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Dr VB and Secretary Cayetano Meeting in Manila



(From left:) Secretary of Foreign Affairs Alan Peter Cayetano, Cayetano's wife and Mayor of Taguig City Maria Laarni Lopez-Cayetano, Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr Vivian Balakrishnan, Secretary of Trade and Industry Ramon Lopez. Photo source: Singapore Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Singapore Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr Vivian Balakrishnan has followed up his visit to the Republic of China with an introductory visit to the Philippines' capital Manila on June 13, 2017.

The two back-to-back official tours are of

significance as both Singapore and Philippines are in deep engagement on important issues, including regional issues which are common to all three—amongst them ASEAN centrality and unity to ensure peace and stability in the region.

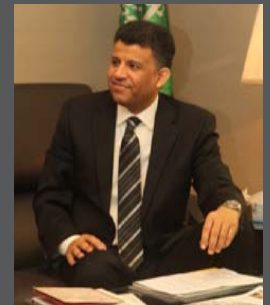
During the course of the visit Dr

Also inside:

New Ambassadors

HE Saad Saleh Al Saleh

Ambassador of the Embassy of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in Republic of Singapore



Balakrishnan met with Philippine Secretary of Foreign Affairs Alan Peter Cayetano and also with Secretary of Trade and Industry Ramon Lopez at a luncheon hosted by Mr Cayetano. Issues touched upon included:

- Reaffirmation of the warm relationship between Singapore and the Philippines and the longstanding bilateral relations between the two.

- Expanding co-operation in the fields of air connectivity, telecommunications, human resource development and urban solutions

- Promoting trade and investment

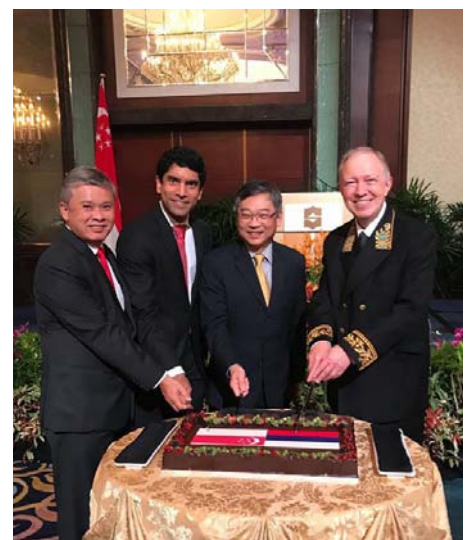
Both countries also look forward to the imminent celebrations, in 2019, of 50 years of diplomatic ties between them. Today, Singapore is the Philippines' fourth major trading partner.

EVENT

Russia's National Day 13 June 2017



The Russian Embassy in Singapore hosted a State Reception on 13th June 2017 at Shangri-La Hotel on the occasion of its national holiday (which officially is on 12th June 2017). HE Andrey Tatarinov, Ambassador of the Russian Federation here spoke on the achievements arising from the visit of Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong to Russia in May 2016 that included high level and positive dynamics of bilateral cooperation in the areas of political, trade, investment, military, scientific, technical and cultural spheres. Together with Guest of Honour, HE Mr Gan Kim Yong, Minister for Health of the Republic of Singapore, they both reiterated the common determination to build on the bilateral partnership especially since 2018 will be the jubilee year, when both countries will celebrate the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties.



(2nd & 3rd from right): Guest of Honour, HE Mr Gan Kim Yong, Minister for Health of the Republic of Singapore and HE Andrey Tatarinov, Ambassador of the Russian Federation resp.

Singapore and Myanmar Reaffirm Bilateral Ties



At the 6th Singapore-Myanmar Joint Ministerial Working Committee Meeting (JMWC) co-chaired by Minister for Trade and Industry (Trade) Lim Hng Kiang along with his Myanmar counterpart, Union Minister for Planning and Finance, and Chairman of the Myanmar Investment Commission Kyaw Win (*pictured above left & right resp*) witnessed the reaffirmation of bilateral ties between the two countries.

The meeting, held in Singapore spotlighted the importance of JMWC as the cornerstone of bilateral economic relations supported by the pillars of trade and investment, finance and legal co-operation, between Singapore and Myanmar. The meeting also had a lively discussion on deepening collaboration in sectors such as urban solutions, transport and logistics, food and agriculture, finance and legal services.

Both countries affirmed the progress of the Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT) negotiations were in total accord to continue to work towards its conclusion by the end of this year.

Negotiations for a BIT were a follow-up on a formal announcement made during the visit of Myanmar State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi's to Singapore in November 2016. The BIT will underpin the importance of a platform for facilitating a proactive environment for investors, and increase the level of protection for bilateral investments between Myanmar and Singapore. On the sidelines of the JMWC meeting the signing of two Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) took place — the first was International Enterprise (IE) Singapore signing an MOU with Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC) to promote bilateral trade and investment and the second MOU was signed by SPRING Singapore with the Myanmar Department of Research and Innovation (DRI) to share expertise in the accreditation of conformity assessment bodies based on international standards and requirements.

Set up in 1995, the JMWC is a platform to promote bilateral economic cooperation and forge new business opportunities. In 2016, bilateral trade between Singapore and Myanmar reached S\$3.3 billion. Singapore was Myanmar's top foreign investor in the fiscal year 2016 (ending 31 March 2017) with investments amounting to US\$3.8 billion (approximately S\$5.3 billion).

Dr Balakrishnan Official Visit to China: Points of Agreement

The state visit of Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr Vivian Balakrishnan to the People's Republic of China from 11th to 12th June 2017 covered important issues that continue to engage the two countries. He was in Beijing at the invitation of China's Minister of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China Wang Yi. During the course of his visit Dr Balakrishnan met with Vice President Li Yuanhao, State Councilor Yang Jiechi as well as several Singaporean business representatives based in China in a breakfast meeting.

Speaking to media at the end of the tour on the subject of bilateral ties, Dr Balakrishnan said, "...we agreed that the Singapore-China relations are in good working order, very strong, based on a very solid foundation that goes back four decades." Singapore, he shared, has been the largest foreign investor in China for the last four years. "China obviously is our biggest trading partner... We reviewed the three G-to-G projects in Suzhou, Tianjin, Chongqing. All of them are doing well... We then looked at the opportunities that the Belt and Road will present."

Singapore has also agreed to three recommendations suggested by China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi. Firstly, to build a high-level platform for connectivity. Basically, to build a network that spans China, Central Asia, Europe and Southeast Asia. The second was on financial support for the Belt and Road initiative. China, Dr Balakrishnan, shared, "Hopes to take advantage of the fact that Singapore is already a well-established financial centre. It has the track record for being able to finance and to assess major projects; that Singapore can also play a role in helping to mobilise the capital that's needed for the Belt and Road." The third was on training, building human resource development and technology transfer for third countries who are also involved in or want to be involved with Belt and Road projects.

COMMUNIQUÉ

French Embassy Invite Ideas for France-Singapore Year of Innovation 2018

As announced by former French President François Hollande and Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, 2018 has been declared as France-Singapore Year of Innovation. In order to make this event a success for the two countries, the Embassy of France in Singapore is inviting Singaporeans to share their innovative projects, ideas or initiatives!

This will be an unprecedented opportunity to promote the different collaborations in France and Singapore in priority fields. The objective is to enhance and deepen the Franco-Singaporean innovation ecosystem; to strengthen the attractiveness of the two countries to talents, partners and investors; to promote the priority sectors in the field of innovation; to stimulate cooperation; and to strengthen synergies between academia, research, business and

entrepreneurs.

The Embassy highlighted that this is also very much a Singaporean project and invite anyone to submit any idea, initiative or project that can fit in the France-Singapore Year of Innovation and make it a success for all.

According to its media release, "We encourage anyone interested in innovation or already involved in partnerships between our two countries to be part of this project by sending ideas and suggestions."

If you wish to get more information, submit your contribution or discuss about this event, do not hesitate to contact the embassy at email: innovation2018.singapour-amba@diplomatie.gouv.fr



SHARE YOUR IDEAS

The Embassy highlighted that this is also very much a Singaporean project and invited anyone to submit any idea, initiative or project that can fit in the France-Singapore Year of Innovation and make it a success for all.

INTERVIEW

HE Saad Saleh Al Saleh

Ambassador of the Embassy of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in Republic of Singapore



ND: Excellency, welcome to Singapore. It is our privilege and honour to have you here. You have recently presented your credentials as ambassador, to President Tan. Please share something of your background before coming to Singapore.

HE: Thank you for inviting me. I joined the Kingdom's Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1993 as a diplomatic attaché. I was posted to the Saudi Arabia embassy in Washington DC for seven years before going on to Cairo for five years. I then went back to Saudi Arabia and continued my work at the Ministry for another seven years before I was sent here as ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

ND: What are your plans during your tenure here? And what would you like Singapore to know about Saudi Arabia?

HE: We hope to develop relations between Saudi Arabia and Singapore in all aspects of engagement; the relationship has mostly been on an economic basis. There are other areas we can work together such as healthcare, education, technology, tourism etc. Also we would like to raise the relationship between the two countries to a much higher level.

ND: What can we expect in terms of bilateral visits in the coming months?

HE: This year is our 40th anniversary for diplomatic ties and we plan for many high official visits between Saudi Arabia and Singapore, which in itself is indicative of the importance of the relationship between our two countries. We hope these high level visits can take place sometime in the next two to three months. This will, of course, depend on their availability but visits by high officials from both countries are very much on the cards this year.

ND: The Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission in Singapore has been operational for many years now and there are many Saudi students who have come here and done very well in their studies. What are the new developments at the Cultural Mission this year?

HE: The Saudi Arabia Cultural Mission here is doing a very good job for Saudi students who have come here to Singapore and they also include trainees who come here to upgrade themselves. The Mission gives them advice and liaises with the colleges and universities here and assesses which programmes are suitable for Saudis coming here to study. Also, there are many courses here for teachers as well, not just students. Singapore has a high quality education system so it is good to have these courses in



HE Al Saleh presented his credentials to President Tony Tan on 1st June 2017 at the Istana

sync with an agency in Singapore. The Mission also plays a role in supporting the students to settle in here as well as promote Singapore universities to Saudi students back home.

ND: In terms of travel to Saudi Arabia, apart from the Haj and Umrah, will you also be encouraging Singaporeans to visit Saudi Arabia?

HE: Thank you for asking this question, because usually people mainly think travel to Saudi Arabia only in terms of Haj and Umrah. Actually, tourism is one aspect covered in our national programme **Saudi Vision 2030** and there are provisions for tourists to visit Saudi Arabia for tourism, as well as for study and

training in fields that we have facilities... So, eventually we will have visitors from other countries visiting the Kingdom for reasons other than Haj and Umrah.

ND: Are there any challenges in reaching out and communicating with Singaporeans?

HE: I feel Singaporeans in general are very easy-going and you can communicate with them any time, through conferences, meetings, access is also good for Singapore government officials; I have had opportunity to also mix with Muslims on occasions such as breakfasts during Ramadan, after congregational prayers at mosques etc. Singapore has so many activities that in one week alone you can meet many officials many times, not just once in a while.

ND: Since you arrived, how do you like Singapore so far?

HE: It's great how it has achieved so much in such a short time. You can be proud of the accomplishments of the country, the people, the heritage and the culture.

ND: I think many people here especially Muslims are very warm towards anything from Saudi Arabia as the country is also the seat of Islam. The Saudi Arabian Embassy itself hosted its annual iftar event recently at the Shangri-La Hotel. How was the experience for you hosting it for the first time? And do you have any message for this Ramadan??

HE: I have seen for myself how Muslims appreciate greatly this connection of Saudi Arabia with Islam. During the Ramadan period, I have attended many iftars and visited many mosques and seen how strong the faith is here. I saw fellow Muslims sharing iftar, praying and being very close to each other, so this gives us, as Muslims and as a Saudi a feeling of great pride and gratitude to God.

I was very pleased that many who we invited were able to come for our Iftar. They included community leaders from other faiths and we are honoured by the presence of all those who attended. We are also happy that you Nomita was able to attend and we here at the embassy would also like to thank you for all the hard work you and Sun Media have put in publishing *Saudi Arabia Gateway to the Middle East* for the past 10 years.

The Saudi Ambassador with interviewer Mrs Nomita Dhar, Editor-in-Chief IN Diplomacy



COLLABORATIONS

Singapore shares its developmental experience and knowledge with others as a responsible global citizen and the Singapore Cooperation Programme (SCP) was established in 1992 to serve as the primary platform through which Singapore offers technical assistance to other countries especially in the area of human resource development and economic development. To date, the SCP has trained over 100,000 government officials from 170 countries.

Upcoming Sustainable Development Courses

As a small country with limited land and natural resources, Singapore is acutely sensitised to the challenges of sustainable development. This cluster supports the United Nations 2030 Agenda by sharing insights and practices in sustainable development solutions for air and water quality management, urban traffic and congestion management, urban planning and climate change adaptation.

For more information about the courses, conditions and eligibility etc please click [here](#).

Course	Course Dates	Closing Date for Nominations
Sustainable Oceans and Marine Resources	3 to 7 July 2017	15 June 2017
Transforming Urban Habitats: Urban Master Planning	30 Oct to 3 Nov 2017	18 Sep 2017
Urban Air and Water Quality Management	6 to 10 November 2017	25 September 2017
Climate Change Adaptation Strategies	11 to 15 December 2017	30 October 2017

From the Embassies....

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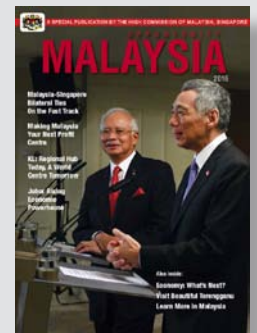
Opportunity Russia 2016



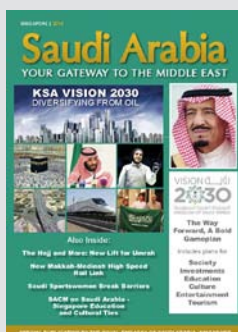
Opportunity Indonesia 2016



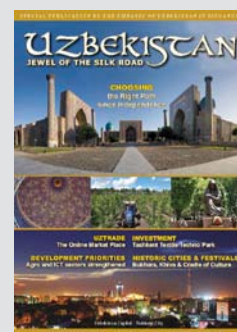
It's Time for Brazil in Singapore 2016



Opportunity Malaysia 2016



Saudi Arabia Your Gateway to the Middle East



Uzbekistan Jewel of the Silk Road



Opportunity Nigeria 2016



Partner Philippines 2017