

IN Diplomacy

MISSION TO COMMUNICATE

Published by



Supported by



DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR CORPS SINGAPORE

Issue 52 July 2019
www.indiplomacy.com

President's Annual Diplomatic Reception



Inside

State Visit:

**President of Maldives:
HE Ibrahim Mohamed Solih**

**Official Visits by Armenia's Prime
Minister Nikol Pashinyan
and**

**Foreign Minister Dionísio da
Costa Babo Soares**

**First Impressions - Vladivostok:
Russia's Far East is Nearer than Far**

**Independence Day Receptions:
Egypt and USA**

Featuring

**High Commissioner
of New Zealand
HE Jo Tyndall**





PUBLISHER Sun Media Pte Ltd

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF Nomita Dhar

EDITORIAL Ranees Sahaney
Sumita Mehta
Jenny Tan
Syed Jaafar Alkaff

ADVERTISING Swati Singh

PRINTING A-Team Design
and Print Pte Ltd

PHOTOGRAPHERS Martin Lukas
Michael Ozaki

Contact

Sun Media Pte Ltd
20 Kramat Lane #01-02 United House,
Singapore 228773.
Tel: (65) 6735 2972 / 1907 / 2986
Fax: (65) 6735 3114
Email: edit@sunmediaonline.com

Website www.indiplomacy.com

For Advertising enquiries contact:
Swati Singh m: (65) 9082 9590
Email: business@sunmediaonline.com

Photos appearing in this issue courtesy of:
- Singapore PMO
- Singapore Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Singapore Ministry of Communication
& Information
- www.istana.org.sg

MCI (P) 071/08/2019



© Copyright 2019 by Sun Media Pte Ltd. The opinions, pronouncements or views expressed or implied in this publication are those of contributors or authors. They do not necessarily reflect the official stance of any other organisation or authorities. While every effort has been made to ensure accuracy of all information contained, the publisher cannot be held liable for loss incurred in any way whatsoever by a company or a person relying on this information.

CONTENTS ISSUE 52



Page 6

3 PRESENTATION OF CREDENTIALS

- United Kingdom ■ Finland ■ Sri Lanka ■ Kazakhstan
- Bosnia and Herzegovina ■ Mali

4 ■ Diplomats & Honorary Consuls Meet at President's Annual Diplomatic Reception

VISIT: STATE

- Maldives President Ibrahim Mohammed Solih Signed Open Air Agreement

VISITS: OFFICIAL

- Armenia's Prime Minister Pashinyan
- Timor Leste Foreign Minister Soares

5 INTERVIEW

High Commissioner Jo Tyndall:
New Zealand - Singapore - The Next Level

6 FIRST IMPRESSIONS - VLADIVOSTOK

Russia's Far East is Nearer than Far



Page 5

7 COMMUNIQUE

- Order of Rio Branco Honours
- New US Charge d'Affaires

EVENTS

- 7 ■ Egypt National Day 2019
- 8 ■ USA Independence Day 2019



Page 8

Supported by



DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR CORPS SINGAPORE

Presentation of Credentials

IN Diplomacy welcomes the new Heads of Mission following their presentation of credentials to the President of Singapore Her Excellency Halimah Yacob

27th June 2019



*The British High Commissioner
Her Excellency Kara Owen*



*The Ambassador of the Republic of Finland
HE Antti Vänkä*



*The High Commissioner of the
Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka
HE Sashikala Premawardhane*

25th July 2019



*The Ambassador of the Republic of Kazakhstan
HE Arken Arystanov*



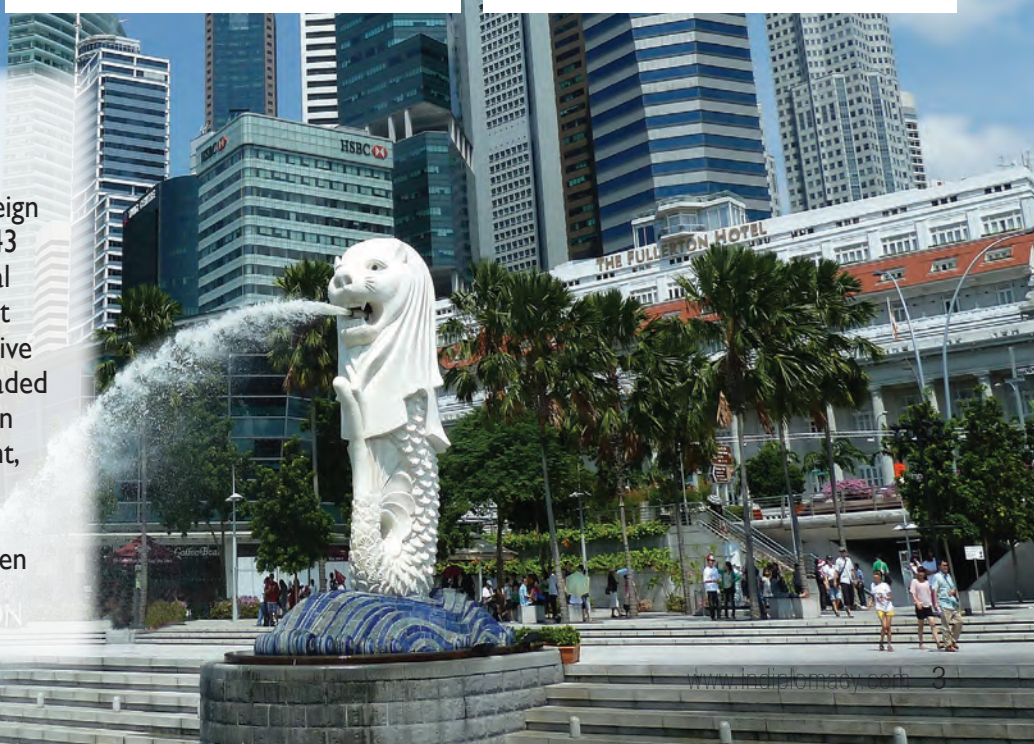
*The Ambassador of Bosnia and Herzegovina
HE Mehmed Halilović*



*The Ambassador of the Republic of Mali
HE Sékou Kassé*

Why Diplomacy Matters

Singapore is home to 70 resident foreign High Commissions and Embassies, 43 Consular Posts and 11 International Organisations. They act as a conduit between Singapore and their respective countries. Diplomatic missions are headed by influential newsmakers who open doors for business, trade, investment, education, the arts and culture. IN Diplomacy has a mission to communicate and be a bridge between the diplomatic community and Singaporeans.



Diplomats & Honorary Consuls Meet at President's Diplomatic Reception this Year



(Source: MCI / Chwee)

This year's President's Diplomatic Reception was held on 11th July 2019 and this year, the event, which is hosted by President Halimah Yacob to honour the Diplomatic Corps for promoting friendly relations with Singapore, was also attended by Singapore Honorary Consuls-General. In her message to the diplomats, the President said, "We may be a little red dot on the map, but Singapore enjoys excellent bilateral relations with the world. This is due to the good work of our diplomats, who play an important role in bridging understanding and appreciation between Singapore and other countries. It has been a tradition since 1985 to hold the President's Annual Diplomatic Reception to honour the Diplomatic Corps for promoting friendly relations with Singapore. I hope we will continue to build our people-to-people relations. My thanks to all who joined us for the reception at the Istana."

8th HCGs Meeting

Singapore's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) held its 8th Meeting of Singapore Honorary Consuls-General (HCGs) from 8 to 12 July 2019. The last meeting was held in 2015. Singapore currently has 33 HCGs across 29 countries. Many are distinguished and well-respected individuals in their respective countries and play a key role in promoting Singapore's political, commercial and diplomatic interests. In honour of their distinguished service, President Halimah Yacob hosted a tea reception for the HCGs and their spouses at the Istana on 10 July 2019 and they also called on the Prime Minister and Mrs Lee Hsien Loong. The next day, they joined the Diplomatic Corps in Singapore to attend the President's Annual Diplomatic Reception at the Istana. During the 8th Meeting, they also had the opportunity to engage in a conversation with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance Heng Swee Keat and Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr Vivian Balakrishnan separately.

VISIT

State

Maldives President Ibrahim Mohammed Solih Signed Open Air Agreement

On 1st July 2019, the President of the Republic of Maldives, HE Ibrahim Mohamed Solih, had meetings with President Halimah Yacob and Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong. President Solih briefed them on the priorities of his government, including on sustainable development. In this regard, Singapore will provide a two-year technical cooperation package, through the Singapore Cooperation Programme, for senior Maldivian officials including that of sustainable development.

Both sides also identified opportunities for further collaboration in healthcare, security, infrastructure and connectivity. PM Lee and President Solih also witnessed the signing of two agreements: An Open Skies Agreement and MOU on Cooperation between the



(Source: PMO)

Maldives' and Singapore's Ministries of Foreign Affairs to strengthen bilateral exchanges and cooperation between the foreign ministries.

VISITS

Official



(Source: MFA)

Armenia's Prime Minister Pashinyan

Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia, HE Nikol Pashinyan, was on his first Official Visit to Singapore from 7th to 9th July 2019, at the invitation of Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong. During his visit, Prime Minister Pashinyan called on President Halimah Yacob, PM Lee and Speaker of Parliament Tan Chuan Jin. In addition, he visited the Economic Development Board and met business leaders at a roundtable organised by the Singapore Business Federation; he also visited the Singapore Botanic Gardens where an orchid was named in his honour. On his visit to the Armenian Church the Prime Minister met members of the Armenian community. He unveiled a sculpture of Vanda Miss Joaquim flowers in the First Botanic Garden at Armenian Street, which was a contribution by the Armenian community here. PM Pashinyan was accompanied by his wife, Madame Anna Hakobyan, Minister of Economy Tigran Khachatryan, Minister of High-Technological Industry Hakob Arshakyan, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Avet Adonts and senior government officials.



(Source: MFA)

Timor Leste Foreign Minister Soares

Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste Dionísio da Costa Babo Soares was on his first Official Visit to Singapore from 8th to 9th July 2019. During his visit, Minister Soares met Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr Vivian Balakrishnan and also paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong. While in Singapore, Minister Soares attended the Timor-Leste-Singapore Business Forum organised by the Timor-Leste Embassy in Singapore. He also delivered a Distinguished Public Lecture at the S Rajaratnam School of International Studies.

INTERVIEW **HE Jo Tyndall**



New Zealand & Singapore: The Next Level

New Zealand's High Commissioner, HE Jo Tyndall, brings a fresh outlook to her diplomatic moves in her new charge as NZ's top diplomat to Singapore in a conversation with *IN Diplomacy* Editor-in Chief Nomita Dhar. The country's former Climate Change ambassador also shared her thoughts on tackling the global challenges facing the environment

You have been here since March this year, what has it been like so far?

Time has really flown and I just love being here; almost everywhere I go people ask me how I'm making the transition to Singapore. But really it is such an easy country to move and adjust to — even the heat — one manages to cope with that. It's a country and city that functions well. There's so much to do, so much to see; the people are incredibly friendly and the diplomatic corps here, I must say, is extremely welcoming and very active as well.

Can you share with our readers briefly where you were before coming to Singapore?

Prior to my coming here to Singapore I spent several years as New Zealand's Climate Change Ambassador, leading for New Zealand the international negotiations for the Paris Agreement, and then co-chairing negotiations on the, so called, Rule Book, which underpins the Agreement. The focus on climate change and other environmental challenges is growing, and very evident here in Singapore. It's so good to see multilateralism driving action and delivering results — even if we all still need to pick up the pace.

What are the recent highpoints of the bilateral relations between our two countries?

The relationship between Singapore and New Zealand is a very important and close one for us. Fortunately the highlight for me, so early in my time as High Commissioner, has been the visit of our own Prime Minister, Jacinda Ardern, here on 17th May on an official visit, when she and Singaporean Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong launched an enhanced partnership between New Zealand and Sin-

gapore. This was the culmination of about three years of considerable negotiations and discussion, and it's a really wide-ranging agreement between our two countries that covers defence and security, trade, economic issues, science and innovation, and people-to-people links, so it's very comprehensive and it pulled together, on both sides, at least 20 different government agencies. So the partnership agreement itself is an umbrella that pulls the threads of our bilateral relationship together, and brings in new initiatives that really provide a platform for taking the relationship to the next level.

So that really starts a very important roadmap for your next few years in Singapore. What would you like to start with first?

It's perhaps not a question of picking priori-

ties, because we want to advance everything under the enhanced partnership. I was a bit surprised when somebody said to me after the Prime Minister's visit: 'Well now that's happened, what are you going to do for the rest of your posting here?' But of course, while it's the end of the negotiation phase, it's the beginning of implementation.

So my focus is on all four "pillars" of the enhanced partnership and we have a pretty comprehensive plan for how we want to take it forward (with details for at least the first year); we need and want to work at both ends of the relationship for that and part of it is about making sure we do all the things we promised to do: the various dialogues, the information sharing exercises, the exchanges — people-to-people exchanges and so on, that form part of this partnership. We need to make sure the things we've jointly committed to do happen.

The second priority is to raise awareness in New Zealand and Singapore of the existence of the enhanced partnership. That doesn't mean going into the (tedious to most) details of e.g. the 700 pages of the upgraded economic partnership treaty, but to really bring alive for people what opportunities are created by the partnership agreement.

And I guess the third thing is to work towards something 'big', but it is still in early planning stages — something to mark our anniversary at about this time next year.

To generate awareness will there be more events, activities and publicity?

We plan to use multiple avenues. That includes traditional and social media, and some would be event-focused, using the opportunities created by the various dialogues and so on, which are being envisaged by the enhanced partnership. I also hope to head home to New Zealand to spread the good word around the country to make sure that New Zealand businesses, and New Zealanders generally, are aware of the opportunities they can take forward from here.

For the full transcript visit www.indiplomacy.com

Career Highlights

High Commissioner Joanne Diedre Tyndall served as New Zealand's Climate Change Ambassador from 2010 to 2018. From 2016 to December 2018, she also co-chaired the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change's (UNFCCC) Ad Hoc Working Group on the Paris Agreement (APA). As Climate Change Ambassador, she was head of delegation to the United Nations climate negotiations with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade from July 2010 to March 2016.

From 2014 - 2015, she held a Vice President position on the Bureau of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, representing the regional grouping of Western European and Other States.

Prior to her role as Climate Change Ambassador, Ms Tyndall was Director of the Broadcasting Unit in the Ministry for Culture and Heritage. From 1999 to 2006, she was Chief Executive of the broadcasting funding body, NZ On Air. She has also served as Chief Executive of two screen industry organisations — the Screen Production and Development Association (SPADA) and Project Blue Sky (1994 to 1999). Ms Tyndall began her career as a multilateral trade policy specialist with the Department of Trade and Industry and subsequently the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

VLADIVOSTOK



Russia's Far East is Nearer than Far

Upcoming Eastern Economic Forum (EEF) focuses on greater Russian and Asia-Pacific links. This year India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi is the Chief Guest. **The EEF has become the biggest international platform for discussing the strategy for developing political, economic and cultural ties between Russia and Asia Pacific.**

By Nomita Dhar
Publisher & Editor-in-Chief



The port city of Vladivostok is gearing up for the fifth edition of the EEF which will be held between 4 to 6 September 2019 (www.forumvostok.ru). Government, institutions, private sector and students are all working together to make the annual Forum a great success.

The EEF started in 2015 and was initiated by Russia's President Vladimir Putin. It was intended to support the economic development of Russia's Far East region and expand international cooperation with countries in the Asia-Pacific while attracting investments into the Far East region.

Over the last few years, the EEF has increased in its importance and reach. "This year the Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, will be attending the Forum as the Chief Guest at the invitation of the President and we are expecting over 7,000 guests to attend the forum," informed Mr A. Klimov, Deputy Secretary of the General Council of the United Russia Party. A high level delegation from Singapore will attend headed by Senior Minister Tharman Shanmugaratnam who will also be going to the Russia-Singapore Inter-Governmental Commission on 6th Sept 2019.

"Asia is our logical partner as we are in close proximity and there are many unexplored areas of collaboration which if tapped, can enhance prosperity for the people in Asia and Russia"

Round Table Discussion

At a Round Table discussion organised in July this year, members of the international press met: Mr V. Shcherbina (First Deputy Governor of the Primorsky Territory), Mr A. Rolik (Chairman of the Legislative Assembly of the Primorsky Territory), Mr G. Kuranov (Deputy Plenipotentiary Representative of the President of the Russian Federation in the Far Eastern Federal District), Mr A. Klimov, Mr S. Tyrtsev (First Deputy Minister for the development of the Russian Far East), S. Sopchuk (Head of the Far Eastern Interregional Coordination Council of the United Russia Party) and representatives of the district leadership; they discussed the international cooperation and development of the Far Eastern Federal District and the Arctic; they also briefed the visiting press on the upcoming Forum.



The Venue – Vladivostok

The city of Vladivostok is the administrative centre of the Far Eastern Federal District and Primorsky Krai, Russia. Located around the Golden Horn Bay, it is just next to Russia's neighbours China and North Korea. Branded as the Gateway to Europe, its proximity to Asia makes it a great draw for Asian tourists. "Asian culture influences us a lot at Vladivostok; we are very far from Moscow, and we are developing very fast; our infrastructure and educational institutions such as the Far Eastern Federal University (FEFU) are creating more options for students from Vladivostok and those in the countries around," briefed the FEFU student liaison Andrey Bryansky.

Mr Igor E. Khrushchev, the Director at the Ministry of Transport of the Russian Federation started his career as a seaman and has been a witness to the changing face and opportunities at the Russian Far East. He is a man in a hurry to catch up on lost time. "Asia is our logical partner as we are in close proximity to each other and there are many unexplored areas of collaboration which if tapped, can enhance prosperity for the people in Asia and Russia".

Reminiscent of Vladivostok's historic past, the city is an important military port as the headquarters of the Russian Navy Pacific Fleet.

**For the full report & more photos
visit www.indiplomacy.com**

SBF Mission in September

The Singapore Business Federation (SBF) is also planning to send a high-level business mission to Vladivostok from 3rd to 6th September 2019. The mission is to help delegates gain a better understanding of the market dynamics and emerging sectors as well as establish business and official contacts. For details visit www.sbf.org.sg

COMMUNIQUÉ Order of the Rio Branco Honours...

...Brazil's Ambassador to Singapore HE Flávio Damico and its Consul General, Mr Nelson Portillo. They were recognised by their government for outstanding performance of their duties and service



Heartfelt tributes were also paid by the Ambassador and Consul General to their wives Rosa (above right) and Veronica (above right photo standing far right) resp. They had emphatically expressed the important roles their wives have played in their success



In his opening remarks to a group of 60 members of the diplomatic and Brazilian community who had gathered for a simple ceremony at the Brazilian Residence on 30th July 2019, Minister Counselor of the Brazilian Embassy, Mr Daniel Roberto Pinto, Deputy Head of Mission paid tribute to the two awardees. The first of these was Mr Nelson Portillo, the embassy's Consular Officer, who received the Knight of the Order of the Rio Branco. The man of the moment was surely HE Flávio Damico who received the Grand Cross of the Order of the Rio Branco - one of the highest decorations awarded by the country. Mr Pinto recalled how three years ago, the Ambassador in his first posting as Chief of Mission here, has worked hard and successfully to remove barriers preventing closer ties and cooperation between Brazil and Singapore. He said, "One of the results of his efforts - Singapore was taken off the list of jurisdictions with preferential tax regimes. This later paved the way for negotiations that led to a bilateral treaty to avoid double taxation and promote investments and close business ties."

New US Chargé d'Affaires



The US Embassy announced that Senior U.S. diplomat Rafik Mansour arrived in Singapore to begin his assignment as Chargé d'Affaires, a.i. of the Embassy of the United States of America on 30th July 2019. Upon his arrival, Mr. Mansour said, "I look forward to deepening the strong partnership between our two countries to advance our shared vision of a free and open Indo-Pacific. The United States and Singapore continue to be indispensable partners, and I could not more proud to represent the United States in this beautiful, inspiring, and strategic country."

A career member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, Chargé d'Affaires Rafik Mansour arrives with more than 20 years of service as a diplomat. Prior to his assignment in Singapore, he served as Deputy Chief of Mission and Chargé d'Affaires, a.i. of the U.S. Embassy in Yerevan, Armenia.

EVENTS

ISSUE 52

Egypt National Day 2019

23rd July 2019

St Regis Singapore John Jacob Ballroom

Egypt's Ambassador to Singapore, HE Mohamed Abulkheir welcomed Mr Koh Poh Koon (pictured right) who was the Guest of Honour as Singapore government's representative to the celebrations commemorating Egypt's National Day. Mr Koh, who is the Senior Minister of State at the Ministry of Trade & Industry, was on hand to cut the traditional birthday cake together with his two parliamentary colleagues, Mr Gan Thiam Poh and Mr Ang Hin Kee (pictured below - far left and right resp.) and at the national day reception at the St Regis Singapore.



USA Independence Day 2019

2nd July 2019

Gardens by the Bay Flower Field Hall

America's first recorded contact with Singapore went back as far as 1842 when the Wilkes Exploring Expedition landed here. One of the first items of trade between the island and the US was in 1854 when the island imported *ice* from the frozen lakes of Massachusetts! These were a couple of the 'cool' facts US Embassy's Chargé d'Affaires, a.i., Stephanie Syptak-Ramnath used to illustrate how historical ties between both countries went back almost 200 years. The embassy celebrated the country's 243rd Independence Day on an historical theme as the US also wished Singapore a happy anniversary for its Bicentennial year. The Singapore government representative and Guest of Honour for the occasion was the Senior Minister of State, Ministry of Trade and Industry and Ministry of Education Mr Chee Hong Tat. For Mrs Stephanie Syptak-Ramnath this year also marked her last term as the embassy's Chargé d'Affaires. As she rightly pointed out the US embassy staff here can be proud they are now part of another historic milestone in US diplomacy. During her tenure the embassy successfully hosted the US-North Korea Summit in Singapore in 2018.

Full report & more photos visit www.indiplomacy.com



① A toast reaffirming the close ties between the US and Singapore by Senior Minister of State Mr Chee Hong Tat and US Charge d'Affaires Stephanie Syptak-Ramnath
 ② Literal display - Singapore imported ice from the US in the 1800s. Accompanying Mr Chee Hong Tat were Singapore Members of Parliament (far left) Mr Seah

Kian Peng and (far right) Ms Foo Mee Har ③ Standing room only - about 1,100 guests came to celebrate! ④ Some popular icons of American life also showed up
 ⑤ An almost tearful goodbye from the much admired and respected US Charge d'Affaires
 ⑥ On a little street in Singapore - a historic themed background for phototaking at the Gardens by the Bay