST in the Mare Orientale, a large impact basin on the lunar south pole. The success of Chandrayaan-3 is a major milestone for India's space programme and a significant achievement for the global space community. The mission will help scientists to better understand the Moon's geology and evolution, and to search for signs of water ice in the lunar south pole.

The Chandrayaan-3 mission was launched on July 14, 2023, from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota, India. The spacecraft consists of a lander, Vikram, a rover, Pragyan, and an orbiter. The orbiter will remain in orbit around the Moon to study its surface and atmosphere, while the lander and rover will conduct experiments on the lunar surface. The

landing of Chandrayaan-3 was a challenging feat, as the Moon's south pole is a region with extreme temperatures and harsh radiation. However, the ISRO team was able to successfully land the spacecraft thanks to their expertise and meticulous planning.



## FACETIME IN AUGUST 2023



Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi's visit to Singapore from 10th to 11th August deepened bilateral relations. Discussions with Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong focused on enhancing regional collaboration and reaffirming China's commitment to ASEAN engagement.



Dr. Malik Bin Osman, Singapore's Minister in the Prime Minister's Office and Second Minister for Foreign Affairs and Education, visited Indonesia's Riau Islands (KEPRI) Province from August 10th to 12th, 2023. He engaged in diplomatic talks, cultural visits, and business discussions, strengthening ties between the two regions.



Mr Albert Chua, Singapore's Permanent Secretary for Foreign Affairs, visited Bangkok for the 3rd Singapore-Thailand Political Consultations with Permanent Secretary Sarun Charoensuwan on 18th August 2023. They reaffirmed strong bilateral ties, reviewed cooperation in trade, green economy, and more. They also highlighted the value of mechanisms like CSEP and STEER Ministerial Meeting for collaboration.



President Ranil Wickremesinghe of Sri Lanka wrapped up his two-day visit to Singapore on August 22, 2023, aimed at strengthening bilateral ties. Discussions with President Halimah Jacob and Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong covered topics like food security, renewable energy, and trade.



Sheikh Mohammed Bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, Qatar's Prime Minister, wrapped up his Singapore visit on August 25, 2023. The aim of the visit was to enhance Qatar-Singapore collaboration. Meetings with President Halimah Jacob and Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong covered various topics including matters from education to water research.



The 8th Qatar-Singapore HLJC Meeting on August 25, 2023, emphasized bilateral ties. Qatar and Singapore officials discussed various areas with an aim to boost collaboration in trade, energy, education, and more. Agreements and MOUs were signed in social development, education, water innovation, and digitalization.



Singapore's PM Lee Hsien Loong visited Hanoi, Vietnam from August 27 to 29, 2023, reciprocating a visit by PM Pham Minh Chinh earlier in the year. The visit marked 50 years of bilateral ties and a decade of the Strategic Partnership. Lee met PM Chinh, the Communist Party's leader Nguyen Phu Trong, Vietnam's President Vo Van Thuong, and the National Assembly's Vuong Dinh Hue. They discussed the Vietnam-Singapore Industrial Park (VSIP), inaugurating new projects and licenses for ventures in the existing 13 VSIPs, which had brought in \$18.4 billion investments and 300,000 jobs. Lee and Chinh engaged with students from Vietnam National University and launched the Singapore-Vietnam Youth Leaders Exchange Programme. Lee was accompanied by Ministers Vivian Balakrishnan, Chan Chun Sing, and Tan See Leng, emphasizing the visit's importance.

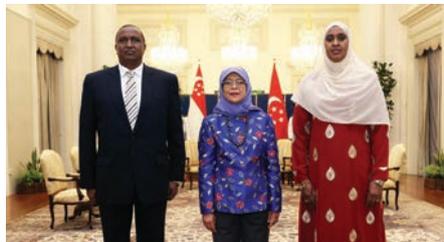
## EVENTS

## PRESENTATION OF CREDENTIALS: PANAMA, KENYA AND BOTSWANA

*President Halimah Yacob received the credentials of the heads of mission from Panama, Kenya and Botswana at the Istana on 29th August 2023*



● **H.E. Enrique Villegas González R.**, the Ambassador of the Republic of Panama to Singapore, was Vice-President of Engineering and Projects at the Tocumen International Airport in Panama City prior to his appointment as Panama's Ambassador to Singapore. Earlier on the Ambassador also held positions in various companies at the management level in the construction sector; he also used to run his own design and construction business.



● **H.E. Galma Mukhe Boru**, the High Commissioner of the Republic of Kenya to Singapore, has spent his career in the Kenyan public service. He began at the Ministry of Planning and National Development as an economist and statistician before becoming a diplomat. He has had diplomatic postings at the Kenyan Embassy in Kigali, Rwanda, in Lusaka, Zambia, in Nairobi in London, in Washington DC and also in Qatar. He has been Ambassador of Kenya to Indonesia since November 2022, and will be concurrently accredited to Singapore from 29 August 2023.



● **H.E. Dr Batlang Comma Serema**, the High Commissioner of the Republic of Botswana to Singapore, prior to this appointment served as Botswana High Commissioner to Namibia from 2020 to 2022. He has held leadership positions such as Vice President of the Botswana Football Association, Chairman of the Botswana National Youth Council Agricultural Enterprise, and Executive Secretary of the Botswana Democratic Party.

## APPOINTMENTS OF SINGAPORE AMBASSADORS AND HIGH COMMISSIONERS

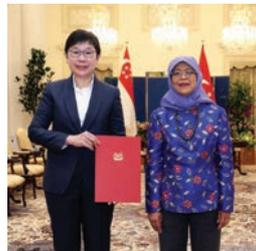
*Singapore's government has announced the appointment of several seasoned diplomats to the United Kingdom, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Republic of Turkey, State of Qatar and New Zealand*



● **H.E. Ng Teck Hean, High Commissioner to the United Kingdom**  
He is currently serving as Deputy Secretary (Asia Pacific) at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). He brings a wealth of experience to this role, having held various significant positions in Singapore's diplomatic corps. Mr Ng has served as Singapore's Ambassador to the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and held positions in key directorates and embassies. He is a distinguished graduate of Victoria University of Wellington and Johns Hopkins University.



● **H. E. S Premjith, Ambassador to the Kingdom Of Saudi Arabia**  
He has previously served as Singapore's Ambassador to the Russian Federation and has recently been named the next Ambassador to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. With a distinguished career at MFA spanning decades, Mr Premjith has held various diplomatic roles in regions including South Asia, Southeast Asia, and Africa. He holds degrees from Murdoch University and the University of Cambridge and has been recognized with the Public Administration Medal.



● **H. E. Kok Li Peng, Ambassador to the Republic of Turkey**  
Ms. Kok Li Peng, former Permanent Representative to ASEAN and Ambassador to the Republic of the Philippines, has been appointed as the next Ambassador to the Republic of Turkey. Ms Kok's diplomatic experience is underscored by her role at the Singapore Permanent Mission to the United Nations and various positions focusing on international organizations and Southeast Asia. She holds degrees from the National University of Singapore and Columbia University.



● **H. E. Wong Chow Ming, Ambassador to the State of Qatar**  
Mr Wong Chow Ming, who previously served as Singapore's Ambassador to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, has been designated as the next Ambassador to the State of Qatar. With a career at MFA that spans several decades, Mr Wong's assignments have encompassed Southeast Asia, ASEAN, and other important areas. He has been recognized with the Long Service Medal and holds a Master of Science from Nanyang Technological University.



● **H. E. William Tan Wei Yuan, High Commissioner to New Zealand**  
Mr William Tan Wei Yuan, formerly the Director-General of the Technical Co-operation Directorate at MFA, has been appointed as the Singaporean High Commissioner to New Zealand. Mr Tan's extensive career has seen him serve across regions such as Northeast Asia, Southeast Asia, South Asia, and Africa. He holds degrees from the University of Michigan and Stanford University, and he has been recognized with the Long Service Medal.



**Republic of Indonesia’s 78th Anniversary of Independence Diplomatic Reception.** The event theme promoted the new capital city of Nusantara at the Ritz Carlton Millenia Hotel Singapore on 24th August 2023.

The host, Indonesian Ambassador of Indonesia to Singapore H.E. Suryo Pratomo and wife Mrs. Noeri Widowati, who were accompanied by the embassy’s deputy ambassador Djati Ismojo and Mrs. Irawati Djati, welcomed the guests dressed in the traditional clothes of Mahligai from Balikpapan, East Kalimantan.

These clothes, inspired by the culture of Paser Balik tribe, Balikpapan, depict Balikpapan’s wealth as a city of oil and knowledge and prosperity.

Guest of honour, Singapore’s Minister for National Development, Mr Desmond Lee, was specially welcomed with the Enggang Dance performed by the Serumpunlima Dance Group from East Kalimantan.

The warmth of the reception and hospitality of the host was extended to all guests. Ambassador Pratomo and Minister Desmond Lee in their

welcome addresses confirmed the close cooperation and friendship that exist between both countries. Sun Media also played a role in highlighting some of the milestones achieved in bilateral ties through its publication IndoConnect which was also distributed to the guests who attended the diplomatic reception. The gathering consisted of various members of Parliament, ASEAN ambassadors and friendly countries, the Singapore diplomatic corps, and defence attaches, entrepreneurs, and stakeholders as well as representatives of Indonesian diaspora in Singapore.



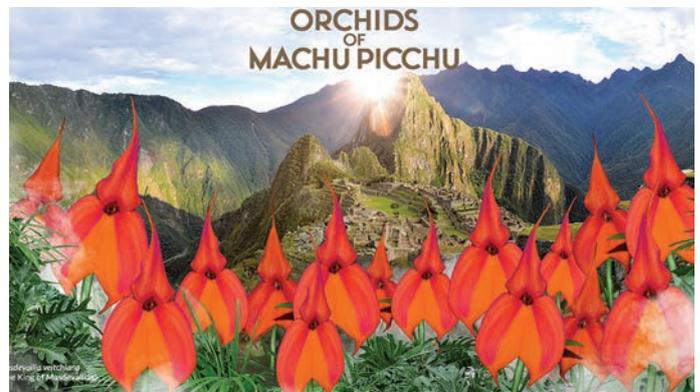
**Chile and the Southeast Asia Region: Seizing the Opportunity.** On 14th August 2023 the Chilean Embassy in Singapore and Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) organised a talk by Mr Alex Wetzig Abdale, the Secretary General of Chile’s Foreign Policy who spoke on relations between Chile and the Southeast Asia Region and “Seizing the Opportunity”



**ASEAN Day Dinner** On the evening of 6th August 2023, the heads of the diplomatic missions of ASEAN member states, Timor-Leste and 11 ASEAN Dialogue Countries, were hosted to the ASEAN Day 2023 Dinner. The Guest of Honour was Singapore’s Minister of Foreign Affairs of Singapore, Dr. Vivian Balakrishnan.



**Celebrating 56th ASEAN Anniversary with Fun Walk** Diplomats and staff from all the missions of the ASEAN member states got together to participate in a Fun Walk on 8th August 2023 at the Singapore Botanic Gardens. The Walk was organised by the Republic of Indonesia’s Embassy to celebrate the 56th Anniversary of ASEAN.



The **Orchids of Machu Picchu** exhibition organised by the Embassy of Peru in Singapore was held from 18th August 2023 at the Cloud Forest of Gardens by the Bay. Also on display was an intricate replica of Machu Picchu and the Intipunku Gate and the

ceramic treasures. More than 80 species of orchids, meticulously preserved in acrylic, native from the region adjacent to the Inca citadel were on display. The collection is owned by the Inkaterra Association and this was its first appearance outside of Peru.



IN DIPLOMACY | SPECIAL  
Malaysia Supplement



## MALAYSIAN HIGH COMMISSION LAUNCHES MEDIA CAMPAIGN TO PROMOTE TRADE, INVESTMENT AND TOURISM

Malaysia's celebrates its 66th National Day in August. To commemorate the occasion, Dato' Dr Azfar bin Mohamad Mustafar, High Commissioner of Malaysia to Singapore shares his thoughts on the media campaign, the state of bilateral ties and the new MyHeart database with IN Diplomacy Editor-in-Chief, Ms Nomita Dhar

**Happy National Day! Dato' would you like to share something about the Malaysia Media Campaign that will be initiated in Singapore?**

At the onset I would like to congratulate Singapore on its National Day celebrations. As Malaysia celebrates its National Day we wish Malaysian residents and friends of Malaysia in Singapore happiness and prosperity.



**For the benefit of our readers, what are the various arms of the Malaysian High Commission in Singapore that work for the smooth functioning of these ties?**

The High Commission of Malaysia in Singapore is one of the biggest missions we have abroad and we also have other agencies here in Singapore. We have Defence, Ministry of Investment, Trade, and Industry (MITI), Malaysian Investment Development

Authority (MIDA), Tourism, Immigration, Labour and Police. These agencies serve not only to ensure that any consular issues can be resolved quickly but also to foster trade relations and take care of Malaysians working here in Singapore.

Although we are very close neighbours we are kickstarting a media campaign to promote Malaysia to Singaporeans and foreigners residing here. Starting with this special supplement in IN Diplomacy we want to draw attention to the latest on investment, trade and tourism. We plan a campaign in print, combined with a new podcast and social media series. The aim is to bring the people on both sides even closer. Malaysian High Commission through this initiative aims to act as a bridge between the new and the old. I would like to encourage businesses and people to come forward to be part of this campaign. Let's all create and share joyful memories and together tap on new opportunities. This is what we are proposing to our stakeholders.

**How are relations between Singapore and Malaysia?**

Malaysia and Singapore have always been good neighbours and close trading partners. There are many Malaysians working in Singapore and we are one of each other's largest trading partners. Since the borders reopened post-pandemic in April 2022, we have seen growth in our trade figures. This strong partnership will continue to flourish in many years to come.

**Government-to-Government visits act as a catalyst to fuel growth, would you like to update us on these visits?**

There have been interactions at the highest level - this year Prime Minister Anwar visited Singapore. During that visit he witnessed the signing of important agreements - on green and digital economy. These two agreements will further elevate our relationship as well as increase trade and investment between Singapore and Malaysia. PM Anwar during his visit also emphasised the close historical ties that we have and also the deep rooted people-to-people ties, that he would like to strengthen in the years to come.

**What trends do you see in the investment sector between Malaysia and Singapore? Can we look forward to greater growth this year?**

Investment from Singapore has been rising since the reopening of the border. In 2021, Singapore was the second biggest investor, with most of the investment concentrated in Johor. I foresee investment from Singapore continuing to be one of the important sources for Malaysia.

This year, Malaysian companies participated in the NATAS travel exhibition. There was also a Tourism Malaysia Fair which was held in May and there's another one upcoming in October.

**What is your message to Malaysians residing in Singapore for this National Day?**

My message to Malaysians in Singapore is wherever we go, Malaysia should always be in our heart. We should try to contribute back to our country. This is something that we always encourage. They may not be able to come back and work in Malaysia but they can always contribute back to their motherland in various ways. One of the things we launched this year through TalentCorp is the MyHeart initiative ([myheart.my](http://myheart.my)) where all Malaysians living abroad or the diaspora, can register in the database listing out their expertise and other details. It is one way we can get to know know them better and see how can contribute back to the country. The database is very timely so that the Malaysian diaspora can find it easier to contribute back to Malaysia.

Full interview at [www.indiplomacy.com](http://www.indiplomacy.com)



**MALAYSIA  
MADANI**

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## BILATERAL MILESTONES IN 2023

*Bilateral ties between Malaysia and Singapore further strengthened by high level visits by Malaysian Prime Minister Dato' Seri Anwar Ibrahim and Singapore President Halimah Yacob*



(From top left, clockwise): Some highlights of the bilateral visits: President Halimah Yacob visited Malaysia in March at the invitation of the Malaysian King H.M. Sultan Abdullah ibni Sultan Ahmad Shah; PM Anwar Ibrahim visited Singapore in January where an orchid hybrid was named after the Malaysian Prime Minister and his wife and President Halimah called on the Sultan of Perak during her State visit to Malaysia

THE bilateral ties between Malaysia and Singapore have been strengthened by the recent visit of Prime Minister and Minister of Finance of Malaysia, Dato' Seri Anwar Ibrahim, to Singapore on January 30, 2023. During his visit, he met with Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong and other officials to discuss ways to deepen ties in mutually beneficial areas and address bilateral issues. The visit resulted in the signing of several agreements to strengthen bilateral cooperation and jointly seize opportunities in the digital and green economy.

One of the agreements signed was a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Ministry of Communications and Information (MCI) of Singapore and Malaysia's Ministry of Communications and Digital. The MOU enables both countries to cooperate on issues such as personal data protection and cybersecurity. This agreement is significant as it shows the commitment of both countries to work together to address issues of mutual concern.

Another agreement signed during the visit was the Framework of Cooperation in Digital Economy and Green Economy. This

agreement covers areas such as trade facilitation, cross-border data flows, and electronic payments. The potential areas of co-operation include cross-border e-payment systems and electric vehicle charging points. The agreement is expected to serve as a "pathfinder" for digital cooperation between the two countries.

President Halimah Yacob of Singapore also visited Malaysia in March 2023, where she expressed her belief that there is much scope for Singapore and Malaysia to expand cooperation. The visit added to the positive momentum in bilateral ties between the two countries.

The recent visit of Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim to Singapore and the subsequent signing of MOU agreements have strengthened the bilateral ties between Malaysia and Singapore. The agreements signed show the commitment of both countries to work together to address issues of mutual concern and jointly seize opportunities in the digital and green economy. The visit and agreements signed are expected to pave the way for further cooperation between the two countries.

### Meaning of MALAYSIA MADANI

In English it means "Civil Malaysia" and is a policy framework and government slogan introduced by the administration led by the 10th Prime Minister, Anwar Ibrahim. The concept focuses mainly on good governance, sustainable development and racial harmony in the country.



# WHY MALAYSIA IS THE PREFERRED INVESTMENT HUB

*Malaysia is a top investment destination that attracted US\$15.4 billion in the first quarter of 2023 across the manufacturing, services, and primary sectors*

MALAYSIA has once again established itself as a top investment destination, attracting US\$15.36 billion in approved investments during the first quarter of 2023, according to Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim. These investments, spanning across the manufacturing, services, and primary sectors, are set to bring prosperity and create 23,977 job opportunities nationwide. Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) continues to outpace Domestic Direct Investment (DDI), with FDI contributing around US\$8 billion, accounting for 52.5% of the total approved investments.

Over the years, the country has forged an extensive network of implemented regional and bilateral trade agreements which have enabled Malaysia-based exporters and investors to enjoy a myriad of benefits such as tariff concessions, expanded market access, and strengthened economic integration with partner nations and regions. As a result, Malaysia's robust international trade activities have played a key role in driving its sustained economic growth and overall development, firmly establishing the nation as a prominent player in the global marketplace.

Malaysia highly values international trade and investment as a key driver of its economic growth. To this end, the country has ratified seven bilateral **Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with Australia, Chile, India, Japan, New Zealand, Pakistan, and Türkiye.**

Malaysia has been proactively seeking new free trade agreements (FTAs) to expand its trade opportunities. As of November 29th,

2022, the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) has come into effect for Malaysia, providing significantly increased market access to the economies of Malaysia and the United Kingdom.

On 30th May, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, who is also Finance Minister, said the government is committed to further facilitate ease of doing business and support domestic direct investments. "The government has taken various measures to catalyze and attract high-quality investments that will generate linkages with local businesses and high-income job opportunities. This includes Budget 2023 measures to support small and medium enterprises (SMEs) particularly through the provision of various financing facilities and guarantees worth RM40 billion," he added.

According to the Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation, the country's trade surplus in July 2023 increased by 7.9% year-on-year to RM17.09 billion and was the 39th consecutive month of trade surplus since May 2020.

## Trade Performance

In tandem with slower global demand and lower commodity prices, total trade contracted by 16.3% to RM222.14 billion. Exports slipped by 14.1% to RM123.98 billion and imports decreased by 18.9% to RM98.16 billion. The performance was similar to other regional markets notably China, Singapore, Indonesia, Taiwan and the Republic of Korea (ROK) which recorded negative trade growth for June 2023.

Despite the decline, strong exports were posted primarily for electrical and electronic (E&E) products, iron and steel products, metalliferous ores and metal scrap, transport equipment as well as processed food.

Compared to May 2023, exports and trade surplus expanded by 3.7% and 64.4% while trade and imports were down by 0.5% and 5.4%, respectively.

Source: Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation (MATRADE)



1<sup>st</sup>

"Top country in emerging Southeast Asia for Foreign investment"

Global Opportunity Index 2022, Milken Institute

2<sup>nd</sup>

"Most competitive country in ASEAN"

World Competitiveness Yearbook 2023, IMD

3<sup>rd</sup>

"Most innovative upper middle income economy in the world"

Global Innovation Index 2022, World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO)

4<sup>th</sup>

"Most Competitive Emerging Market"

Agility Emerging Markets Logistics Index 2022

Source: www.mida.gov.my



## MALAYSIA TOURISM IN THE SPOTLIGHT

*Travel shows highlight Malaysia is a top choice in terms of the variety of attractions, proximity and prices for Singapore holiday makers*

MALAYSIA reopened its doors to welcome international tourists beginning 1st April 2022. The tourism industry began to pick up where it left off and the country is in its recovery phase as it strives to return stronger to revitalise its tourism industry to greater heights.

In the first quarter of 2023 4.5 million tourists visited Malaysia with many from ASEAN countries. Deputy Tourism, Arts and Culture Minister Khairul Firdaus Akhbar Khan was confident that if the momentum is sustained the country can look forward to receiving up to 16.1 million tourist arrivals this year and generating RM49 billion in tourism revenue.

Internationally, Malaysia is actively participating in travel trade events worldwide, while conducting roadshows and sales missions to network with international industry stakeholders and promote the latest tourism products that are in demand. Some of the notable initiatives undertaken in Singapore this



Photo: The Datai Langkawi

year is its participation in the **National Association of Travel Agents Singapore (NATAS) Travel Fair** in February. Tourism Malaysia booth showcased a diverse range of companies representing the vibrant tourism industry of Malaysia that included Sarawak Trade & Tourism Office, Sunway

Theme Parks, and Transtar Travel. In May more than 20 exhibitors set up booths at the **Travel Malaysia Fair** at Marina Square and most recent was the **Malaysia Fest** held in July.

Maximising the multi-faceted platform, Malaysia now also places greater emphasis on promoting its rich biodiversity in the form of sustainable, nature-based and community-based tourism as the country focuses on becoming the Top of the Mind Ecotourism Destination of the World. Tourists are introduced to the country's natural wonders, endemic flora and fauna species, multicultural society, unique culture and heritage, as well as unmatched gastronomy. For more information, Visit [www.malaysia.travel](http://www.malaysia.travel)

### Consumer Travel Fair Note

Coming up **Travel Malaysia Fair 2023 @ Marina Square** will be held from 6th to 8th October 2023 at the Marina Square Central Atrium

## PURSUE HIGHER EDUCATION IN MALAYSIA

*Why Malaysia is a popular study destination among international students*

MALAYSIA has much to offer for anyone wishing to study there. Here are eight good reasons to check out campuses across the causeway!

**\*Widely-recognised Programmes** Malaysia offers qualifications that are well-recognised globally and the country continue to make great strides in international rankings with more than 20 higher education institutions listed in the QS World University Rankings 2023.

**\*Modern Muslim Nation** Malaysia is a modern and sophisticated country as well as a Muslim-friendly country that places a strong focus on the com-

fort and convenience of its Muslim citizens and visitors. Mosques and Musollas can be found almost everywhere and the majority of eateries in the country serve Halal cuisines too.

**\*Learn English** English is widely spoken and used in Malaysia. It's one of the main requirements for students' admission to apply for higher education institutions. Malaysia administers its own English proficiency test, the Malaysian University English Test (MUET). In the city or in rural areas, interact with the locals or your international friends using English.

**\*Multicultural** Malaysia is known for its friendly community and a melting pot of Asia's diverse communities. Malaysia's diversity in culture makes it one of the few countries where students can gain a global perspective on working, interacting and living with people from different cultures.

**\*Reasonable Cost** From food, travelling, transportation as well as the tuition fees, Malaysian offers a reasonable cost in many areas. The

capital city of Kuala Lumpur is ranked #1 in Southeast Asia in the Affordability indicator, (QS Best Student Cities 2023). The Numbeo's Cost-of-Living Index 2022 rates Malaysia as having a low Cost-of-Living index.

**\*Peaceful and Friendly Nation** Malaysia is one of Asia's most friendly and tolerant countries (\*BBC 2022). According to *Global Peace Index (GPI)* in 2022, Malaysia is ranked 18th providing a safe and secure environment for your study journey.

**\*Dynamic Lifestyle** Many international students choose to study in Malaysia because they want to broaden their horizons and develop personal growth. Students get to experience a dynamic lifestyle as they can explore many exciting activities, beautiful destinations, and its harmonious multicultural society.

**\*Strategic Location** Malaysia is blessed with a strategic location, in the heart of Asia. Hence, it is easy and affordable to travel to neighbouring tourist destinations.

## INTERVIEW

## Ambassador Antti Vänskä

*Celebrating the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Singapore and Finland, the Finnish Ambassador shared his thoughts and impressions of Singapore, as his four years tenure comes to an end*



urban fabric, left a lasting impression. "It is really, really a 'garden' city," he enthused, highlighting Singapore's distinctive charm. Reflecting on what he would replicate in his home country, Ambassador

AMBASSADOR Vänskä marveled at Singapore's captivating blend of cultures, people, and delectable cuisine. The unexpected lushness of the city-state, with its green parks and jungles seamlessly woven into the

Vänskä commended Singapore's dynamic and forward-thinking approach. He praised the city-state's penchant for systematic planning and its openness to adopting best practices from around the world. This drive

to shape the future and benchmark against global standards stood out as a valuable lesson.

Turning our attention to Finland, Ambassador Vänskä shared the secret of the nation's remarkable consistency in topping global happiness charts. He attributed this achievement to the Finns' genuine appreciation for life's modest joys and a steadfast commitment to maintaining a robust work-life balance. "We don't live for work only," he underscored, emphasising the importance of harmony between professional and personal pursuits. This year marks the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Singapore and Finland. Ambassador Vänskä highlighted a special commemorative event to mark the occasion.

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

## EVENTS

## ASBF PAVES WAY FOR PROSPEROUS AFRICA-ASIA PARTNERSHIPS



(From left): Minister Gan Kim Yong delivered the Keynote Address. (Seated from left): First panel speakers Mr Samaila, Minister of State Mr Alvin Tan and Mr Shankar V

ENTERPRISE SG hosted a diverse gathering of over 600 delegates, including business and government representatives from Africa and Asia, at the **Africa-Singapore Business Forum (ASBF)**. The forum, held under the theme of enhancing economic collaboration between the two regions, provided a platform for discussions on opportunities and strategies to advance trade and investment partnerships.

The ASBF Keynote Dialogue featured notable personalities such as President Samaila of the Africa Finance Corporation and V. Shankar, Co-Founder and CEO of Gateway Partners. These leaders elaborated on the significant

opportunities within Africa, Southeast Asia, and Singapore.

Singapore's Minister of Trade & Industry, Mr Gan Kim Yong, emphasized the critical role of maintaining cross-regional connections, especially in the face of contemporary challenges. He highlighted the potential for closer relations between Southeast Asia and Africa, with Singapore positioned as a pivotal node for facilitating Africa-Asia trade. Singapore's Minister of State for the Ministry of Trade & Industry, Mr Alvin Tan, further underlined the commitment to bridging Singapore and Africa's economic landscapes. While acknowledging Singapore's existing

trade relationships with all countries in continental Africa, Tan emphasized the need for expanded efforts.

Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) were signed with South Africa and Kenya, focusing on Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and skills development. Another MOU with Kenya aims to foster collaboration under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement, demonstrating the dedication to sustainability. Altogether five commercial MOUs were exchanged, 13 country investment agencies shared market opportunities and over 300 B2B meetings took place.

The Africa Singapore Business Forum signifies a significant step forward in fostering enduring economic collaboration between the two regions. With a focus on partnership, innovation, and shared growth, this initiative holds the potential to reshape the economic landscape for the better.

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



**Congratulations and Best Wishes to  
the People and Government of Malaysia  
on Malaysia Day 16th Sept 2023**



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