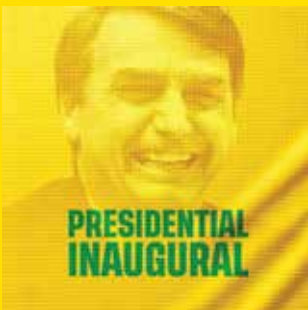


IT'S TIME FOR **BRAZIL** *in* **SINGAPORE**

G20 Unites Brazil & Singapore



Also Inside:



- **Migratory Waves: Settlers Who Bound Together Asia & Brazil**
- **Visiting Delegations from: Maranhão State • Lemann Foundation • Santos Export • CDL Salvador • INPI • ENAP • FIRJAN**



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FOREWORD

As we inch closer to the turn of the decade, we can draw a number of lessons from the past years. The economic and trade outlook has become more uncertain, and all countries, large or small, must make an extra effort to stay competitive and relevant. Yet competitiveness and innovation do not happen in a vacuum: the more competitive you want to be, the more cooperative you must be. After all, trade and investment depend on mutual trust, and innovation has ceased long ago to be the brainchild of lone geniuses. Fortunately, Brazil and Singapore, already good partners, are getting closer and closer together, for the benefit of both.



In 2019, several Brazilian delegations visited Singapore to become acquainted with the country's experience in innovation. This edition of our magazine showcases some of these partnership initiatives. As a token of the interest in the Singaporean expertise, six governors, vice-governors and other officials took part in two missions to get a grip on training for teachers and for civil servants and other modes of skill-building.

This edition also features the ongoing drive to understand, adapt and implement scientific breakthroughs and innovations inspired by Singaporean solutions. You'll read about graphene, a revolutionary new material being researched at the National University of Singapore by a team which includes Brazilian scientists. There is also interest in hi-tech solutions for port logistics, finance, retail, infocomm, and more. Also, to learn more about the Singaporean innovation ecosystem, a delegation from Brazil's Industrial Property Institute spent a week here and signed a memorandum of understanding with the Intellectual Property Office of Singapore (IPOS). Other missions described in these pages underscore the bright prospects of technology tie-ups between our two countries.

Singapore has a strong presence in Brazil, as in no other place in Latin America. We'll be talking about Brazil's steel industry, and also about its famous precious stones and its popular superfoods, such as açaí. Brazilian exports are more and more present in Singapore.

Our outgoing Ambassador, Mr. Flávio Damico, delivered numerous presentations this year to business audiences to promote stronger bilateral ties. As a token of mutual interest, President Bolsonaro and PM Lee met on the margins of the G20 meeting in Osaka last June. The summit at Davos in January and the Brazilian national day in September were just two of the several other opportunities for Brazilians and Singaporeans to get together and discuss their common interests.

We have also included two articles about little-known episodes in Brazilian history. The first article tells the story of Brazil's important contribution to the fight against the Axis during World War II. The second covers Japanese immigration to Brazil since 1908, along with considerations on newer migrant waves from Asia. Brazil takes pride in its ethnic and cultural diversity, and the East Asian immigrants made Brazilian culture a lot richer.

As we bid farewell to Ambassador Damico, we also extend a warm welcome to our new Ambassador, Ms. Eugenia Barthelmess. Both are interviewed in these pages. Ambassador Barthelmess will find an active ecosystem of businesses and other interests, as well as common values, uniting the two nations across the oceans.

Thank you to all those who advertised in this issue or gave any contribution to make its publication possible. I wish you all pleasant reading. And don't let the title of this magazine fool you: It's always time for Brazil in Singapore, just as it's always time for Singapore in Brazil.

Daniel Roberto Pinto
Deputy Head of Mission

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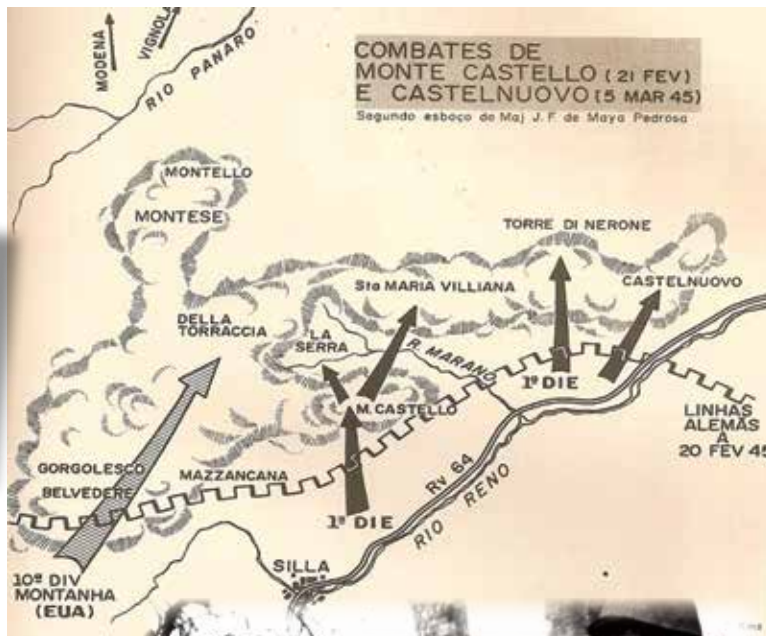
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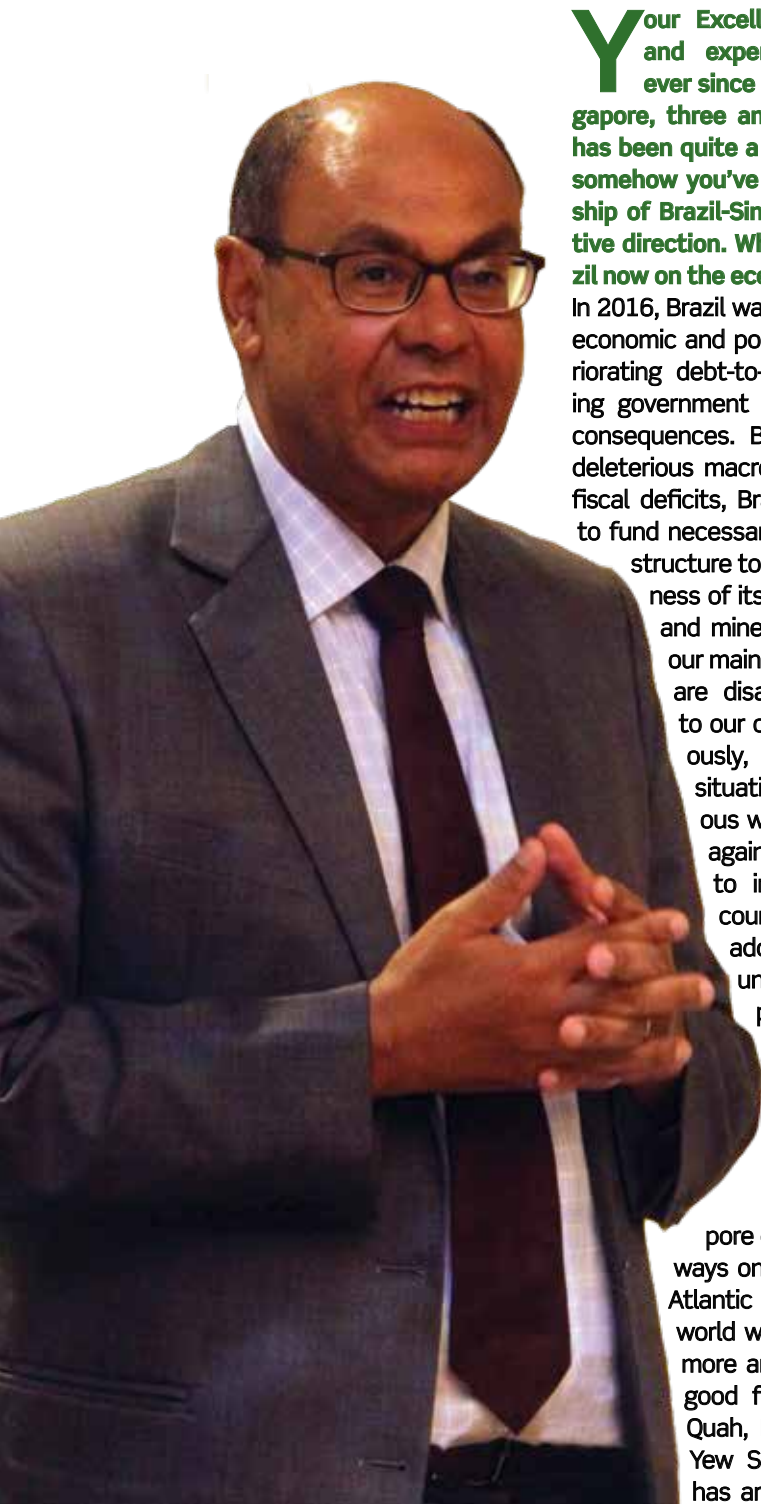
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HE Flávio Soares Damico: Singapore - A Source of Inspiration and Abiding Friend to Brazil *By Nomita Dhar*

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



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

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

Being here in Singapore enabled me to consider ways on how a country on the Atlantic could be relevant in a world where the Indo-Pacific is more and more important. My good friend Professor Danny Quah, Dean of the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, has argued convincingly that

the centre of economic gravity has slowly moved away from the West to the East. This is a reality we have to be aware of. Much of my job in Singapore entails drawing the attention of the Brazilian government to developments here.

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

Prospects for the resumption of a faster pace of growth by 2020 are quite good. There has been one point about which we are disappointed: the recovery has not been, so far, accompanied by commensurate job creation. The economy is not yet strong enough to support consumer confidence. Besides that, many of the companies were hit hard by the weak performance of the economy in previous years.

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

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

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

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

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

What have been the lessons you are taking away from Singapore from your time here as Ambassador? Also, if you were given an opportunity to bring certain processes from Singapore to Brazil what would those be?

Singapore is a fascinating place and its unique trajectory — economic, social, etc. — is quite amazing. In 30 years it has moved from Third World to First. The rise in income levels is almost unparalleled anywhere else. Of course, some factors inherent to Singapore have helped with its success and it also has to do with the international scenario, which bore opportunities for a country seeking to find a niche for itself. But a favourable scenario is not enough. You have to have people here who are able to identify opportunities and make the necessary adjustments and reforms that would put the country in a position to take advantage of these cir-



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

cumstances. This is perhaps the historical legacy of Singapore's pioneers, who were able to actually anticipate the future and prepare the country to reap its benefits.

Nowadays, things have become a little more complicated. The international scenario has been eroded by the growing mutual suspicions between the United States and China, and like all other countries Singapore is caught in the middle. Singapore is at the fulcrum of this due to its historical linkages both to the East and to the West and is very much exposed to these circumstances. I sense, however, that the spirit of Singapore's pioneers is still here, as the current administration is trying to find a way for it to be more competitive and more innovative and is also trying to attract the most modern industries and sectors into the city-state. There is no let-down in seeking to keep up with the times.

So, if I were to bring something of Singapore to Brazil, it would be this restlessness, this notion that we cannot be complacent and that a country should always strive to find a better position in the international system. I believe that Brazil can draw inspiration from this attitude. We are such a

large country and we should not fall into complacency. It would not be a bad idea to spread those 'genes' of restlessness in my country.

On the bilateral front, what have been the highlights this year?

I'm very happy that in my three and a half year tenure I have managed to accomplish what I set out to do: acting based on what economic actors on both sides wanted and creating a favorable environment for these actors to interact.

We were starting from a high baseline as Singapore was already the 11th largest destination for our exports. My challenge was to generate the necessary confidence for us to go to the next level. To accomplish this, we identified two main areas: (a) investment facilitation, which we have done with the signing of the Agreement on the Avoidance of Double Taxation that hopefully will be ratified by the Brazilian Congress by the end of this year, and (b) the negotiation of the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with Singapore, which we hope will be accomplished in the second round of negotiations to be held shortly. Once these have been established, things should get smoothened out.

We didn't receive many visitors of note from Brazil here in Singapore from 2016 to 2018 because of the Brazilian domestic political cycle. In 2016, we went through a Presidential impeachment. In 2017, there were municipal elections and, in 2018, we held a general election. So, politicians and decision makers were reluctant to travel abroad. More recently, once the cycle of elections was concluded, we started to see a fairly large number of visitors, missions and politicians from different states. We noticed that they displayed more openness to what was happening here in Singapore. This year, we had five governors and two vice-governors visiting Singapore.

So things are turning around now?

The level of confidence is quite good, particularly when you look around and see that the world is becoming more complex and things are getting messier by the day. There's an inflation of expectations... but

what's also happening is the disconnect between the possibilities of the economy and the expectations of the people who want things moving very fast, but don't have the capacity to withstand the setbacks... So there's a lot of impatience due to the fact that the world is in our palms thanks to mobile phones and there's greater awareness of how things are taking shape in other parts of the world. Discontent can spread easily via the information technology revolution. The news cycle has shortened considerably. We need to be prepared for that.

What is the technological scenario like in Brazil? We have also learnt that there is an increasing interest from Brazil in the Singaporean innovation ecosystem.

It's like everywhere else when it comes to information and communication technology in the international scene: discussions about what changes the 5G network will bring and what's going to happen between Huawei and the United States, regarding the deployment of the 5G. We, of course, will not be an active part of these debates. But, just like Singapore, we can prepare for the new hi-tech scenario. And we found out that we can do it much better when we join our talents. We had a number of missions this year who came to study the Singaporean innovation ecosystem and to explore possible partnerships in research and development. I am pleased that Brazil's Industrial Property Institute signed a memorandum of understanding with its counterpart, the Intellectual Property Office of Singapore, to collaborate in a number of areas, for the benefit of entrepreneurs and innovators in both countries. Brazilian science, as measured by the number of scientific publications, has achieved a very high level of international recognition. I firmly believe that both Brazil and Singapore can benefit if we join forces to leverage this scientific knowledge into marketable innovations. There are already a number of Brazilian entrepreneurs active here, in areas such as fintech, and also in research of such groundbreaking materials as graphene. In addition, Singapore can be a source of venture capital for Brazilian startups. In fact, I'm very optimistic as I envisage more and more companies showing interest in these areas.

You have also been a very important member of the diplomatic corps here. What was that experience like?

The diplomatic and consular corps here is of very high level, and one important role

I will miss my home here. It is so peaceful and is such a refuge for me, given my hectic pace life. And then there is the beautiful Marina Bay Sands area, the city skyline which takes your breath away....



Ambassador and wife, Mrs Rosa Maria Campos Damico, took time out for a photo at this year's Brazil National Day reception with the Marina Bay Sands Resort in the background

it has is providing support to a newly arrived diplomat, in terms of advice on what to expect from the new country. That's why I decided to join the Foreign Service: because I embrace change and coming to a new country means understanding its people, economic circumstances, new societal scenarios; it's all very fascinating and enriching. So, by the time I leave Singapore, I will certainly look back and see how much I learned from and enjoyed this amazing experience in one of the most dynamic cities on the planet, the "unofficial capital of Asia", as Parag Khanna put it in his recent book, 'The Future is Asian'. I feel privileged that I was a part of it and I hope to have made a certain contribution back home in terms of drawing attention to the importance of things taking place here.

Would you recommend Brazil as a hub among Latin American countries for businessmen?

The fact that the Singapore government set up in Brazil its only embassy in Latin America has been the biggest endorsement for my country. I see the potential for all manner of investments coming in. On our side, we have no hesitation in using Singapore as a hub for entry into South-east Asia and beyond.

In terms of politics, we left behind a rough period in Brazil. Politics is becoming more contentious in every country. We are reassured by the fact that the economy points to a much better future than ever before.

What is your favourite place in Singapore, which you know you will miss?

I will miss my home here. It is so peaceful and is such a refuge for me, given my hectic pace life. And then there is the beautiful Marina Bay Sands area, the city skyline which takes your breath away.... Likewise, my wife and my stepson carried out a very fruitful and happy life here as well.

Please share with our readers about your next posting.

My next posting is as Ambassador to Paraguay, a neighbouring and really important country for Brazil. Brazil is the second largest investor in Paraguay. Among the many important joint projects, Brazil and Paraguay co-own the world largest hydro-electrical power plant, Itaipu (it generates more electricity than the Three Gorges dam in China). We also share a long border area of around 1500 km. Cooperation between the two countries is essential to control it. Moreover, we have a very large Brazilian community living in Paraguay. It is going to be a very different assignment from the one here in Singapore. I will have a big challenge ahead that I am looking forward to confronting. I am sure that, in spite of all the differences between the two places, the experience I gained in Singapore, and the many things I learned here, will help me carry out my new responsibilities successfully.

HE Eugenia Barthelmess: There is More to Brazil than Meets the Eye *By Nomita Dhar*

■ The new Ambassador of Brazil to Singapore speaks to Editor-in-Chief Ms Nomita Dhar about building on the base established by her predecessors as well as greater emphasis on promoting Brazilian innovation and culture

Which part of Brazil do you hail from?

I was born in Curitiba, the capital of the state of Paraná, in the south of the country. Paraná is among Brazil's main agriculture and livestock producers and exporters. It is well-known for its massive waterfalls, Iguazu Falls, right on the border with Argentina. We are also home, with neighbouring Paraguay, to the Itaipu power plant, the world's largest in hydroelectric generation. Ecotourism is very popular in the state parks, which are filled with abundant vegetation, large rivers and wild fauna. Paraná's landscapes are uniquely beautiful and should be on everyone's plan when visiting Brazil.

Could you brief our readers about the highlights of your diplomatic career and about your previous postings?

In a career that spans over three decades, I have worked for the Brazilian diplomatic service in many different capacities. I have been posted to several offices abroad, among them the Brazilian Mission to the Organization of American States in Washington, DC; the Brazilian Embassy in Ecuador; and the Brazilian Mission to the European Union in Brussels. Over the past six years, I have been in charge of bilateral relations with Brazil's South American neighbors. As Director for South America in the Brazilian Foreign Ministry, I have been at the head of a 15-strong team of diplomats tasked with accompanying Brazil's everyday political contacts with eleven countries and three regional organisms. It is a challenging but rewarding job.



Fewer people know about the very high quality of Brazilian science. I believe we can work to further expand on joint ventures in the agricultural and industrial fields, as well as develop initiatives to boost research and development

What was your first reaction when you were asked to serve in Singapore?

I was truly honored to be assigned as the new Brazilian Ambassador to Singapore. Singapore is a particularly exciting place for any Ambassador's assignment abroad. Personally, I'm fascinated by its mix of cultures, the diversity of its people, its rich history, its beautiful architecture, and also the fact that it is heir to both the Western and the Eastern cultural traditions. It is an inspiration to us all that such a young country has accomplished so much in terms of both social and economic development. I believe there is a lot to learn from Singapore's uniquely successful experience. As an added advantage, Singapore's location at the very core of Southeast Asia's economic boom gives us a privi-

leged standpoint to observe what happens in the region and, I would think, in all of the Asia-Pacific.

Brazil is far in distance, but close to the hearts of Singaporeans. As the two countries celebrate 52 years of bilateral ties, what are your wishes for the near future?

I am very privileged to be able to follow in the footsteps of Ambassador Flávio Damico, an enthusiast of the rich potential of Brazil-Singapore relations, as well as of other very talented predecessors, who have worked hard to bring our two countries closer together. It is my wish to be able to build further on that solid base in all areas: trade, business, political consultations, but also innovation and culture. Our countries

have a lot to offer to each other. I intend to work towards an ever stronger presence of Singapore in Brazil and of Brazil in Singapore.

What will be the focus of your work and activities during your term here?

Brazil, as many of you know, is an agricultural powerhouse. It is also an important industrial country. Fewer people know about the very high quality of Brazilian science. I believe we can work to further expand on joint ventures in the agricultural and industrial fields, as well as develop initiatives to boost research and development. Our countries have a lot more in common than initially meets the eye. I am convinced that both Singapore and Brazil have much to benefit from a strong bilateral partnership, in-



Ambassador Barthelmess hails from Paraná State, well-known for its massive Iguazu Falls: "Paraná's landscapes are uniquely beautiful and should be on everyone's plan when visiting Brazil."

But I would also want Singaporeans to get to know more about the other Brazil: a country of hard-working people, full of entrepreneurial spirit, open to the world, and also very active in scientific and technological research

cluding in the field of innovation. I was taking a look at some recent reports on this area and couldn't fail to notice that we seem to have many complementary strengths. It would be a shame not to take advantage of the opportunities this opens up.

Cultural diplomacy has always been a very useful tool to bring people together. How would you like to explore this?

My university major was in literature. I am a strong believer in the role of culture not only to enrich people's lives but also to bring nations closer together. Some could say this is a cliché. In my experience, it is not: I have seen the positive impact of reciprocal exposure to a foreign country's culture to inspire mutual feelings of goodwill and friendship. History abounds in examples of cultural sensitivity helping to strengthen links between nations.

How would you like Singaporeans to experience Brazil through your eyes?

Brazil is the ninth-largest economy in the world, with a nominal GDP of \$1.87 trillion U.S. dollars. Its population of 220 million, the world's fifth largest, is a particularly attractive consumer market, both for domestic and foreign goods. At 8.5 million square kilometers, the Brazilian territory is also the world's fifth in size, about twice the area of the European Union. I see Brazil as an extraordinarily resilient country, which

has risen from past difficulties, building up strength and important capabilities along the way. As a people, we try to look for answers that are not too obvious and this is an admirable quality. In addition, we are well-known for our creativity, art, culture, music, and food, not to mention our talent in football. I believe Singaporeans have a fondness for all of this, and I hope I'll be able to contribute to create many opportunities for them to enjoy Brazilian culture. But I would also want Singaporeans to get to know more about the other Brazil: a country of hard-working people, full of entrepreneurial spirit, open to the world, and also very active in scientific and technological research.

Since you are just coming from home, please tell us a little bit about youngsters in your country. What do they dream about, what are their hopes for the future? How could the youth of our two countries collaborate?

Brazilian youth, not unlike in Singapore, are very well connected and informed, have wide access to social media and actively discuss the political, economic and social challenges ahead. They are concerned with serious issues at both local and global levels, such as broadening access to health, education and justice and promoting sustainable development. At the same time, we Brazilians like to have fun, practice and watch sports, and listen to music.

Brazilian and Singaporean youngsters can collaborate in planning and thinking about how they want the world to look like in the future and discussing how they can contribute to reaching their goals. Technology is on their side. Communication across the world is incredibly easy and access to information is one click away (when it doesn't pop up on your smartphone screen). I believe that student exchanges and college programs will naturally lead to closer collaboration and the identification of unsuspected affinities.

Is this the right time to invest in Brazil? If so, why?

I have no doubt about that. Large as it is, the Brazilian economy is fast finding its way back to growth, with very positive macroeconomic indicators, the lowest interest rates ever and inflation rates that have been under control for decades. The federal government is committed to a responsible fiscal policy. The higher level of predictability is already increasing investors' confidence and driving new capital inflows. In fact, Brazil and Singapore rank at about the same level as destinations for foreign direct investment; sometimes Brazil is ahead, sometimes Singapore is. There is a vast array of new opportunities for investment in Brazil, mainly in the building of new physical infrastructure and the sustainable exploration of natural resources. Through the Brazilian Investment Partnership Program, roads, railroads, port and airport concessions, as well as mining and oil and gas industries are offered as attractive fields for incoming foreign investment.

This Embassy-supported publication is celebrating its 20th anniversary this year. Would you like to convey a message to our readers?

The magazine "It's time for Brazil in Singapore" has been an important vehicle to communicate with the local community in so many levels: from investors, to businessmen, officials, academics, researchers, diplomats and visitors from abroad. I believe it does justice to the outstanding work carried out by the Embassy's staff. It also sets the bar very high for the year ahead. I hope I'll have plenty of new interesting developments to share with you and your readers for the next edition, at the end of 2020.

Presidential Inauguration *by Carlos Brian Pheysey*

■ H.E. Minister Maliki Bin Osman attends the ceremony in Brasília



Brazil turned a new page in January 2019 when newly-elected President Jair Mesias Bolsonaro took office, in a ceremony marked by due pomp and the decisive cheering of one hundred thousand Brazilians at the nation's capital, Brasília. Dignitaries from other nations were present in a show of support and respect for another success of Brazilian democracy.

Among those present was H. E. Dr. Mohamad Maliki bin Osman, a Senior Minister of State for Defence and also for Foreign Affairs. Singapore selected this luminary from its Cabinet in view of the strength of the relations between both nations, be it in trade, investment and other spheres of bilateral interaction. On a positive note, his visit to the Presidential event marked the highest-ranking Asian presence at the occasion, an honour indeed for Brazil.

Just slightly over a year back, in late December 2017, Brazil's Inland Revenue had removed Singapore from its list of "tax havens", thus easing the matter of taxation, remittances and investment between these two countries and culminating thence in mid-2018 in the signing of an Agreement for the Avoidance of Double Taxation (ADT). Hopefully, the ongoing negotiations for a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between Singapore and the Mercosul bloc of several South American nations will bear fruit soon. One should also recall that PM Lee Hsien Loong met in late 2018 the then outgoing incumbent, President Temer, during the G20 summit in Argentina's capital.

For a more in-depth usefulness of his trip to the Presidential ceremony in Brazil



(Top): Inaugurated: President Jair Mesias Bolsonaro. (Above): Aligning ties, with Minister Ernesto Araújo (source: Dr Maliki's FB page)

in January 2019, Minister Maliki bin Osman requested a meeting with his newly-chosen counterpart, Minister Ernesto Araújo, who was to lead Brazil's foreign policy from then on. The two ministers touched on the prospects for the expected FTA outlined above and also expressed hopes that the ADT would be ratified by Brazil's Congress at some point within 2019.

By way of some background on the two authorities, Dr. Mohamad Maliki bin

Osman, a Senior Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and also for Defence, is also Mayor of the South East District of Singapore. Born in 1965, he obtained a PhD in social work. He has been Member of Parliament for the constituencies of East Coast and also Sembawang. During mid-decade years, he was also Minister of State for National Development. Though being of Malay ethnicity, he embraced the multiracial ethos of Singapore and learned to play guzheng, originally a string instrument of the Chinese ethnic group.

As for Minister Ernesto Araújo, he is a career diplomat. Born in 1967, he majored in linguistics and literature. Having joined the foreign service, he acquired expertise in Pan-American matters, from advisory to Mercosul tariffs and frameworks, to postings at both North American capitals, Ottawa and Washington.

Meeting of Minds

The meeting of minds between the two Ministers laid the groundwork for other meetings that involved the two nations in 2019, particularly that between Brazil's Minister for the Economy, Paulo Guedes, and Singapore's Deputy Prime Minister, Tharman Shanmugaratnam, on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, later that same month. That encounter and its deliberations are outlined in another section of this magazine's edition. Suffice to say that the Presidential inauguration and the presence of Minister Maliki bin Osman in early January 2019 kicked off an auspicious year for the ties between Brazil and Singapore.

A people's acclamation, outside the National Congress





President Bolsonaro (centre) and Minister Guedes (far right)



Then Deputy Prime Minister Tharman Shanmugaratnam

The Men of Davos *by Carlos Brian Pheysey*

■ Brazil's Minister for the Economy, Paulo Guedes, met with then DPM Tharman Shanmugaratnam, at the World Economic Forum

The World Economic Forum (WEF), held annually in Davos, Switzerland, has proved to be an insightful exchange of views on how to move the global economy forward. Luminaries from all over the world converge onto this alpine town to bounce off ideas and proposals to shape the new world and the late January 2019 gathering did not disappoint in that regard, though beset by matters of trade wars and other instances of fragmentation of the world order.

Paulo Guedes, Brazil's Minister for the Economy, was present at the event. He had taken office only weeks earlier, as the new President of Brazil, Jair Bolsonaro, took over the country's helm. Mr. Guedes has a track record of teaching at universities, writing for several periodicals in Brazil and founding or partnering at a few private investment entities, prior to joining the nation's new administration in 2019.

Singapore, having taken notice that Minister Paulo Guedes would be in Davos, requested a one-on-one meeting on behalf of the then Deputy Prime Minister, Tharman Shanmugaratnam, who was also set to attend the Forum. DPM Tharman has set, throughout the decade, the investment strategy of Singapore. Nearly three years ago, the G20 nominated him to head the Eminent Persons Group on Global Financial Governance, so as to review and reform the global financial framework. A few months prior to the 2019 Forum in Davos, he had already had talks with Brazilian leaders, namely the then Minister of Finance, Eduardo Guardia, and the chief executive of Brazil's Central Bank, Ilan Goldfajn.

Ministers' Dialogue

The meeting between Minister Guedes and DPM Tharman came to pass and they managed to hold their dialogue on the final day of WEF, after President Bolsonaro had already departed Davos for Brazil. It had been a busy week, as Minister Guedes spoke to companies such as Visa, IBM and Total and DPM Tharman experienced a likewise hectic string of dozens of meetings. Minister Guedes further took part in a session on investment in infrastructure and development, a luncheon promoted by the Bank of America and another session on building agile financial systems.

At various meetings, Minister Paulo Guedes alluded to Brazil's roadmap for reform of the social security system, the move towards privatisation of state enterprises, an overhaul of the nation's administrative machinery and, last but not least, a commitment to open Brazil's economy to global flows. He assured entrepreneurs that Brazil is set to offer legal security for foreign enterprises keen on investing there. Yet, he also mentioned that the opening of its foreign trade will be gradual so as to enable Brazilian businesses to survive and adjust. He declared that Brazil would double its investment in research, technology and innovation during President Bolsonaro's term.

A few months after the World Economic Forum, Mr. Tharman Shanmugaratnam was made a member of its Board of Trustees. At the same time, he ceased to be Deputy Prime Minister and was designated a Senior Minister of Singapore. He remains the Chairman of the Monetary

Authority of Singapore (MAS), the body that plays the role akin to that of Brazil's Central Bank. He also chairs various other entities that tap into his financial, organisational and international expertise.

Having served as Minister for Education more than a decade ago, he retains a commitment to upgrading students and the workforce. At the WEF he stressed the need to develop skills in people and innovative capabilities in companies. He added that Singapore is a renowned for having built skills and capabilities and this will keep the country in good stead as the world weathers a storm of trade wars, technological rivalry, populism, cleavages within nations, climate change and more. He hopes that societies will overcome inner fragmentation and find a new shared purpose and prosperity. He pointed out that Singapore has remained solid and coherent by building people strengths. The then DPM mentioned Singapore's free trade agreements and attractiveness for companies seeking a stable platform to serve Asia. Singapore is an innovation centre, a medical and pharmaceutical hub and a data-protection fortress aided by its infocomm skills.

Minister Paulo Guedes and the then Deputy Prime Minister Tharman Shanmugaratnam returned to their respective countries with the certainty that these two nations will have much more to talk in the emerging new decade as their economies become ever more entwined. Much stock is placed in the success of this bilateral investment and trade partnership that binds Brazil and Singapore together.

G20 Unites Brazil and Singapore *by Carlos Brian Pheysey*

President Jair Bolsonaro and PM Lee Hsien Loong trade insights in Osaka



(From left): A mirthful moment between President Bolsonaro and PM Lee. Powwow of world's most powerful leaders and economies

The Japanese city of Osaka hosted in late June 2019 the powwow of the world's twenty leading economies, the G20 Summit. Brazil's President was there as expected, on account of the country's giant output, and so was Singapore's Prime Minister, leader of a country invited in all editions of the summit despite its smaller GDP, underscoring Singapore's relevance in the eyes of G20 members.

The hectic pace of multilateral meetings did not preclude a talk between the leaders of both nations. President Bolsonaro and PM Lee Hsien Loong referred to recent achievements in bilateral ties, such as the signing of the agreement for the Avoidance of Double Taxation (ADT) several months earlier, a mechanism to reduce transaction costs for companies setting up operations with, or in each other's jurisdiction. There were hopes that Brazil's Congress would soon ratify the accord in late 2019 as this magazine's edition went to print.

The ADT signals that Brazil is keen to receive Singapore's business initiatives. President Bolsonaro lauded Singaporean

companies for having invested in key sectors of the Brazilian economy, such as oil and gas, plus infrastructure, real estate and other segments of the country's productive life. Reciprocating, PM Lee hoped to see more Brazilian firms setting up branch offices or other operations in Singapore. The Prime Minister also alluded to the ongoing negotiations for a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between Singapore and the Mercosul bloc of South American nations.

It's no secret that some G20 members do not see each other eye to eye, as some topics are divisive, such as trade wars. In any event, the group managed to keep negotiations moving. The forum discussed eight themes overall: global economy; trade and investment; innovation; environment and energy; employment; women's empowerment; development; and, health.

First G20 Meeting

It was the first time that a Brazilian President attended a G20 summit of leaders. Bolsonaro also held discussions with the leaders from the USA,

Germany, France, Saudi Arabia, Japan and India. He was also one of the three main speakers at the session on innovation and technology.

At the margins of G20, as an established tradition of the BRICS, the leaders of the five members met in order to reaffirm their mutual collaboration. In his brief speech to his fellow members in the grouping, the President spoke of Brazil's desire for multilateralism in the world, for reform of the World Trade Organisation, for an end to protectionism and to some nations' subsidies in agriculture, plus also for a strengthening of the BRICS as a platform for stability.

Brazil's President also met with the President of the World Bank. While in Osaka, he also received an award from the Chamber of Commerce and Industry for Japan in Brazil. Brazil and Japan have had immensely strong ties of a business, ethnic and further multi-pronged nature for over a century. In this context, President Bolsonaro also exchanged words with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, leader of the country that proved a most kind and able host of the G20 Summit.



(From left): The five BRICS leaders, at Osaka's G20. Two BRICS meet up: Brazil's Bolsonaro and India's Modi. Selfie with Brazil's President

Purveyors of Knowledge: Lemann Foundation and Singapore's Education *by Carlos Brian Pheysey*

■ Singapore's success story attracts attention of Brazil, which is reassessing and revamping its public education model



The revolutionary economic configuration of the 21st century demands a re-skilling of humankind and its relationship with the realm of production, innovation, qualifications, entrepreneurial drive and more. Gone are the certainties of the past century regarding one's set of skills, job security, static frameworks, local logistics and captive markets. The new world is far more volatile and less forgiving of outdated workforce profiles.

Brazil, in particular, needs urgently to reassess and revamp its public education model, which no longer takes into account the radical social, technological, free-market and supply-chain reorientation that is taking place globally. What's more, the public administrators in charge of building capabilities among the workforce are often out of touch with new realities, new modes and new trends and thus they don't allocate resources correctly. Instead, they pump money and efforts into old frameworks and ossified ideologies that, ultimately, don't provide the upskilling that is needed. In effect, the managers and



(Top): At the Academy of Singapore Teachers: excellence in teaching. (Above): HE Ambassador Damico addressed the visiting delegates

public administrators themselves need some serious re-training of their managerial styles.

It is in this spirit that Lemann Foundation was created in 2002 by businessman Jorge Paulo Lemann. The entity partners with universities abroad, start-ups and countries that have taken the lead in education, so as to enact a change in the mindset and horizons of Brazil's public educators, managers, teachers, officials, students and other stakeholders.

Singapore is a success story that has

caught the eye of the Lemann Foundation. The country tops the score in the PISA exams (Programme for International Student Assessment), thus there's a case to be made for the superior method of math and science teaching on this island-state. Singapore also adds now an emphasis on financial literacy, digital innovation and a pro-entrepreneurial stance, fostered in the schools so as to lead youngsters to break free from the job-for-life expectations of previous generations and older trade unionism.

Heavyweight Visit

Experts from Lemann Foundation have visited Singapore in previous years, but this time, in September, they ratcheted up the challenge, by bringing a VIP delegation of heavyweights from Brazil's state machinery: 3 Governors, 3 Vice-Governors, various Secretaries from federal state governments and even a renowned TV presenter, Luciano Huck, definitely an influencer for a huge cross-section of Brazilian viewers. Despite the short notice given, the delegates re-



Dr. Vivian Balakrishnan, Minister for Foreign Affairs

The Brazilian mission met also with the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dr. Vivian Balakrishnan who shared with the delegates the trajectory of Singapore-Brazil ties and how these may determine new levels of joint efforts, technical exchanges and bountiful investments, thus elements that will drive the new economy, the information and innovation realm and the ensuing prosperity of the people of both nations.

ceived help from the Trade & Economic section of the Embassy of Brazil toward securing key meetings with Singapore's authorities and players in the field of capacity-building of students, workers, managers and officials.

The delegates met Ambassador Flávio S. Damico, who briefed them thoroughly on the differences between Brazil's education and Singapore's quality schooling and training. The mission then held talks at the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, the think-tank that prepares the leaders of Singapore's efficient state machinery in its search for enhanced outcomes.

More directly related to actual teaching, the visit to the Academy of Singapore Teachers proved fruitful, as its Director expounded on the professional development of teachers. Here's a career path that in Singapore is not tied to the number of years spent in a classroom but rather based on merit, results, continual training and commitment to the use of new methods and technologies. Another essential meeting was led by the Minister for Education, H. E. Mr. Ong Ye Kung. The Minister elaborated on the vast resources and initiatives under his portfolio, deemed a key component of Singapore's success story.

The wealth of experience accumulated by Singapore in its trajectory that led to its joining the developed nations a quarter of a century ago is something that can be shared with other nations.

The Singapore Cooperation Enterprise is the statutory board that provides consulting abroad, by linking the experts from a given relevant branch of Singapore's government with the interested foreign party. The Brazilians had a fruitful exchange of ideas about how to bring some of that expertise and training to Brazil as a means of injecting new ideas into the upgrading of the public sector managers and professionals in various states of Brazil.

Training of a competitive workforce and management cadres is a desirable outcome, but how does it fit into a country's long-term targets? The delegation heard from the Centre for Strategic Futures, under the purview of the Prime



HE Ong Ye Kung, Minister for Education

Minister's Office, about what Singapore aims to achieve decades from now and the preconditions that will have to be met for those aims to turn into reality, in a holistic all-of-government approach.

It is from this wider perspective encompassing many Ministries, national initiatives and translational collaborations, that the Brazilian mission met also with the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Singapore, Dr. Vivian Balakrishnan. The latter shared with the delegates the trajectory of Singapore-Brazil ties and how these may determine new levels of joint efforts, technical exchanges and bountiful investments, thus elements that will drive the new economy, the information and innovation realm and the ensuing prosperity of the people of both nations.

Private Sector Revenue

The private sector will generate the revenues that will enable this transformation, but the public sector will need fine-tuning in order to direct society and business into a sustainable path. The mission from Brazil held talks therefore with the Head of Civil Service and Permanent Secretary for Strategy (under the Prime Minister's Office), Mr. Leo Yip. Likewise, more insights were shared with the delegates by Permanent Secretary Loh Khum Yean, from the Public Service Division, tasked with delivering quality from within the public administration circles.

The delegation returned to Brazil thus with a far better understanding of what nation-building entails. Both teachers and authorities will need new skills and new methods geared toward innovation and efficacy of outcomes. Citizens, businesses and government in its totality will need to come together for a drastic change in human resources to occur, on a journey that Singapore can assist by virtue of its excellence in education scores and excellence in governance.



The mission met HE Chan Chun Sing, Minister for Trade & Industry (5th from right)

'Santos Export' Mission: Channelling Efforts into Ports *by Carlos Brian Pheysey*

■ Delegation from Santos Export, a private sector forum, examined the Singapore model for port management and met leading maritime technology and service providers



Senator Wellington Fagundes, Congressman Júnior Bozella and Ambassador Flávio S. Damico

Ports in Brazil have long been hobbled by bottlenecks that hamper the country's exports. A lack of automation and innovation, along with yet timid privatisations and an institutional framework still short of some benchmarks of the 21st century, have dogged the logistics sector, prompting thus much urgent soul-searching among public and private decision makers.

Among numerous efforts by various entities to break this gridlock, a private-sector forum was set up, termed "Santos Export" for taking as its centrepiece the country's main port, Santos, but then extending its deliberations to other Brazilian ports farther south and north as well. Over the years, Santos Export has been examining successful stories of global ports, often staging missions to visit them with a view to gleaming ideas that work.

Thus, in preparation for its October forum, in September a "Santos Export" delegation headed to Singapore, comprising a veritable Who's Who of Brazil's ports: associations of terminals and of port operators, the Ministry of Infrastructure, the ANTAQ (national water-

ways board), various private service providers and other executives and experts likewise. The meetings were arranged under the auspices of the Enterprise Singapore branch office in São Paulo, along with help from the Trade Section of the Embassy of Brazil in Singapore.

First and foremost in the programme stood PSA, the company that operates the world's largest transshipment hub, rendering Singapore as one of the top-most global ports. There are no two ways about its slogan: "PSA: the World's Port of Call". From its base at the confluence of the Indian and Pacific Oceans, it has acquired terminals in other continents, leading to hopes that someday it shall operate a terminal in Brazil, thus easing congestion and imparting lessons in digital automation and efficiency.

The tour went on to visit the MPA, the Maritime and Port Authority. Not only does this statutory board set the framework for land leases and all regulatory parameters but it also plays a key role in capacity-building through its MPA Academy, which runs a wide array of courses for technicians and specialists, thus ad-

ressing a key HR need beyond any digital wonders.

Speaking of digital breakthroughs, the delegates were treated to a technical presentation at CrimsonLogic, a company that has provided numerous e-Government solutions to statutory boards on the island and has launched itself globally as a provider to other nations requiring electronic automation of services, infrastructure, trade and other fronts.

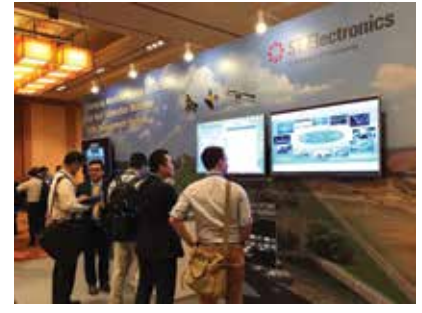
The Enterprise Singapore also scheduled a string of presentations by automation providers, e-commerce outfits and trading companies that have gone on-line, all within a morning of briefings administered at the Embassy of Brazil itself.

In the afternoon, the delegates visited ST Engineering, which acquainted them with electronic systems, sensors and infocomm links between vessels, ports, technicians, officials and freight operators.

Pier71: Innovations and Start-ups

Another morning saw the mission at the Pier71, a hub that acts as accelerator for maritime innovations and start-ups. Once more, young entrepreneurs pitched to the Brazilians their e-platforms and analytical tools designed for the fine-tuning, swiftness and intelligent allocation of shipments, dockings, storage, pricing, etc. The range presented catered thus to a wide spectrum of needs of the private-sector members of the mission.

Yet, for all the talk about digital applications, ports also contend with physical constraints, land allocation and a need for optimisation of areas. A key driver for the planning of such spaces is Surbana Jurong, a consulting firm closely linked to the Singaporean public sector and geared toward maximising infrastruc-



(Top row from left): Discussions at the Maritime and Port Authority (MPA). CrimsonLogic crafts eGovernment solutions for Singapore and beyond. ST Electronics: linking maritime communications systems. (second row from left): A start-up makes its pitch at Pier71. At Surbana Jurong, under the watchful gaze of Lee Kuan Yew from a corner

ture, rendering it into a vibrant ecosystem for economic transformation of a region. Master-planning under SJ ensures that an industrial park attached to a logistics hub is shaped to become attractive and come alive through links to a planned satellite town, seamless transportation, relevant tech companies, corporate services, scaled-up residential spaces, retail malls, lifestyle options, entertainment, schools, parks and more features that make a port's hinterland a pulsating value-added economic engine and community home.

The Brazilians were keen on seeing such a marvel at Jurong Island, an amalgamation of seven islets through landfills, nowadays the world's third main refinery hub, even though Singapore has not a drop of oil or gas. Massive artificial caverns were dug underground for storage, while above ground vessels dock at every side of the island. Arriving at the storage facility of the Dutch company Vopak Terminals, the delegates were pleased to be addressed in their own national language, since the operation's

Managing Director lived himself in Brazil, got to know Santos well and mastered thus a degree of proficiency in Portuguese.

A final meeting brought the mission to Portek International, nowadays a subsidiary of Japan's Mitsui & Co. Portek re-scales existing cranes, adds to their mobility or automation, ships them or discards them according to needs and even manages a few yard operations abroad. The mission ended with the delegates attending Brazil's 197th National Day celebration at the Fullerton Bay Hotel, duly organised by the Embassy.

More than about technology, the delegates heard from operators in Singapore, whether at ST Engineering, PSA or Vopak Terminals, the urgent need to change Brazil's port system to be more business-friendly, less bureaucratic in its concessions, with clearer tax frameworks, balanced labour rules, training at all levels, foreign technology and capital, plus the much-awaited pension-reform bill that went to Congress thereafter with a view to balancing the nation's books. With more transparent and seamless port operations, Brazil's economy can only take off and scale new heights.



PSA, the world's top transshipment port operator, opens its doors to Brazil's team

New Dawn for Maranhão State *by Carlos Brian Pheysey*

■ The visiting mission was led by its Senator Roberto Rocha, who wants to draw investments in capital and technology into the state's infrastructure and economy



São Luís, the state capital

It is not often that one hears from the state of Maranhão, yet this is set to change sharply, in no small part by virtue of the drive by its Senator Roberto Rocha to implement ambitious changes in that state along the northern coast of Brazil.

Located at the point where the arid Northeast meets the lush forest close to the mouth of the Amazon river, Maranhão is known for its uncanny beauty, its historical legacies, its miscegenation, but above all as the outlet for much of the production in north-central Brazil of aluminium, iron ore, soybeans, babaçu oil, rice, cassava, cotton, cattle meat, eucalyptus wood, natural gas, etc.

Senator Rocha came to Singapore in May 2019 with a view to gleaning lessons from Singapore's excellence in governance and with the aim of drawing investments in capital and technology into his home state's infrastructure and economy, be it in logistics, manufacturing or tourism facilities.



The dunes and lagoons of Lençóis Maranhenses

Central to his plans is ZEMA, the Export Zone of Maranhão, a coastal jurisdiction set up to foster the industrial processing of primary goods before they are shipped abroad. The bane of Maranhão has been its role as a coastal entrepôt for commodities without ever experiencing value-added activities that will boost revenue, jobs and more. The port of Itaqui, the second deepest worldwide and located on the island that houses the capital São Luís, will



Maranhão state, in northern Brazil

see thus an industrial district attached to its rear area, already receiving input from China's CCCC company. In this manner, the port would become far better prepared to make use of its proximity to the Panama Canal and also to the North Atlantic markets.

The port of Itaqui could do with an injection of expertise and capital from PSA, Singapore's star operator of one of the largest container ports worldwide and



Senator Roberto Rocha, from Maranhão, in Congress

holder of a stake in ports in 4 continents, therefore discussions were held at PSA's headquarters. Senator Rocha also toured its Pasir Panjang terminal, a fully automated marvel of efficiency to behold.

Further talks were held at GIC (formerly the Government of Singapore Investment Corporation), the holder of Singapore's reserves for infrastructure and other large-scale projects. At both GIC and PSA, the executives from Singapore's side expressed a desire to see Brazil's pension reform pushed through Congress this year, as this would enable the unlocking of resources for a re-balancing of Brazil's economy and confidence-building for investors.

In this respect, Senator Rocha also met the heads of Singaporean branch offices of Brazilian conglomerates, in order to understand their views and their requests for business-friendly changes in Brazilian legislation enacted by Congress. The Senator also helms the Brazil-Singapore Parliamentary Group, hence his paramountcy in leading bilateral talks and seeing that action is taken. In that capacity he also toured Singapore's Parliament, where insightful discussions took place regarding recent and future relations between both nations.

There is yet another front that interests Senator Roberto Rocha and his state, namely tourism dividends that can stem from novelties and improvements. Maranhão has the beauty of its shoreline, but the infrastructure is sadly lagging.

Interest in Casino

Singapore is home to the integrated resort called MBS (Marina Bay Sands), a wondrous complex housing a casino, hotel, mall, a SkyPark high up, and more. This casino complex has become one of the key

Central to Senator Rocha's plans is ZEMA, the Export Zone of Maranhão, which is set up to foster the industrial processing of primary goods before they are shipped abroad... The port of Itaqui, the second deepest worldwide and located on the island that houses the capital São Luís, will see thus an industrial district attached to it



The port of Itaqui, second deepest harbour worldwide



Singapore Port - PSA runs the world's top transshipment port

pillars in generating revenue for Singapore. It is hoped that MBS casts an eye on Maranhão as a prospective location for a similar resort, thus talks were held to that effect.

Brazil used to have casinos in the state of Rio de Janeiro before the war, but the post-war democratic regime phased them out in 1946. Senator Rocha hopes to bring them back to life, but this time in his home state of Maranhão. He was keen on Singapore's model of curbing prospective social ills by barring any easy access to the general population and to criminal syndicates. This protective integrated resort could be a formula that would appeal to Brazil's Congress, which otherwise tends

to legislate against gambling. The Senator was briefed further in the matter by the Casino Regulatory Authority, of Singapore, where he learned more about taxation, land allocation, licensing and other matters ancillary to casino operations.

Senator Roberto Rocha completed thus his itinerary in Singapore with a better understanding and the right contacts to institute changes in the sources of revenue for the state of Maranhão, be they in logistics, industry or leisure options. This northern state may be rendered therefore poised to enter the coming new decade in a much better shape to face the challenges posed by the future.

Back to School: Singapore Hosts Lemann Foundation Delegates *by Carlos Brian Pheysey*

■ A 20-strong team of experts and educators from various parts of Brazil came to study Singapore's education system



The team visits the National University of Singapore

The Lemann Foundation was set up in Brazil with the aim of fostering better outcomes in education. Schooling ought to be a pillar of society and of the nation's economy, yet the reality is that schools in Brazil have quite not kept up with the upheavals observed in the era of globalisation. Singapore, in turn, is a country that can teach many lessons on how to stay ahead of the game in the domain of shaping the future generations of citizens so as to become themselves economic agents for change.

With a view to grasping what Singapore is doing right in that sector, the Foundation sent in January 2019 a twenty-strong team of experts and educators from various parts of Brazil to glimpse and partner with some of the marvels of Singapore's structuring of its top-notch education effort. The logistics of the mission were arranged by the office in São Paulo of the statutory



Global education: teacher João Paulo Araújo, at the Enterprise Singapore office

board "Enterprise Singapore", a unit in charge of launching abroad Singapore's projects, business, exports, finance and consulting.

The Brazilian delegates met Ambassador Flávio S. Damico, who held a briefing for them on the stellar performance of the local education system and what

facets thereof Brazil could consider for its own realities. A one-size-fits-all approach may not be suitable, but some items such as the efficacious teaching of mathematics that has made Singapore famous might be implemented with relative ease in the Brazilian context. Some other formats are tougher to secure, for instance if Singapore's statutory boards were to offer their consulting services at a fee, thus necessitating the future allocation of outlays not easily secured within Brazil's budgeting processes.

Another factor that stands out is the standardisation achieved in Singapore towards a nationwide curriculum and a single-venue location for teacher training. Brazil is trying to implement a BNCC (Brazil's National Common Curricular Base), but this is an endeavour that takes time till it percolates to all stakeholders, sometimes reluctant ones. The country is too vast for a single-

A one-size-fits-all approach may not be suitable, but some items such as the efficacious teaching of mathematics that has made Singapore famous might be implemented with relative ease in the Brazilian context. Some other formats are tougher to secure...

point training location, but much can be done to reduce the wide disparity in teachers and schools within a same municipality, often stemming from lack of coordination.

Investment in Human Resources

Bereft of natural resources, Singapore was forced to invest in human resources, translated into a firm allocation of national efforts and funds into schooling. Singapore recently ranked first in all three dimensions of PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment, an exam under the OECD), i.e. mathematics, science and reading. A key thrust that ensures such results is the investment in teacher training and career progression, a topic that drew much attention from the Brazilians.

During their week here, the team visited the National Institute of Education (the unit that moulds better teachers), the National University of Singapore, the Singapore Polytechnic, the Institute of Technical Education and two schools, Farrer Park Primary School and Fairfield Methodist School. Thus, the delegates managed to gain insights into the full spectrum, from basic education up to tertiary studies. What's more, the mission also heard briefings from start-ups providing tech solutions, such as KooBits, Neeuro, Mindscratcher and, finally, I Can Read. Once more underscoring the crucial role played by teachers, Educare, a teachers' co-operative, likewise addressed the Brazilians. The delegates even had a chance to chat with pupils and parents and hear their views.

Teachers in Singapore are selected from the top 30% scorers among students and offered a fine and rewarding career, with promotions based on effort and merit, an aspect that is sorely lacking in that career in Brazil, marked by length of service and thus not conducive to an individual's initiative, upgrading and adoption of innovation tools.

Singapore stands out in its results by reason of some decisive factors: strict and constant assessments and metrics;



Jorge Paulo Lemann: visionary founder of Lemann Foundation

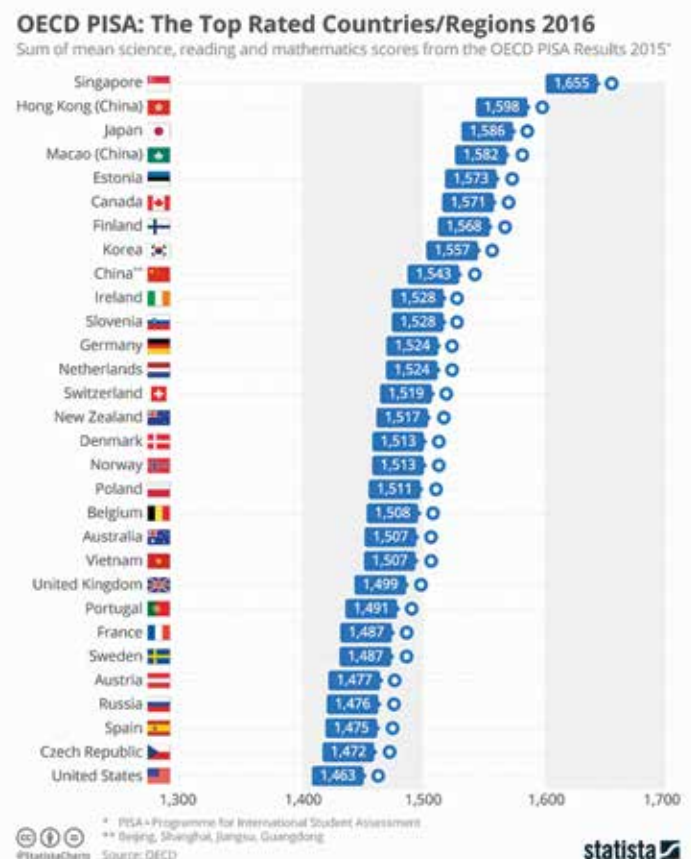
a total teacher commitment; meritocracy to filter good and bad teachers and students; last but not least, a constant effort to implement innovations, be they technical or not.

Thus, only the best-scoring professionals are taken a step further and given constant training and incentives. A teacher in Singapore stays with the same school, unlike teachers in Brazil, constrained by a 16-hour set of classes per week and thus compelled to teach at various schools so as to make ends meet. Additionally, recognition of a teacher's merit and resulting pay increments lead to renewed commitment.

Finally, the never-ending effort to break new records leads Singaporean schools to evolve constantly, now compounded by a drive to steer away from rote learning and introduce critical thinking, teamwork, digital skills and more, for an enhanced and future-ready workforce. It also helps that Asian parents get heavily involved in nurturing their children's performance, whereas in Brazil a conducive fam-

ily bolster and home ambience are not always present.

Above all, a strong interaction, coordination and integration between the Ministry of Education, schools, teacher training, society and industry is paramount for the success of the education enterprise. If these various pillars don't act in cohesive fashion, an assured randomness ensues, with deterioration of results for all. It is not enough for a few individuals to perform well in educating their cohorts, while other peers are at a loss in a bureaucratic maze or lost in ideological musings about the roots of failure. There has to be a firm guiding hand coming from above, from the authorities and institutes that will shape public policies and the minds of the nation. This centrality of the role of leaders was duly noted by the Brazilian mission as it prepared to return to Brazil to impart experiences gleaned from this journey.



Retail-cum-Tech Therapy *by Carlos Brian Pheysey*

■ CDL Salvador Chamber of Shopowners want to tap into latest retail technology



The city of Salvador: a retail hub in its own right

The world of retail no longer consists only of fancy displays and jazzy promotions. It has gone beyond and embraced the new possibilities provided by IT, from algorithms that recognise consume behaviour to the vast array of convenience enabled by e-commerce. The sector also encompasses the dizzying panoply of means of payment made ever easier and seamless by the day.

With such innovations in mind, the Chamber of Shopowners of Salvador city, known as CDL Salvador for short, chose Singapore as a hub to be examined, given the Asian city's advances in fintech, AI, virtual reality, blockchain solutions, etc. Needless to say, Singapore is also a mecca for retail addicts, fashionistas, foodies and others who come from afar to sample its offerings.

March 2019 saw the arrival of the Brazilian delegates, many of them leaders in Salvador's range of malls and the city's overall shopping scene, but chiefly from the fashion domain. Accordingly, the Commercial Section of the Embassy of Brazil on the island arranged for a string of cutting-edge meetings to suit the needs of the team landing in town.

The schedule ranged across a suite of tech companies: Jing King Tech Holdings, OutSystems Singapore, Adilam Pte. Ltd.,

Fomo Pay and also Kratos. The IT experts at these outfits presented digital projects in domains such as e-payments, blockchain data, back-office solutions and more. They also heard from the delegates about peculiarities of retail in Salvador and in Brazil at large and the specific needs of



(From left): Alberto Nunes, President of CDL Salvador. Leonardo Teles, head of the CDL Salvador mission



that market, in many ways very distinct in framework from Singapore and yet with many useful parallel experiences to be shared in common.

Tech-savvy Customers

Dovetailing from that desire to understand existing frameworks, the mission also requested to meet with the Singapore Retailers Association. The body serves the purpose of upgrading the skills and productivity of the retail sector, which used to be an artisanal activity only a few decades ago. With demanding, tech-savvy and quality-obsessed customers ramping up the pressure, the retail sector in Singapore needed a change and the associa-

tion thus has provided training to produce smart outcomes in customer relations, technology tools, fancier shop lay-outs, new means of reaching out and so on.

The delegates also had a chance to exchange views with the management of The Paragon, one of the flagship malls along Singapore's prime strip of glitzy shop windows, Orchard Road. The executives of the mall briefed CDL Salvador on some of the innovations, technologies and promotion strategies introduced that have made the shopping experience unique in the realm of Singapore's bustling life.

Turnkey Solutions

Pushing the envelope further, the mission also visited the hubs where tech developers, angel investors and other interested parties mingle with a view to turning science into start-up businesses and marketable outcomes. Block 71 and The Hangar are the sort of venues fostering incubator spaces for start-ups, where inputs collide and bear fruit, where people discuss new proposals freely with anyone willing to consider them, where ideas bounce off one another until a deal is closed and applied science becomes technology ready for a market hungry for turnkey solutions.

Brazil itself has a legion of competent digital experts that can assist the country's retailers, yet a fresh perspective from abroad is always welcome. Singapore, in particular, is a model for its lack of much of the red tape that dogs businesses in other parts of the world. Free from being hobbled by such encumbrances, Singapore's retail sector, tech sector, start-ups, service providers, consumers and other stakeholders interact in rich ways, competing, co-operating, building, innovating and achieving breakthroughs that meet the needs of all parties, players and end-users. The wealth of interactions and ideas engendered can benefit malls and shops in Salvador, wider Brazil and the world of consumers found across all continents in this brave new globalised world of ours. The future is at hand for consumers and societies at large.

Reiterating the I-word: Innovation and Brazil's INPI

by Patricia de Mello Franco

■ Brazil's National Institute of Industrial Property (INPI) was an active participant in this year's IP Week@SG and visited the key agents in Singapore's innovation ecosystem

It is a well-known fact that innovation and intangible assets, including intellectual property (IP), are, and will continue to be, two of the main drivers to the global economic growth. In the last 40 years, the amount of investment dedicated to intangible assets, including patents, trademarks, copyrights and other forms of IP, has increased at a much faster pace than the tangible assets (such as land, vehicles, equipment, and inventory). In fact, today, the intangibles are estimated to account for more than 50% of the companies' value.

Recognised Innovation Hub

Asia has been a fundamental agent in this transformation. The continent is responsible for four out of ten dollars invested in R&D in the world, and six out of ten new IP registrations. In Singapore, where geographical size is a constraint, growth will certainly be propelled by intangibles such as IP. The country has been consolidating its position as a worldwide recognised innovation hub and a go-to place for entrepreneurs to protect their intellectual property. It has been ranked top in Asia for IP protection, rule of law and international arbitration.

No wonder Singapore has been hosting one of the largest IP conferences in the world, the IP Week. The event has been organized by the Intellectual Property Office of Singapore (IPOS) and, this year, hosted 4000 participants from more than 45 countries, comprising of representatives of SMEs, MNCs, startups, legal/patent firms, entrepreneur, and IP offices from around the world, including the Brazilian National Institute of Industrial Property, INPI. The Brazilian delegation was inspired by a series of panels and presentations about intellectual property, economic growth, technology and innovation. The presi-



The president of INPI, Dr. Cláudio Vilar Furtado, participated in a joint discussion panel, with representatives from Russia and Turkey

dent of INPI, Dr. Cláudio Vilar Furtado, participated in a joint discussion panel, with representatives from Russia and Turkey, entitled "Emerging Markets: The Innovation and IP Playbook".

Dr. Furtado laid out some of INPI's main projects, such as the effort in reducing patent backlog, which has been building up due to the explosion in the number of complex orders in the last 20 years. The institute aims to combat the accumulation of patent applications through a newly designed process that prioritizes examination requirements. The goal is to reduce the patent backlog by 80% in two years, reaching an average decision period of two years.

Objectives for Trademarks

In the field of trademarks, INPI's objective is to speed up the examination and registration process. The improvement can already be seen: according to Dr. Furtado, the average registration time went from 28 months in 2017 to 11 months as of April 2019. Brazil's accession to the Madrid Protocol in May 2019 will certainly contribute to expedite the process even further. The Protocol opens up the possibility for Brazilian companies to register their brands faster and at a low cost in 120 countries simultaneously.

The third project concerns the development of advanced tools that will

facilitate and improve the interaction between users and the institute – the "IP Digital". The project will provide digital solutions to schedule meetings, look up a customer service guide, hold audio-visual communication between institutions, provide virtual assistance through chat-bots, and build interface with other government digital platforms.

INPI has signed two Memorandums of Understanding, one with IPOS and another with INTA, the International Trademark Association. The first one aims to bring the two institutions closer together and strengthen the cooperation between them, by sharing good practices, promoting technological exchange and, ultimately, deepening the contribution of IP to the innovation economy in both countries. The second recognizes the importance of intellectual property for economic and social development and creates the framework for cooperation on activities such as training programs, information exchange, joint studies, meetings and seminars, and others.

As part of the mission post-conference meetings, INPI's delegation had the opportunity to meet with the top representatives of Brazilian companies based in Singapore, such as BB Securities, Braskem, BRF, Embraer, Petrobras, Tramontina and Vale. The group discussed about the current scenario for intellectual property in Brazil and prospects for the future after the changes – for example, the accession to the Madrid Protocol and the implementation of innovative tools in IP registration and examination – take place.

During their visit, the president of INPI and the Head of International Relations of the institute, Mr Leopoldo Nascimento Coutinho, held talks with some

of the key agents in the Singaporean innovation ecosystem. The delegation first met with Fraunhofer Singapore, institution affiliated with the German Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft, which promotes close interaction between leading technology research entities with potential buyers of their innovations in different industries. Fraunhofer's focus has been on visual computing - such as virtual reality and augmented reality - as a result of research at universities and other centers. The institution's director, Wolfgang Müller-Wittig, shared with INPI how Fraunhofer Singapore identifies, funds and commercializes academic projects with high patenting and commercialization potential.

A*STAR Visit

At A*STAR - Agency for Science, Technology and Research - the delegation met with the Executive Vice President, Ho Cheng Huat. This government agency fosters, supports and coordinates public funded research, focused on innovative technologies applied to the biomedical (pharmaceuticals, nutrition, medical technology and biotechnology), physics and engineering sciences, acting as a bridge between universities/research institutes and the industry. A*STAR leads a diverse ecosystem which develops a number of initiatives through private-public partnerships.

Its activities start from the elaboration of research lines - which must be in accordance with the strategic planning of the Singaporean government - to the structuring of laboratories, granting of funding and scholarships and commercial advising. The agency offers its partners an extensive patent portfolio marketed by its commercial division, A*ccelerate.

At the meeting with the WIPO Singapore Office (WSO), INPI executives held talks with Denis Croze, Executive Director, and Peter Willmot, Project Director, who highlighted the most relevant initiatives carried out by the WIPO of-

fice in Singapore. WSO conducts activities for IP culture dissemination in the entire ASEAN region and co-sponsors events in partnership with IPOS, such as this year's copyright seminar and the IP Week. The parties envisaged that the WSO, perhaps in partnership with the WIPO office in Rio de Janeiro, could support meetings between representatives of Latin American and ASEAN countries

vision for the Ministry of Justice, Simon Seow, who mentioned the three main points of interest of the Singapore government in the field of IP: (1) promoting the commercialization of IP; (2) expanding the number of IP experts; and (3) encouraging innovation and entrepreneurship. Seow stressed the importance of IP registration and commercialization in protecting innovations. Commercialization, in addition to yielding financial return that is eventually reinvested in R&D, makes innovation better known and thus hinders the violation of its protection.

In a meeting with the Industry Relations Office at the National University of Singapore (NUS), its Senior Vice Director of IP Administration and Marketing, Ma Mun Thoh, explained that the office provides a variety of services and solutions for university researchers and entrepreneurs, such as IP registration guidance, research and projects commercialization; support in partnerships with the industry, legal consultancy, amongst others. The goal, of course, is to ensure that innovations developed at the university can be commercialized and generate value.

The mission was considered very successful by all parties involved. Besides signing two MOUs, Dr. Furtado was able to portray to broad audiences from Asia and other coun-

tries INPI's vision of a modern intellectual property management system, in tune with the goals of a growing emerging country. IP Week's various plenary sessions, as well as visits to companies participating in the Singapore innovation ecosystem, have provided numerous ideas that will enrich the discussions already underway in Brazil on the new challenges of intellectual property. Finally, the prospects for collaboration with Singapore on all issues related to economic growth, innovation, intellectual property and intangible asset creation will certainly further enrich the bilateral relationship in all its facets.



(Top): INPI has signed two Memorandums of Understanding, one with IPOS and another with INTA, the International Trademark Association. (Above): The delegation also met with Fraunhofer Singapore, institution affiliated with the German Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft

to discuss relevant IP issues.

At Deloitte, executives met with Keyo Soo Earn, IP valuation specialist, a topic of special interest to INPI in this mission. Keyo discussed methodologies for calculating the value of intangible assets used by the consulting and auditing firm in mergers, acquisitions and litigations, and how IP rights could be accepted as collateral for transactions, if well assessed.

Singapore's Main Points of Interest for IP

The INPI mission held talks with the Director of the Intellectual Property Di-

ENAP: Setting High Standards on Public Administration's Best Practices *by Patricia de Mello Franco*

■ Meetings and exchanges of ideas between Brazil's National School of Public Administration (ENAP) representatives and Singapore specialists in public administration have benefitted both countries

In the quest to shape public services to face the challenges of the present days, the International Institute of Administrative Sciences (IIAS) aims to produce and disseminate relevant knowledge on public governance and to enable collaborative and strategic projects among its members. In 2019, IIAS held its annual flagship conference in Singapore, and the president of the Brazilian National School of Public Administration (ENAP), Mr. Diogo Godinho, took advantage of this enriching forum to participate in discussions on the standards of best practices in public management.

Organized in partnership with the Centre for Public Administration of the Nanyang Technological University (NTU), a leading Singaporean institution that provides policy-oriented education and cutting-edge research on public governance, the 2019 IIAS Conference had as main theme "Effective, Accountable, and Inclusive Governance". In the opening remarks, Deputy Prime Minister Heng Swee Keat highlighted that the basic principle in Singapore's governance is to provide all people with means to realize their potential, whatever their origin or starting point in life. He also stressed that good governance is essential for the development of all countries, especially in a context of rapid change and increasing complexity.

On the verge of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, the countries are experiencing a unique convergence of the physical and digital worlds, which means a huge potential to transform and realign our economies and societies, but this could also cause disruptions to citizens. It will require unparalleled efforts for a close collaboration between the public and private sectors to ensure that technological innovation continues to act for the benefit of the society.

Meetings with...

On the sidelines of the conference, the president of ENAP had the opportunity to meet with some of the most relevant specialists in public policy. At the Centre for Strategic Futures (CSF), a think tank linked to the Prime Minister's Office that develops new foresight methodologies and produces long-term futures re-

At the Civil Service College (CSC), ENAP's counterpart in Singapore, Mr. Godinho met with Michele Leow, Deputy Director of CSC International. They discussed the training programs promoted by both institutions to develop public administration professionals' skills and how to prioritize complex demands from various segments of the public sector, a challenge that both CSC and ENAP have

in common. The representatives of CSC and ENAP shared with each other their views on the best practices in assessing the efficacy of the educational institutes, such as key performance indicators (KPIs). As prospects for the future, they considered collaborating in the development of a leadership program.

Lastly, the president of ENAP visited the prestigious Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy (LKYSPP), where he met with its Dean, Dr. Danny Quah, and the Director for Executive Education, Dr. Francesco Mancini. Among other topics, they examined possible initiatives of partnership with the private sector and international organizations, to increase the diversity of the programs already offered by both institutions. Furthermore, Mr. Godinho expressed his interest in sending Brazilian civil servants to attend some of the most prominent courses at LKYSPP,

the program "Futures thinking and scenario planning", which aims to prepare policymakers to anticipate change in complex environments.

The series of encounters between the leader of the Brazilian civil service school and some of the most renowned Singaporean specialists in the matter has surely benefited both countries. The amount of exchanged ideas has enhanced the knowledge, of both sides, on how to tackle a large array of issues every government in the world faces.



(Clockwise from top left): President of ENAP, Mr. Diogo Godinho; Dean of the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, Dr. Danny Quah, and a peek into Singapore's Civil Service College

search, Mr. Godinho met with Liana Tang, Deputy Head and Deputy Director of the Centre. The main topics of the conversation included the challenges posed to public administration by technological, demographic and climate changes. With regard to Government to Government (G2G) programs, the Deputy Head shared with Mr. Godinho the experience of Singapore in reducing redundancy in public service work through well-structured coordination mechanisms between the various agencies.

FIRJAN's Quest *by Carlos Brian Pheysey*

■ The Federation of Industries of the State of Rio de Janeiro (FIRJAN) also searches for innovation breakthroughs for its member companies

The various manufacturers and enterprises of the State of Rio de Janeiro have a home in FIRJAN, the Federation of Industries of the State of Rio de Janeiro. The entity plays a major role in not just representing the interests of industry but also in raising productivity levels through constant skill-building, courses, workshops, lectures and other mechanisms to introduce new benchmarks, technologies and innovation strategies into company operations in that key state of Brazil, often abbreviated to RJ.

A key thrust of this upgrading effort is the attempt to assimilate some of the game-changing Industry 4.0 transformations taking place in various

innovation, technology and automation and likewise a concerted effort to set new standards, productivity gains and learning trajectories within enterprises.

Technical Linkages

Ms. Emmeline Lam, Senior Director of the Global Business Group at the SMF, hosted the delegates and briefed them on the technological linkages between the Federation and the spectrum of industries in Singapore. She also highlighted the centrality of the overall effort at SMF to impart a sense of urgency toward new heights in innovation among its affiliated manufacturing companies.

The Brazilians were additionally briefed at the Enterprise Singapore,

One can picture technology-driven companies from Rio de Janeiro, whether large or small, actually taking an interest in getting a foothold in Asia by way of Singapore, naturally

nations pursuing cutting-edge R&D and new future horizons in manufacturing. FIRJAN thus sends its managers abroad with a view to capturing some of these insights so as to partner with them and share them with businesses statewide in RJ. Two experts toured therefore Southeast Asia in October 2019, as part of that quest for new technological dimensions.

Mr. Maurício Ogawa is General Manager for Technology and Innovation at Firjan Senai, i.e. the learning hub of that federation. Mr. Eric Cardona Romani is Coordinator for Research, Development and Innovation at the Institute Firjan Senai for Technology, Automation and Simulation. As a scientist, he has helped develop new fronts in the realm of new materials.

The two technical experts contacted the Embassy of Brazil and obtained from its Trade & Economic team that a meeting be set up for late October with the Singapore Manufacturing Federation. The SMF is akin to FIRJAN in many facets, as it too has committees geared toward

the statutory board that fosters the launching of Singaporean companies onto the world stage, thus globalising the island yet further. Enterprise Singapore already has an office in São Paulo that can lead to more partnerships between technology start-ups, innovation-led businesses and future-ready industries between both Singapore and Brazil.

Likewise, the two delegates met with the team from another statutory board, the EDB (Economic Development Board). EDB seeks out foreign enterprises abroad and invites them to set up operations in Singapore, so as to develop vibrant clusters, inject capital, create jobs and, above all, foster a convergence of ideas, technologies and benchmarks that will propel Singapore into the future. One can picture technology-driven companies from Rio de Janeiro, whether large or small, actually taking an interest in getting a foothold in Asia by way of Singapore, naturally.

Further that same week, the mission was to meet with Prof. Antônio Hélio Castro Neto, a Brazilian physicist in Singapore



INFORMA, FORMA, TRANSFORMA

FIRJAN informs, gives form and transforms



Mr. Maurício Ogawa: introducing Industry 4.0



Prof. Antônio Hélio Castro Nero delivers a presentation



The Centre for Advanced 2D Materials, at NUS



(centre) Prof. Ricardo Vinicius Bof de Oliveira



FIRJAN's heritage quarters: now a training and cultural centre

who heads the Centre for Advanced 2D Materials at NUS, the National University of Singapore. He has masterminded Singapore's R&D into graphene, a unique new material comprising a one-atom-thick layer that proves to be ultra-strong. Given its electric and magnetic conductivity properties, graphene shall find applications in the field of semiconductors, touch screens, solar-panel cells, batteries, etc. Unable to be present at this meeting, Prof. Castro Neto had his partner, Prof. Ricardo Vinicius Bof de Oliveira, discuss and share ideas with Mr. Cardona, seeing as both are experts in new materials. In fact, Prof. Castro Neto had delivered himself a presentation just months earlier in Rio de Janeiro, thus making new connections with his Brazilian peers while in that state capital.

The Brazilian experts exchanged insights on crafting science for the future needs of Singapore and Brazil and on making scientific findings commercially viable. The group upheld the need to link up industry, capital,

universities and institutes for swifter and smoother outcomes in science and technology that are immediately and seamlessly applied into business and society, bypassing thus bureaucratic or institutional hurdles or biases often raised against science links with business, whose sources of finance are so critical for the viability of new discoveries.

Mr. Ogawa and Mr. Cardona Romani then returned to Brazil to begin acting on the pointers raised during their discussions in Southeast Asia. The matter of automation and technology overall has become a pressing one, as companies in Brazil, Singapore and everywhere strive to remain competitive in a globalised business environment. It stands to reason that substantial gains in industrial productivity shall be derived from the application of new concepts, new materials, new tools and new breakthroughs, wherever innovation can be sourced and harnessed for the betterment of manufacturing processes.

2DM: New Start-up by Brazilians Makes Waves, or rather, Graphene in Singapore *by Carlos Brian Pheysey*



CEO Patrick Teyssonneyre, a Brazilian now in charge

As a spin-off of the R&D work developed at the Centre for Advanced 2D Materials, at the campus of NUS, a small business enterprise has emerged that proves promising. The start-up 2DM (or rather 2D Materials Pte. Ltd.), founded just a few years back, is making graphene in commercially viable quantities. This high-tech, ultra-light ingredient will enhance the conductivity and tenacity properties of composites, coatings, lubricants, batteries and more. From carbon-based substances, 2DM is able to achieve high-purity graphene, i.e. fewer than ten layers of graphene in each plate, for client industries demanding reliable quality and volumes. The outfit's homepage has an order form for powder, underscoring the transition from science to commerce.

The university, along with the statutory board "Enterprise Singapore", made this company into a reality at Science Park (adjacent to NUS), by way of its

scientists turned entrepreneurs, Prof. Ricardo Vinicius Bof de Oliveira and Mr. Patrick Teyssonneyre, both Brazilian experts involved in making science and innovation reach markets. They not only produce powder nanoplatelets and formulations but also provide technical support in characterisation of samples for quality assurance, in dispersion protocols and evaluation of properties.

Upon Request

Upon request, they can develop specific applications for use in the chemical industry, soon in the solar, electronic and other ones. The Brazilian scientists based at NUS, led by Prof. Antônio Hélio Castro Neto, flew back in September 2019 so as to join the "Graphene Brazil" international summit. It is through this and other initiatives that they are reaching out to various industries and manufacturers and making a mark in the annals of applied science and technology.

Matter of Physics: Graphene *by Carlos Brian Pheysey*

■ New carbon-based material that's ultra-thin yet hyper-strong developed by Brazilians catches the President's eye

Graphene is making waves in the world of physics, as a new carbon-based material that comes of the aid of many technical applications of engineering of materials. Achieving an ultra-thin yet hyper-strong sheet of graphene took highly specialized work by various masters in the domain of physics.

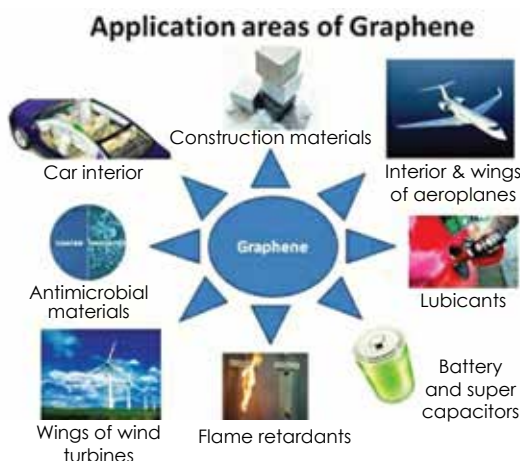
Prof. Antônio Hélio Castro Neto, a Brazilian physicist, has made a name for himself as a wizard of graphene. In 2010, the NUS (National University of Singapore) set up its Graphene Research Centre (GRC) and designated him as its Director. It was the first graphene R&D facility in Asia and was granted US\$30 million, a sum that remains only a distant dream for most researchers in Brazil. No wonder he's dubbed the "Godfather of Graphene".

The concept and founding of the GRC was masterminded by two Nobel-prize physicists, Andre Geim and Konstantin Novoselov, the first scientists to isolate graphene. The latter's partnership with Prof. Castro Neto led these two on a journey to Brazil in September in order to meet President Jair Bolsonaro, who has taken a keen interest in the new material. Yet what is graphene exactly and what uses will it have?

Graphene is a carbon-based material derived from graphite and rendered into a two-dimensional lattice sheet of, astonishingly, a single-atom thickness laid out in hexagons. Though atom-thin, its strength is a hundredfold that of steel, and yet it can be bent like plastic and won't degrade. It conducts electricity and magnetism, thus can be used as semiconductor in electronic, handheld touch screens, LEDs (diodes, thus dispensing with light bulbs), plus lasers, solar-panel cells, capacitors, batteries, photonics, optics, avionics, faster internet and such. The use of graphene means your smartphone will have the ability to bend and never again have a cracked screen. The very same nanomaterial also has uses in biotech, medicine, biosensors, molecular absorption, tissue engineering, biomicrobotics and more. It can also enable water-filtering or water-proofing, act



Prof. Konstantin Novoselov, Nobel Prize Winner in Physics, meets President Bolsonaro



Advancing graphene: physicist Antônio Hélio Castro Neto

as a lubricant, coolant or catalyst, plus serve other purposes yet to be developed.

The President of Brazil, Jair Bolsonaro, had already taken a keen interest in graphene when he was still a Congressman. In September, the "Graphene Brazil 2019" conference took place, which congregated experts and pundits from Brazil and elsewhere. On that occasion, Prof. Castro Neto and Prof. Konstantin Novoselov flew from Singapore to Rio de Janeiro so as to join this powwow of great minds in the

realm of this new material. While in Rio, the duo also met with Finep, the Funding Authority for Studies and Projects, in order to set up a road-map for the manufacture of graphene in Brazil.

A high point was the trip of the two scientists toward inland, to the nation's capital, Brasília, in order to meet President Bolsonaro as well as the Minister for Science, Technology, Innovations and Communications, Marcos Pontes, himself the first Brazilian astronaut to reach space.

Educating Businesses

Prof. Castro Neto aims to educate businesses in Brazil about graphene, as many industrialists are still in the dark about its potential. During his exchange with President Bolsonaro, Prof. Novoselov reminded the nation's leader that Brazil holds huge underground deposits of graphite and that it ought to begin adding value by setting up its own graphene production chain and thus leap-frogging developed countries.

In Brazil itself, Prof. Castro Neto has partnered since mid-decade with MackGraphe, an R&D unit at Universidade Mackenzie, a private university in São Paulo, thus the first Brazilian private-initiative institute to tackle graphene. MackGraphe emerged from a visit by Prof. Eunézio Antônio de Souza, from that university, to the GRC in Singapore, now expanded to become the NUS Centre for Advanced 2D Materials. By a stroke, they bypassed thus the bureaucratic nature of public-funded universities in Brazil, which eschew links with private technopreneurs, companies, commercial applications and such. Above all, applied science requires flexibility and capital, whatever the source.

Singapore itself hosted in November 2019 the "Graphene & 2DM Singapore Summit". Clearly, this disruptive and wondrous material is bound to garner much attention from industry and consumers in the next decade, as graphene enters our lives thanks to the brainstorming of physicists and materials-science engineers in Brazil, Singapore and worldwide.

BRICS: Give Me Five *by Carlos B. Pheysey*

■ The BRICS nations hold their summit in Brasília



Leadership: South Africa, India, China (rear), Russia and Brazil

The leaders of the five BRICS nations had already met at the margins of the G20 Summit in Osaka, Japan, back in June, but their exclusive moment was yet to be. In mid-November, the 11th BRICS Summit at last brought together the five nations once again, this time in Brasília, the capital that saw the heads of state of Brazil, China, India, Russia and South Africa hold talks of interest to these emerging markets and powerhouses in their own right.

President Jair Bolsonaro hosted President Xi Jinping, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, President Vladimir Putin and President Cyril Ramaphosa, for a string of ambitious meetings under the slogan "BRICS: economic growth for an innovative future". The talks were held at the Palácio do Itamaraty, the headquarters of Brazil's foreign service.

Many work targets were raised, in particular the strengthening of co-operation in science, technology and innovation; co-operation on digital economy; enhancement of the fight against transnational crime; and, fostering closer relations between the New Development Bank and the BRICS Business Council.

Together, these countries encompass 40% of the globe's population and account for nearly one-third of the world's production of goods and services. The five leaders expressed caution against the trade discord between some leading economies and also against the politi-

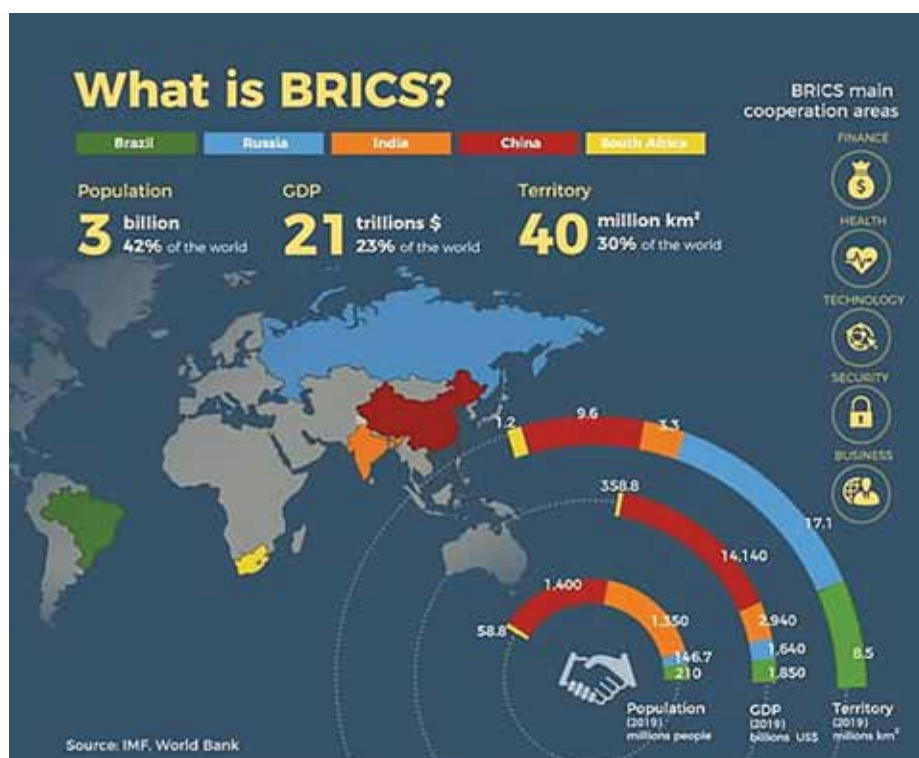
cal upheavals verified in various nations in 2019. They called for multilateralism and an end to protectionism as well as to the turmoil and divisions undermining the stability of societies and their prosperity, whether in the Middle East, South America, Asia or elsewhere.



With the aim of avoiding dependence on one currency, the five countries endeavoured toward a framework that would enable their national currencies to be used in their trade, payments, financing, etc. The heads of state also expressed a commitment to counteract climate change and to prevent an arms race in outer space.

The world is facing difficult times as the global economy is yet rallying only gradually, which behooves the question of how to keep the BRICS meetings and talks relevant and able to produce results. The five nations' sizes, outputs and trajectories are disparate and divergent at times, but efforts remain in place to engender meaningful alignments.

The five BRICS will continue to seek common ground in their effort to build a new world order and new paths to prosperity for their peoples. It is through dialogue that a gradual web of governance will emerge that can implement new thrusts, policies and strategies to break free from older monopolies dating back to the mid-20th century. At the same time, the BRICS will ensure to be inclusive by keeping open the channels of communication with all members of the international community.



Infographics by China Global Television Network or CGTN (www.cgtn.com)

Brazil-Singapore Ties Brighten Each Year

■ Brazil and Singapore have many reasons to celebrate during Brazil's National Independence Day. Ambassador Flávio Soares Damico highlights excellent bilateral ties and upcoming agreements will boost ties and trade to greater heights



The Ambassador of Brazil to Singapore, HE Flávio Soares Damico hosted Brazil's National Day reception at the iconic Fullerton Bay Hotel's The Clifford Pier on 5th September 2019. Representing the Singapore Government was HE Sim Ann, the Senior Minister of State, Ministry of Communications and Information & Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth. She joined other guests from Singapore's political, economic, social and cultural spheres, as well as the international diplomatic community in wishing Brazil a happy *Sete de Setembro*, as Independence Day is known in Brazil.

The Brazilian Ambassador and Senior Minister of State Sim Ann affirmed the relations between Brazil and Singapore are excellent and look forward to improving on ties as the countries ratify the recent agreements on the avoidance of double taxation and finalise a bilateral free trade agreement.





PianoBotanica 2019: A Tribute to João Gilberto

■ This year featured Singapore's own INDIGO band, who paid tribute to the man known around the world as the "father of bossa nova" and as "O Mito" or The Legend in his native Brazil



Once again the appeal of Brazilian music was on showcase in the annual PianoBotanica series organised by the Brazilian Embassy and its kind sponsors. This year, the passing of João Gilberto, the famous Brazilian singer, songwriter, and guitarist in July, was marked by a tribute concert performed by INDIGO, a group of Singaporean musicians.

The group featured Dawn Ho on vocals, Munir Alsagoff on guitar, Mohammed Noor on drums, Kaye on saxophone and Mario Serio on piano. Apart from performing the works of the late Bossa Nova Maestro, they also presented songs from other legendary composers such as Antônio Carlos Jobim (Tom Jobim), Baden Powell, João Donato, Marcos Valle, Sérgio Mendes, Maria Rita and Djavan.



Music experts have described Gilberto's style as combining traditional elements of samba with more-contemporary jazz. His "unique" acoustic guitar style involves a syncopated rhythm of plucked chords,

with chord progressions rooted in the jazz tradition. His vocal style has been described as "laid-back and understated" and Leonardo Rocha, in his obituary for the BBC, states that Gilberto's music describes "a period of huge optimism in Brazil".

This year stood out not only because of the outstanding music. As HE Ambassador Flávio Damico explained, it was also very fortunate the hundreds of music lovers and their families who came on the Sunday of 8th September 2019 were spared any rainy downpour that seemed to coincide with several past years' concerts!



Outreach to the American Club *by Carlos Brian Pheysey*

■ Ambassador Flávio S. Damico's briefing on Brazil's new economic prospects



As President Jair Bolsonaro took office in January 2019, observers were keen to hear more. The American Club in Singapore came in handy by staging its string of lectures termed "Ambassador Series". In April 2019, Ambassador Flávio S. Damico, himself an economist, delivered therefore his talk, "Economic perspectives of the new Brazilian government", to a sharp audience at the club.

Ambassador Damico began with an outline of the legacy of previous years and the challenges ahead, such as a Congress fragmented into many parties, slow growth, low savings, underperforming GDP, high unemployment and poor scores of school students in PISA assessments, but also good indicators, such as Brazil as the 4th main recipient of FDI, its inflation in check, large financial reserves, lower CO2 emissions, etc.

In this era of globalisation, Brazil's relative closing-off has caused its share of the world's GDP to drop by nearly half since 1980 as Asian Tigers and others forged ahead. As for the demographic transition, it is a double-edged sword, as the lower fertility has now taken much pressure off the country's network of resources and opportunities, but questions arise about the availability of manpower to sustain growth closer to mid-century. The relatively low retirement age and high pension expenditure in Brazil also pose issues that beg further the need for reform of the social welfare framework. Pensions have weighed dramatically upon the nation's fiscal balance.

The stock market, Bovespa, was up after a drastic low in early 2016, indicating that players feel positive about

One notices also an occasional triangulation as Singapore is an excellent partner to both (Brazil and the USA) and thus many intriguing possibilities and opportunities can be discerned when experts and operators from the three nations find unexpected mutual interests

President Bolsonaro delivering growth. Exchange rates have achieved a relative stability, which enables better planning of Brazil's insertion into the global economy. However, much more needs to be done to open up the economy to world realities, as last year closed off with an exports-to-GDP ratio of 12%, thus an increment but very narrow at that when compared to Singapore's huge share of exports. At least the country's good stock of reserves available in early 2019 seemed to buoy the economy.

Trade Surpluses

In the external domain, a piece of good news is that Brazil has been yielding positive trade surpluses, after the lows of mid-decade. There are concerns over the excessive concentration of exports into a few commodities, mostly geared for voracious China. For the US, Brazil has been exporting manufactured goods at a stable and steady volume. China is thus the primary destination for Brazilian products, having displaced the US, yet Americans still purchased a sizeable 12% of Brazil's exports in 2018. Argentina and Chile figure high in Brazil's tabulations, as do the Netherlands and Germany.

Foreign direct investment remains a key consideration that deserves better

fine-tuning. The flows into Brazil continue on a strong upswing, but more reforms are needed to keep Brazil attractive and FDI sustainable.

Brazil and the USA have been friends for the longest time and it is hoped that their alignment and the upcoming reforms in Brazil will lead to more American investment in Brazil, greater export-import volumes and various technical and non-technical exchanges that will further enrich the bilateral interaction of those huge nations holding sway over the Americas. One notices also an occasional triangulation as Singapore is an excellent partner to both and thus many intriguing possibilities and opportunities can be discerned when experts and operators from the three nations find unexpected mutual interests.

The audience at the American Club absorbed the Ambassador's presentation and insights with optimism. Despite the bumps ahead, there are indications of positive outcomes, which may benefit joint Brazil-USA interests. The outlook feels even better when Singaporean enterprises are added to the mix. Indeed, Singaporean operators present likewise enjoyed the lecture ministered in April. More of such exchanges are to be encouraged, in the interests of all parties and societies.

Backbone of the Nation: Brazilian Steel Stands Strong

by Carlos Brian Pheysey

■ Brazil is one of the world leaders in steel production, not just because of volumes but also of quality benchmarks.

Notwithstanding all the talk about digital transformation, a key component of our civilization retains its strength all around us: the ever reliable frames provided by steel. Brazil stands as one of the world leaders in steel production, not just on account of volumes but also of quality benchmarks.

Brazil is thus the largest producer in Latin America, the 6th among main global exporters and the 9th largest producer of steel worldwide, at 35.4 million tonnes of raw steel in 2018, one-third of which is shipped abroad, reaching over a hundred markets worldwide, such as Singapore's oil-rig and shipbuilding yards and the island's voracious construction needs.

The great names of Brazil's range of steel mills have left their mark in global markets: Gerdau, Villares, ArcelorMittal, Usiminas, CSN, Vallourec and yet others. These companies, encompassing 32 mills, have had a long track record of meeting the world's demand for steel supplies.

Mining for gold in the state of Minas Gerais in the 18th century dovetailed into the discovery of sizeable deposits of iron ore. Small-scale mills began processing it in the 19th century, but it was only Brazil's industrial revolution in the early 20th century that led the country's steel industry to become the giant it is today. Though in the 1920s and 1930s one still saw Brazil importing much steel, the postwar period marked a new era of positioning close to achieving self-sufficiency, fed by the rise of the national automotive industry, large-scale infrastructure projects and the consumer items of the emerging middle classes.

Up to the 1980s, most of the mills were state-linked enterprises. This model had run its course, and thus, in the 1990s, several were privatised, accounting for 70% of the nation's output. The new array of stockholders, now far more diverse, has led these conglomerates to diversify interests and assets, translated into a stake in logistics, be it in rail, port terminals and more. The vibrancy attained by the private sector of steel



The CSN foundry in Volta Redonda



Flat-rolling of steel, at Nacional Aços Industrial Ltda



The Usiminas shopfloor: steel ready to ship out



Welded as a team: a Vallourec unit for alloy tubes



Tramontina's products: available in Singapore

is such that Brazilian steel no longer depends on any subsidies or tax breaks.

Steel manufacturing accounts for 4% of Brazil's GDP, thus making up a significant chunk of the nation's economy. Yet, it is true that the steel sector in Brazil took a hit in the mid-decade years as Chinese steel took a bite off the market and the USA levied higher tariffs on steel imports in 2018, thus compelling Brazilian companies to think harder, innovate and stay competitive.

The figures from Brazil are impressive by any account. In addition to the raw steel mentioned earlier, in 2018 the country made 33.6m tonnes of secondary steel products. The capacity in place enables 51.5m tonnes to be manufactured. The massive exports yielded a surplus of US\$6.3 billion, coming to the aid of Brazil's insertion into the global trade chains. Apparent consumption within the country totalled 21.2m tonnes in 2018.

As in any part of the world, consumers, companies and cities in Brazil depend on steel for the transportation network, vehicles, civil construction, power plants, oil pipelines, hospitals, agribusiness mechanisation, warehousing, telecommunications grid, military ordinance, canning plants, kitchenware, tools, machinery, equipment, appliances and much more. Overall, in 2018 a Brazilian citizen consumed 101 kg of steel.

Local and global concerns over the impact on the world's environment have led the Brazilian steel industry to go eco-friendly. Manufacturing methods are now somewhat cleaner and less wasteful, residue is better treated and large-scale recycling is now the norm. A much-ravaged world is indeed grateful to see this renewed effort at conserving materials.

At some point, Brazilian steel enters your day-to-day, whether at home, at work or in your other interactions at large. In 2018, Singapore imported US\$ 2.6 million in Brazilian bars and rods of steel, the 7th largest supply of this item into this island. You wanted the strength and reassurance of cold steel: Brazil duly delivers it, for all walks of life.



Jam-packed with Gems: Precious Stones of Brazil

by Carlos Brian Pheysey



A rock-solid destination for seekers of gems is found in the rich mineral deposits of Brazil. One of its federal states alone, Minas Gerais, i.e. “General Mines”, accounted for 25% of the world’s production of precious stones. Yet, other states too throughout Brazil yield magnificent precious stones.

Though foreigners may love Brazilian stones, few know the breadth, depth and sophistication of the country’s gemology. For instance, high-end chains of shops for polishing, design and retail, i.e. the full producer-to-buyer sequence, duly managed by Brazilian entrepreneurs, exist within Brazil and, what’s more, these has gone global, setting up their very own luxury stores abroad.

Brazil is the lead producer of aquamarine, amethyst, brazilianite, citrine, chrysoberyl, morganite, paraíba stone, topaz, imperial topaz and tourmaline. Additionally, in smaller amounts, one finds in Brazil alexandrite, amazonite, green beryl, chalcedony, diamonds, emeralds, fluorite, garnet, heliodor, iolite, kunzite, cat’s eye, opal and rubellite. Speaking of diamonds,



(Top): Gems galore: the wealth of subterranean Brazil. (Above): Minas Gerais state: a name geared to mining. (Above right): Mr. Sauer, d. 2017, examines an emerald

there was a time when colonial-era Brazil was the largest provider of diamonds to the world, back in the mid-18th century.

Singaporeans have travelled to Brazil, marvelled at these beauties and returned home with such timeless pieces that dazzle the eyes and the imagination. A word of caution is in order: when buying stones, one must make sure to visit a brick-and-mortar shop that provides certificates that guarantee the provenance and authenticity, thus curbing any dodgy claims by unknown dealers who may prowl the streets. Just be sure to buy from genuine shops, for one’s trip to be rewarded with sparkling joy.

It is a pity that Brazilian stones and the meticulous Brazilian design and craftsmanship that goes into them are not yet on display at Singaporean trade shows geared to gems and jewellery. It is high time that Brazilian experts and dealers be present in Singapore and meet the well-heeled cohorts of Asian society.

A scan of Singapore’s import statistics of 2018 shows Brazil as the 7th supplier (US\$ 259 thousand) of roughly shaped precious stones entering this island,



i.e. trailing behind the more traditional suppliers of Singapore located in Africa and Asia. As for stones already worked and set onto mountings, the number of Brazilian pieces found in Singapore is still small. Nevertheless, there is hope to be found in how successful these Brazilian designer pieces have been in the US, EU and beyond.

Brazilian jewellery such as H. Stern and also Amsterdam Sauer have taken their shops and designs to the rest of the world. The former, founded in Brazil just after the war, is now a chain of nearly two hundred outlets spread out across four continents. Hollywood stars have worn its pieces and discerning shoppers can obtain them at Harrods in London. The designs of H. Stern, a.k.a. HStern, incorporate other Brazilian manifestations such as dance, architecture, the fluid curves of nature and much more, from the hands of Brazilian crafters.

The Amsterdam Sauer chain of jewellery likewise began in the 1940s, but rather from Brazil itself, despite its Dutch sounding. This luxury household name, nowadays referred to simply as Sauer, has outlets all over Brazil and now also in the USA.

These examples indicate that Brazil has moved away from merely mining and then shipping unhewn stones abroad. Instead, the country’s experts have added value to national stones, by moving up the chain and developing their own designs, polishing, setting (onto metal supports) and finally placing these masterpieces at luxury shops of their own, for a world of consumers bedazzled by these gleaming beauties.

Açaí Hailed as a Wonder Berry *by Carlos Brian Pheysey*

■ The fruit pulp that is today synonymous with Brazil is a firm favourite with health and fitness-conscious crowd as well as fruit juice lovers

Health-conscious pundits have had their sights on açaí throughout this entire decade, engendering much buzz about its beneficial properties. This Brazilian berry, pronounced as “as-sa-EE” and originating from the region where the Amazon River empties into the Atlantic Ocean, is held up as a treatment option for the boosting of the human circulatory system.

The berry's name stems from the Tupi language of Brazil's native coastal Amerindians and stands for “fruit that cries”, due to the juice that leaks from it. Legend has it that Iaçá, daughter of a tribal leader, became pregnant just when he had decreed death to all infants due to food scarcity. The infanticide reached her baby and its remains were buried. She cried at the grave, until she saw a palm tree grow thence. One day, she thought she saw her daughter there, hugged that tree and died thereupon. The tribe saw that final embrace and decided to eat the tree's fruit. They never went hungry again and the tribe's headman gave it the name açaí in honour of his daughter.

The tree's scientific name is *Euterpe oleracea*, reaching up to 30 metres in height and prevalent at the flooding-prone edge of waterways in the Amazon. Akin to a blueberry, açaí bears a dark purplish hue. The fruit grows in thick bunches of slim twigs curving downwards. It is nowadays grown in other parts of Brazil's Amazon and neighbouring countries in northern South America. Harvesting entails tree-climbing since



(Top row from l): The fruit can be turned into powder or pulp; Bowl of pulp purée: favourite mode for eating açaí. (Second row from l): Processing açaí into pulp; Açaí, the fruit pulp that is today synonymous with Brazil, is making headway. (Above): Igarapé-Miri: town known as “world capital of açaí”

the bunches are often near the top, being thus a very labour-intensive mode of securing a fruit supply.

Açaí is rich in vitamins B and C, plus iron, calcium and potassium. Its anthocyanins, or pigments, foster an enhanced blood circulation. For better results, the fruit is typically rendered into a paste, which can then be the basis for beverages, sweets, jams, ice cream and other desired products. Sometimes it becomes part of shampoos, cosmetics and other personal use items, for its

antioxidant properties. People in the northern state of Pará consume twice more açaí than milk.

Having arrived in Singapore a decade ago in its frozen pulp variety, it is often served as a smoothie or mashed into a bowl. The bowl paste is oftentimes a blend of açaí with guaraná seeds – itself an equally healthy Brazilian item – or else topped with nuts, almonds, flakes, other fruits, honey, syrups, milk and other fanciful condiments and ingredients.

Nutrients & Antioxidants

The antioxidants in it are touted as propping up our immune system against free radicals. Its fibre content steadies bowel movements and the blood sugar level. Its omega-3 fatty acids can lower a person's cholesterol and risk of coronary disorders. Moreover, its calcium strengthens our bones, muscle, nerves and overall endurance.

In other words, one may say that açaí might

potentially contribute towards curbing weight, aging, arthritis, heart disease, cancer, cholesterol, diabetes and more, though research into its benefits is still in its early stages. The jury is still out but, at any rate, fans call it a superfood, i.e. an edible fix for many of the modern ailments ensuing from our unhealthy urban lifestyles.

Various outlets in Singapore have been serving the bowls and smoothies: Cooçaça, Beriwell, Project Açaí, Afterglow, Absolute Açaí, Aloha Poke, Parallel,



A toucan enjoys açai hanging from a bunch

Salad Stop, Super Loco, Stranger's Re-union, Haakon, An Açai Affair, Seed and Soil, plus yet others that have sprung up all over this island to satisfy the cravings of the health worshippers. Buyers can also buy packets to take home and make their own bowl or smoothie. In fact, Selvá Foods is an outfit set up by Brazilians resident in Singapore that provides the semi-processed product to consumers themselves or to outlets and production facilities.

The presence of Brazil's açai in Singapore can be attested through the impressive statistics available. If one takes the HS code (Harmonised Standard) as

0811.9000, i.e. other fruits and nuts, uncooked or cooked by steaming or boiling in water, in frozen format, one can see clearly that, among Singapore's supplies from abroad, Malaysia leads in various fruit pulps, followed by imports from the USA in second place and then Brazil in third place. In 2018, Brazil accounted for an astonishing 246 tonnes (SG\$731,000 or US\$536,000) of such cooked frozen fruit entering Singapore, with açai pulp accounting for the overwhelming majority of Brazil's supplies to this island under that HS code. This figure keeps rising as Singaporeans demand ever more açai.

Açai is thus here to stay. It has struck a chord in the palates of connoisseurs and in the minds of fitness buffs and health advocates. Whether in Japan or Australia and beyond, this wondrous berry from Brazil's Amazon is bound to be all the rage into the new decade that is about to unfold from here on out.

The antioxidants in it are touted as propping up our immune system against free radicals. Its fibre content steadies bowel movements and the blood sugar level. Its omega-3 fatty acids can lower a person's cholesterol and risk of coronary disorders. Moreover, its calcium strengthens our bones, muscle, nerves and overall endurance.



BRAZIL IS CLOSER THAN YOU THINK

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If You Have Global Growth on Your Mind

by Caroline Mollica

■ Brief perspective of a Brazilian Lawyer working in Singapore

Unsurprisingly, the phenomenon of globalization has not only resulted in a number of significant changes in the social, economic and political spheres around the world, but also has directly influenced business and legal environments worldwide.

In the last decades, globalization has forced law firms to be prepared to advise international clients dealing with cross-border transactions that often involve parties belonging to numerous different jurisdictions. This has directly contributed to law firms becoming more global and also led to the emergence of new actors in the legal industry and new business practices, such as international arbitration courts and an increased use of arbitration as a mechanism for dispute resolution between players from different jurisdictions. Those facts have then enabled individuals and private and public entities from diverse jurisdictions, which are often subject to different legal systems, i.e. Common Law and Civil Law, to transact with each other.

It is also evident that most of the current international business relationships result from the economic and commercial interdependence between different countries. This has also enhanced a commercial approach between geographically and culturally remote countries and, therefore, has increased the level of internationalization of businesses and the promotion of legal pluralism. The growing demand in Asia for goods produced by Latin American countries, combined with Latin America's need to receive foreign investments from Asia, is a good example of said interdependence and approach.

Historically, the Latin American countries have focused on establishing trade relations with the United States, the European Union and other countries in Latin America. However, in recent decades, diplomatic and trade relations with numerous Asian countries were initiated and/or intensified in several sectors of the Latin American economy. As a result, China, for instance, is currently the main trading partner of Brazil in Asia, and is also one of Brazil's top 10 foreign investors, focusing on greenfield projects, mergers and acquisitions and joint



Caroline Mollica

venture transactions. Japan and other countries from Southeast Asia have become an important market for Brazilian commodity exports as well.

Pioneering Collaboration

Capitalizing on the increased demand for business among Latin American and Asian clients, **VEIRANO ADVOGADOS**, a leading Brazilian law firm, and **DUANE MORRIS & SELVAM LLP**, a Singapore-based international law firm, have decided in recent years to combine the synergies of their respective Asia and

Latin America Desks. The main purpose of such pioneering collaboration is to offer a more comprehensive and personalized full legal service to their clients seeking business opportunities in both continents, which includes, among other strategies, the mutual exchange of lawyers.

After 12 years practicing in the area of mergers and acquisitions and infrastructure projects in Brazil, of which almost eight years as an associate of Veirano Advogados, I recently joined the Latin America Desk of Duane Morris & Selvam in Singapore. Having worked with leading clients mainly from China, India and Singapore, I can state that this collaboration definitively benefits our Asian and Latin American clients by overcoming the legal challenges presented by deals that involve more than one jurisdiction, as well as by bridging the cultural gap which exists between our regions. In addition to assisting on challenges from Brazil's complex legal system, our work also involves helping our Asian clients to have timely and competitive access to the current business opportunities that are available in the region, especially in Brazil.

The interaction between our two firms has also contributed to the enhancement of our lawyers' skills. Through daily exchange of experiences, we are becoming more capable from a technical standpoint and definitively more aware of the cultural customs and expectations of our multicultural Latin American and Asian clients. And this is what definitively permits us to provide a more personalized and effective assistance to our clients, adding value to the relationship.



(From left): Ronaldo Veirano, founder of Veirano Advogados, Caroline, Ambassador Damico of Brazil, Eduardo Ramos-Gomez, Partner at Duane Morris & Selvam, Ambassador Fredesman Turro of Cuba, Ambassador Dr Balfaqeeh of the UAE, Ambassador Carlos Vasquez Corrales of Peru, Ambassador Florin-Marius Tacu of Romania, and Ambassador Fabrice Filliez of Switzerland

Migratory Waves: Settlers Who Bound Together Asia and Brazil

by Carlos Brian Pheysey



(Above): The ship that brought in 1908 the first Japanese. (Far left): Chinese arrivals in Brazil in the 1960s (Left): Japanese family and their Brazilian horse and chicken.

The traditional view of the ethnic composition of Brazil was restricted, in past discourse, to three main elements: the Amerindian natives of the pre-Columbian era; the Africans who were brought in ignominiously as forced labour; and, the Europeans, mostly from Portugal and its Mediterranean neighbours, with a sprinkling of Germans and other Caucasians. Despite issues of racism, inequality, power and other complicating factors, these three groups miscegenated and produced a new human being, perhaps olive-skinned or brown-skinned, making Brazil known to the world as a relatively tolerant and assimilating society.

The aforementioned version of events often fails to take into account the other groups who settled in that great immigrant land that is Brazil. For instance, the vast and magnificent Jewish presence in the country stems from both Europe and the Ottoman Empire. Other Middle Easterners of various origins, particularly Lebanese, likewise left a deep imprint in Brazil. These various religions and ethnic groups straddling a bridge between the Near East and Europe would, alone, warrant additional fascinating pages in this edition of our magazine, had we more space herein for that purpose.

In contrast, we shall focus here on the wider Asian presence in Brazil, itself an intriguing history that has enriched the kaleidoscope of Brazilian society. Those migrants too left descendants, offspring

who were raised as Brazilians and who have further engaged in inter-racial marriages that have made Brazil ever more colourful, diverse and accommodating of differences.

Already in the later days of the monarchical period, Brazil had considered calling Chinese peasants to till the vast lands in Brazil that awaited cultivation in the late 19th century. However, it was only in the early 20th century that Brazil would see a first Asian wave, albeit a Japanese one. The year 1908 brought the first cohort of settlers from the Land of the Rising Sun, willing to grow produce in a strange land that certainly looked intimidating at first. Yet, Brazil was willing to take them in, as opposed to other Western nations that had banned from their shores any Asian immigration.

Most Japanese immigrants settled in the hinterlands of the states of São Paulo and Paraná. Life was tough, as they often did not own the rural plot, wages were low, few modern implements and facilities were available, along with cultural and labour disagreements with the hosts.



Lt.-Brigadier Juniti Saito, the Commander of the Brazilian Air Force until 2015

Arrivals peaked in the early 1930s and then, in the 1940s, ties were cut with Japan due to the war, which halted all passenger shipping. The Japanese language was banned during the war years, thus setting the stage for assimilation. Though many had thought of returning to Japan at some point, numerous Japanese immigrants had seen thus their link severed over an extended period, which made them ponder permanent settlement as being a viable option, while their offspring had actually become fully-fledged Brazilians, attended local schools, learned to speak Portuguese, integrated into and identified with the new nation.

Gradually, the settlers managed to own the land and, through hard work and perseverance, succeeded in securing high yields and prosperity. Rising incomes provided a better education and thus the



Japanese immigrants arrive in Brazil

The year 1908 brought the first cohort of settlers from the Land of the Rising Sun, willing to grow produce in a strange land that certainly looked intimidating at first. Yet, Brazil was willing to take them in, as opposed to other Western nations that had banned from their shores any Asian immigration.



Female farmers in Paraná



(From left): Sabrina Sato, model and TV presenter; Kim Katagiri, one of the leaders of the Free Brazil Movement, and celebrating Lunar/Chinese New Year in São Paulo

offspring began acquiring skills that led them to lead the farms and pursue a life in the big cities of Brazil, as professionals, technicians, managers, entrepreneurs, artists and public administrators. Despite the early difficulties in the first half of the 20th century, Brazil proved to be a most assimilating country, absorbing the new ethnic group with ease as time went by.

The descendants of the Japanese acquired a positive image, being regarded as industrious, studious, never reliant on handouts. It also helped that postwar Japan became prosperous and technically advanced once more and moreover pacifist too, thus endearing that Asian nation to all Brazilians.

Intermarriages followed and the Japanese descendants came to occupy high positions in business, political, cultural, sports and social circles of Brazil. For instance, Luiz Gushiken became Minister of Social Communication and Strategic Management. Juniti Saito was the Commander of the Brazilian Air Force until

2015. Kim Katagiri is a Congressman and one of the leaders of the pro-enterprise and pro-free-market Free Brazil Movement. Sabrina Sato has been a model and TV presenter. Other successful names abound, adding to the pride felt overall. In 2008, Prince Naruhito, nowadays Emperor, attended the centenary celebrations in Brazil that marked the arrival of the first Japanese.

Reverse Flow

Interestingly, a reverse flow has occurred likewise. A number of Brazilians have moved to Japan, in recent decades, as a means to find new work opportunities and a degree of stability. Most of them are descendants of Japanese settlers, yet many lack proficiency in the Japanese language despite the ethnic kinship, and many more of these Brazilians are from other ethnic backgrounds, i.e. non-Japanese. The picture becomes more complex as one sees that some stay for a while in factory jobs in Japan and then return to Brazil with savings in hard currency, whereas many others end up staying for good in Japan. Hence, one hears much Portuguese being spoken in Japan, Brazilian food is ubiquitous and there is even a Brazilian Carnival parade in Tokyo.

However, the Japanese have not been the only Asians in Brazil. In recent decades, other Asian immigrants have arrived and added to the colourful mix that is Brazil. After the Korean War that devastated their coun-

try, numerous Koreans came to São Paulo, setting up small retail shops, garment manufactures and export-import firms, while some went into electronic engineering jobs. K-pop culture too has arrived in Brazil. This author lived on a street that housed a Korean-Brazilian family. Furthermore, he also met Indian-Brazilians while in the work teams of two distinct jobs held, and a Chinese-Brazilian at another job. However, the number of Indians remains small in Brazil and their tasty gastronomy is still restricted to upmarket restaurants, unlike the affordable version offered at food courts and hawker centres in Singapore. The Brazilian TV soap opera “Caminho das Índias” helped to make India popular in 2009 among Brazilian viewers.

Let us not forget the Chinese immigration into Brazil, itself a relatively recent phenomenon, though a few Chinese experts had already been invited in the 19th century to grow tea and help at a mining enterprise. In the late 20th century, the Chinese presence grew more considerable as some fled the Cold War, then later others came to set up retail shops and bilateral facilitation firms as Deng Xiao Ping opened up the economy of China. Astonishingly, China is now one of the largest investors and, moreover, the lead buyer of Brazil's exports. One can expect to find ever more Chinese living in Brazil and becoming Brazilian, and possibly vice-versa from Brazil toward China. Brazilians and Chinese have come a long way indeed.

Other communities, whether from Southeast Asia or other parts of Asia – not to forget the Middle East – are also adding their presence to Brazil's ethnic, cultural and business mix. Though numbers may be small for some, the bonds forged are strong, as easygoing Brazil absorbs and embraces smoothly and happily the contributions made by these hardy immigrants and entrepreneurs come from the far shores of Asia.



(Clockwise from top left): The celebration of century-old ties; The Korean Cultural Centre, at its new address in São Paulo, and the India-Brazil Chamber is located in Belo Horizonte

Into the Darkest Days of WW2 *by Carlos Brian Pheysey*

■ 2019 marked the 75th Anniversary since Brazilian forces joined the Allied onward assault till final victory



(From left): A Brazilian patrol near Monte Castello. Brazilian fighter planes get ready for another incursion

The Second World War posed grave dilemmas for Brazil. At the turn of the 1930s into the 1940s, the country was still heavily dependent on agricultural exports and machinery imports, yet its trade partners had joined the war and thus curtailed dealings with or caused shortages for the country. Brazil was still in the early stages of building a manufacturing base for its needs and the nation's naval, land and air power themselves were yet ill suited, should another nation impose a blockade or strike its shores, among the frightful skirmishes that raged throughout Atlantic waters.

The Vargas regime that ruled Brazil was of a non-democratic nature, paternalistic and occasionally fond of a few elements of the totalitarian regimes that had gained power in Europe. In fact, there were a few elements who advocated a degree of co-operation with the Axis, whereas a vast number of people openly and adamantly favoured the Allied cause.

Its territory had become home to huge numbers of Germans, Italians and Japanese immigrants, raising concerns over a fifth column, which nevertheless never materialised as these communities remained mostly non-political and non-aligned. In fact, under Brazil's benevolent assimilation environment,



The Navy, vigilant more than ever

most expressed peace sentiments or even a desire, among those descendants already born in Brazil, toward siding with the just cause of the Allies.

While such domestic debates raged in the first few years of WW2, various incidents in the Atlantic were unfolding in 1941, as German submarines occasionally sank a Brazilian vessel in the high

seas. Also, Lend-Lease aircraft from the US were flying from Brazil's northeast tip to West Africa and thence to the British desert front, which led to acrimony between the Axis and Brazil.

By late 1941, on the opposite side of the globe, Japan, cornered by an oil embargo against its invasion of China, had opted to up the ante by striking against US, UK and Dutch territories, in the process seizing Singapore in early 1942. Washington then exerted its diplomatic muscle, persuading numerous Caribbean and Central American partners in early 1942 to declare war on Axis powers. More resilient, Brazil resisted such pressures. However, events would force the hand of Vargas and prove that nobody could remain neutral in this brutal and global contest for the very soul of humankind.

Brazil Joins Allied Forces

In early 1942, in view of the bonanza brought on by a US need for raw materials, port logistics and air routes and patrols over the Atlantic, the regime reached agreements with Washington and decided it was a safe bet to break off relations with Axis powers, from then on waging an undeclared war as Brazilian aircraft engaged Axis submarines in mid-1942. The German and Italian naval commands, however, took the

The first measures dictated participation of the Brazilian Navy in the cross-Atlantic convoys linking the Americas, Africa and the Mediterranean. The Navy shielded both merchant ships bearing war supplies and also troop transports of the Allies and often it fended off or sank German and Italian submarines.



(From left): Allied Presidents Vargas and Roosevelt (seated, centre). General Mascarenhas de Moraes led the FEB into action. Grateful Italians greet the Brazilian liberators in Massarosa.

diplomatic rupture as a licence for the onset of intensified submarine sinkings of Brazilian freighters and passenger vessels in mid-1942.

Fierce casualties ensued and the incensed public demanded armed action. Brazil's political leadership saw itself compelled to cross that final line and thus declared war on Germany and Italy in August 1942. In hindsight, it may be easy to think of the ultimate Allied victory as a foregone conclusion, but in mid-1942 the outcome did not appear clear-cut, as Axis forces pushed into the Caucasus, Egypt, New Guinea the Solomons and an all-out U-boat offensive in 1942-1943. Brazil's decision was fraught with tension for a nation not yet ready for the industrial scale, far-reaching logistics, harsh rationing and mass mobilizations demanded by total war. The nation's coastal cities went dark as a blackout was imposed. Brazilian counter-intelligence achieved a few coups with the arrests of fascist spies in those early stages of its own war.

Atlantic Shield

The first measures dictated participation of the Brazilian Navy in the cross-Atlantic convoys linking the Americas, Africa and the Mediterranean. The Navy shielded both merchant ships bearing war supplies and also troop transports of the Allies and often it fended off or sank German and



Brazil, present in the war of liberation from fascist tyrannies

Italian submarines. Co-belligerent navies set up in Brazil the Allied Command Atlantic South for enhanced coordination in that sector.

Most importantly, US and Brazilian aircraft stationed in Natal, at the northeast angle of Brazil that juts toward Africa, closed the mid-Atlantic gap through air patrols against the peaking U-boat menace. In 1943, Brazilian aircraft sank the

U-199 off the coast of Rio de Janeiro. There were naval losses too, as U-861 sank in 1944 the auxiliary troopship Vital de Oliveira.

After meetings with other Western Allies in early 1943 in Casablanca, French Morocco, US President Roosevelt returned via Brazil and met with Vargas. That meeting would prove decisive for Brazil's cross-oceanic armed offensive role in WW2, as opposed to mere coastal patrols set up by other Latin American nations, the exception being Mexico's pilots who flew combat missions in the Philippines in 1945.

FEB Enters Europe

Vargas and Roosevelt agreed to constitute a Brazilian Expeditionary Force (or FEB) that would be sent to Europe soon after a foothold was gained on that continent. This was a remarkable novelty, as no Brazilian troops had ever gone into action across oceans. Allied landings in Italy during that year led to a collapse of fascism in the peninsula and an Allied push toward Rome, albeit slowed down by the harsh terrain and a most able German defence, resulting in a delayed capture of the Eternal City only in June 1944, just as the main Allied assault upon Normandy was already under way. The Italian front was to become thereafter a backwater, but soon

new blood from young Brazilians would bring a fresh push among the numerous foreign armies large and small in that half-forgotten front.

The FEB, though not yet fully trained and equipped, was ferried across the Atlantic and the Mediterranean for disembarkation in Naples in mid-1944. It is based on that arrival into the thick of action that the 75-year anniversary is to be understood, as this magazine went to print in late 2019. The troops spent the European summer gearing up for a dangerous fight against a well-trained foe bent on skilfully defending every inch of the rocky peninsula. American instructors briefed them on fighting conditions, modern warfare tactics and the use of US-issued ordinance. Then, under the command of General Mascarenhas de Moraes, the FEB deployed with the US 5th Army in the centre-left of the Allied front's multinational armies arrayed against the Germans' Gothic Line across the breadth of central-northern Italy.

Fierce Action Along the Apennines

The high peaks of the Apennines provided the perfect cover for German defences, thus the Brazilians took some time firstly digging in, assessing local conditions and acclimatising during autumn, before seeing fierce action with the onset of winter in the highlands. Interestingly, many civilians in Tuscany approached the friendly Brazilians to ask about relatives who had migrated to São Paulo. More strikingly, the FEB's ranks did not practice the racial segregation that was common in various other armies.

In the meantime, fighters from the Brazilian Air Force (FAB) had become active. Upon completing training at the Panama Canal, the pilots joined aerial missions in October, flying Thunderbolt aircraft, at first with the Americans, but thereafter braving on their own the enemy's murderous flak and unavoidable accidents in the treacherous terrain and wintry conditions. Reconnaissance and interdiction operations, often strafing and bombing supply columns, barges, bridges and columns, led to victories and successes but also casualties whenever planes were shot down from Italian skies.

Brazilian troops went into action and filled the gaps as more Allied units were removed to be thrown into the August landings in southern France. In Septem-

ber, the FEB took the town of Massarosa. Far more difficult would be the taking of the line of defences centered on Monte Castello. Attempts in November and December saw the Germans repel the Brazilian incursions. It was thus in the depths of winter that the FEB would need to take Monte Castello, even as the thermometer sank to -20°C. There was to be no break or resting for the FEB, which saw uninterrupted action from its arrival until war's end. At last, under Operation Encore planned by the Allies, the Brazilians took Monte Castello in February 1945.



Brazil's Monument to its Dead of World War II

This conquest became part of the Allied breaking of the Gothic Line at various other points, resulting in the invasion of the industrial Po Valley to the north. In Montese, FEB troops, supported by Brazilian armour, would yet endure heavy casualties in April, followed by further losses in Fornovo, during the final breakthrough that routed the Germans in northern Italy. Overall, the FEB saw 463 of its men die in Italy, their remains later resulting transferred to a poignant war cemetery and monument in Rio de Janeiro.

As a crowning glory, the FEB took the surrender of the German 148th Infantry Division, trapped in northwestern Italy, in early May of 1945, then met up with French forces at the Alpine foothills, which marked the end of FEB's war. The Brazilian Expeditionary Force had pitted itself against the all-powerful Wehrmacht and done therewith its duty, toward the freedom of nations from totalitarianism, fear, conquest, genocide, militarism and tyranny, and had at last emerged victorious, in unison with its long-committed allied comrades-in-arms. That triumph achieved in 1945 calls for a 75-year anniversary of the

final victory by FEB and its Allies, as we enter 2020.

Final Loss

The troops, pilots and sailors returned to Brazil in stages over the course of mid- and late 1945. A final loss occurred in July as the cruiser Bahia, covering the sea lanes that oversaw shipment of Allied units and materiel from pacified Europe to the yet raging Pacific war, experienced an accident that ignited an explosion, which sent the ship to a watery grave.

By June, the savage fighting in Okinawa was also nearing its bitter end. It was then that Brazil declared war on Japan, although, still retrieving its men from Europe, it could not possibly dream of joining the fray in the Pacific. Alas, soon thereafter, Japan began seeing its own defeats, its lone isolation, the hopelessness of kamikaze pilots against the Allied armada, the crippling effects of the US Navy's blockade, creeping malnutrition, the firebombing of cities into ashes, the humiliating naval bombardments of shore installations, the onslaught of the

Red Army, the ensuing threat of a Communist takeover, and then at last the final nudge triggered by the fiery blasts of two atomic bombs. The budding peace faction within Japan then accepted Allied terms and put an end to the carnage that was WW2. In closing, likewise for Singapore, freedom had come at last, after nearly four years of a dark and brutal Occupation.

Thus ended Brazil's victorious armed intervention in the Second World War. The country's Armed Forces had dealt in heroic deeds and violent death, whether on land, air or sea, and there-with acquired experience, emerged more professional and built a sound military structure. More to the point, people at home began asking how the nation's authoritarian regime could have unleashed the FEB against fascism and yet hoped to remain in power within Brazil. The death knell for the Vargas administration had thus sounded. In late 1945, Brazil had again resumed democratic process and regained its place among the free nations of the world. From its baptism of fire, Brazil staked a claim, emerging confident then as a founder of the peace-inspired United Nations in 1945.

BRAZILIAN TRADE SHOW CALENDAR

Compiled by Carlos
Brian Pheysey

Note: in each trade
show's website,
click on a UK or US
flag or the option
for English

2020



COUROMODA - International Shoe, Leather Goods and Accessories Fair
13-15 January

www.couromoda.com/en/fair/

Vitória STONE Fair - International Marble & Granite Fair

11-14 February

www.vitoriastonefair.com.br

INTERMODAL SOUTH AMERICA - International Exhibition for Logistics, Cargo & International Trade

17-19 March

www.intermodal.com.br

INFOCOMM LATIN AMERICA - Expo for Audiovisuals, Systems Integration, Digital Signage and Unified Comms

14-15 April

www.infraportos.com.br

EXPOSEC - International Security Fair
14-16 April

<https://exposec.tmp.br>

ECOMONDO Brasil - Technological Solutions for Sustainability Management Trade Show

14-16 April

<https://ecomondobrasil.com.br>

HOSPITALAR - International Technology Fair for Hospitals, Laboratories, Pharmacies & Clinics

19-22 May

www.hospitalar.com

FRANCAL - International Shoes and Accessories Fashion Fair

1-3 June

<https://francal.com.br>

FCE PHARMA - International Exhibition of Technology for the Pharmaceutical Industry

2-4 June

www.fcepharma.com.br

BIO BRAZIL Fair - International Fair of Organic Products & Agroecology

17-20 June

www.biobrazilfair.com.br

FISPAL FOOD Service - International Food Service Trade Show

16-19 June

www.fispalfoodservice.com.br

MARINTEC South America NAVALSHORE - Shipbuilding & Offshore Industries' Expo & Conference

11-13 August

www.marintecsa.com.br

FISA - Food Ingredients South America
18-20 August

www.fi-events.com.br

FENASUCRO & AGROCANA - International Fair of Sugar, Ethanol and Energy Technology

18-21 August

www.fenasucro.com.br

TRANSPQUIP Latin America (Expo Airport / Latin Port / Expo Urban / Expo Stadium) - Transport Infrastructure Expo

26-27 August

www.transpoquip.com.br

RIO OIL & GAS EXPO

21-24 September

www.riooilgas.com.br

FUTURECOM - Information & Telecommunications Technology

October

www.futurecom.com.br

EXPOLOG - International Supply-Chain Fair

October-November

www.feiraexpolog.com.br





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