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## Historic 54th NDP - Behind the Scenes



### Inside

**State Visit: President  
of Turkmenistan  
HE Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedow**

**Official Visit: Qatar Deputy PM  
& Minister of Foreign Affairs  
HE Sheikh Mohammed bin  
Abdulrahman Al-Thani**

### Featuring

**High Commissioner  
of Rwanda HE  
Guillaume Kavaruganda**







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## CONTENTS ISSUE 53

### 3 BEHIND THE SCENES: Singapore 54th National Day Parade VISIT: OFFICIAL

### 4 ■ Qatar Deputy PM Signs MOUs, and Agreement and Reaffirms Progress on IMM

#### VISIT: STATE

### 5 ■ President of Turkmenistan Historic First State Visit to Singapore

#### VISITS:

### 4 ■ ESM Goh @ TICAD 7, Yokohama



Page 4



Page 4

### 5 ■ Dr Maliki @ 20th Anniversary of Timor-Leste's Popular Consultation Celebrations

### 6 ■ Malaysia Visit to Enhance Ties



#### INTERVIEW

### 7 High Commissioner HE Guillaume Kavaruganda

Page 6

#### EVENT

### 8 ■ Indonesia 74th Independence Day Diplomatic Reception



Page 8

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# BEHIND THE SCENES

## Singapore 54th National Day Parade

For the first time the leaders of Brunei, Indonesia and Malaysia were invited to witness the largest annual public event in Singapore. This year also marks the Island Republic's Bicentennial celebrations making it doubly memorable and one for the history books. Below is a brief peek behind the scenes as the leaders gathered together at the National Gallery Singapore.

Photos: Singapore Ministry of Communications and Information



The hosts, the Republic of Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong and Mrs Lee at the National Gallery Singapore together with...



Sultan of Brunei Darussalam Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah and wife Paduka Seri Baginda Raja Isteri Pengiran Anak Hajah Saleha



Indonesian President Joko Widodo and wife Iriana Joko Widodo



Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad along with Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali





VISIT

Official



(Source: Singapore MCI)

## Qatar Deputy PM Signs MOUs and Agreements; Reaffirms Progress on IMM

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the State of Qatar, His Excellency Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani, visited Singapore from 27th to 28th August 2019, at the invitation of Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr Vivian Balakrishnan.

He met Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance Heng Swee Keat (pictured above), and they discussed ways to deepen relations across various areas, including financial cooperation and trade linkages.

Sheikh Mohammed, who co-chaired the Second Implementation Monitoring Mechanism (IMM) meeting with Minister Balakrishnan, discussed with Minister Balakrishnan the good progress made since the inaugural IMM meeting in April 2018, and reaffirmed the importance of the IMM meeting as a platform to facilitate mutually beneficial bilateral partnerships. They reviewed the outcome of the discussions (pictured top right) held between representatives of both countries from six working-level Technical Working Committees. These covered the areas of Information and Communications Technology, Security, Business, Legal, Sustainability, and Social Development.

Sheikh Mohammed and Minister Balakrishnan witnessed the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Qatar Free Zones Authority and the Intellectual Property Office of Singapore, as well as an agreement between Megawatts Engineering Services Private Limited and DServ to establish a limited liability company.

Sheikh Mohammed also called on Senior Minister and Coordinating Minister for National Security



(Above): Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Qatar Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani co-chairing the Second Implementation Monitoring Mechanism meeting with Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr Vivian Balakrishnan on 28 August 2019. (Source: Singapore MFA)

Teo Chee Hean in the afternoon. Sheikh Mohammed and Senior Minister Teo had a wide-ranging discussion on regional and international developments, and affirmed their continued support for the IMM platform, which had resulted in substantive bilateral projects and cooperation between Singapore and Qatar.

Sheikh Mohammed also called on President Halimah Yacob. Sheikh Mohammed and President Halimah reaffirmed the warm and friendly relations between Singapore and Qatar. During his visit, Sheikh Mohammed, who is concurrently the Chairman of the Board of Directors at the Qatar Investment Authority, visited Temasek Holdings.

## ESM Goh @ TICAD 7, Yokohama



(Source: Singapore MFA)



(Source: MOFA TICAD)

(Above left): ESM Goh Chok Tong greeting Japan's PM Shinzo Abe. He is attending the meet as PM Abe's guest. (Above right): ESM Goh arriving at the Welcome Reception co-hosted by Japan's Prime Minister and Mayor of Yokohama City. (Right): ESM Goh met Japanese Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance Taro Aso on the sidelines of TICAD 7



(Source: Singapore MFA)

Emeritus Senior Minister (ESM) Goh Chok Tong was in Yokohama, Japan, for the Seventh Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD 7) from 27th to 30th August 2019. He spoke at a Plenary Session and interacted with African leaders at the conference. He was invited by Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to speak at TICAD 7 where he shared an overview of the development experience of Singapore, and stated that it is important to inherit a consistent policy to achieve economic and social development. ESM Goh expressed his hope for Africa's sustainable economic growth making use of Asian experience.

ESM Goh met Japanese leaders PM Shinzo Abe, Deputy PM and Minister of Finance Taro Aso, and former PM Yasuo Fukuda. ESM Goh also congratulated Deputy PM Aso, on the success of TICAD 7, and had a candid exchange of views on regional and global developments. ESM Goh and former Prime Minister Fukuda had a good discussion on a broad range of issues. ESM Goh also interacted with African leaders during the visit which included a meeting with Ghanaian President Nana Akufo-Addo, where



ESM Goh Chok Tong met Ghanaian President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo on the sidelines of TICAD 7 (Source: Singapore MFA)

they discussed how Singapore and Ghana could work together to strengthen bilateral ties and further economic cooperation. The theme for TICAD this year was "Advancing Africa's Development through People, Technology and Innovation."



## VISIT

## State

## President of Turkmenistan Historic First State Visit to Singapore

The President of Turkmenistan, HE Gurbanguly Berdimuhammedow, made a State Visit to Singapore from 26th to 27th August 2019, at the invitation of President Halimah Yacob. This will be President Berdimuhammedow's first State Visit to Singapore.

President Berdimuhammedow was received with an official Welcome Ceremony at the Istana and called on President Halimah Yacob, who hosted a State Banquet in his honour.

President Halimah and President Berdimuhammedow reaffirmed the friendly ties between Singapore and Turkmenistan, and discussed ways to enhance bilateral cooperation. President Halimah welcomed President Berdimuhammedow's interest to deepen engagement with Singapore in areas such as trade and investment, tourism and capacity building.



(Source: Singapore MFA)

President Berdimuhammedow also met Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong and the President briefed Prime Minister Lee on Turkmenistan's priorities, including developing its infrastructure and connectivity. Both leaders witnessed the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding for:

- Cooperation in the Legal Field
- Avoidance of Double Taxation Agreement
- Visa Abolition Agreement

President Berdimuhammedow also met business leaders over breakfast to discuss commercial opportunities in Turkmenistan. The breakfast meeting included senior figures from DP Architects, DBS Bank, Surbana Jurong, Enterprise Singapore and the Singapore Business Federation.



(Source: Singapore MFA)

## Dr Maliki @ 20th Anniversary of Timor-Leste's Popular Consultation Celebrations



Senior Minister of State, Ministry of Defence and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dr Mohd Maliki Osman visited Dili in the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, from 29th to 31st August 2019 to attend the 20th Anniversary of Timor-Leste's Popular Consultation celebrations. The celebrations commemorated the UN-organised referendum on 30th August 1999 that led to Timor-Leste's independence in May 2002.

During the visit, SMS Maliki attended commemorative events related to the

celebrations, including a dinner hosted by President Francisco Guterres Lú-Olo (pictured right), a lunch hosted by Prime Minister Taur Matan Ruak and a plenary session at the National Parliament. SMS Maliki also called on other Timor-Leste leaders during his visit; amongst those he met with were the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation Dionísio Babo Soares and Minister of Defence Filomeno da Paixão de Jesus.

SMS Maliki congratulated the Timorese leaders on the considerable progress Timor-



(Above): At the official dinner hosted by President Francisco Guterres Lú-Olo. (Left): A traditional dance performance at the official ceremony commemorating the 20th anniversary of the Popular Consultation. (Source: MFA)

Leste has made since its independence in 2002 and conveyed Singapore's continued support to Timor-Leste's development. Both sides also reaffirmed the warm and longstanding ties between Singapore and Timor-Leste, which date back to even before Timor-Leste's independence. They noted the good trade and investment flows between both countries. SMS Maliki welcomed more Timor-Leste officials to participate in capacity building courses under the Singapore Cooperation Programme.





## Malaysia Visit to Enhance Ties

Singapore's Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr Vivian Balakrishnan was on a working visit to Kedah and Penang from 29th to 30th August 2019. Singapore has strong historical, economic and people-to-people ties with the states of Kedah and Penang. The visit was part of Singapore's efforts to enhance these valuable ties, and to deepen the country's overall engagement with Malaysia at all levels

In Kedah, Minister Balakrishnan had an audience earlier in the day with the Sultan of Kedah Kebawah Duli Yang Maha Mulia Al-Aminul Karim Sultan Sallehuddin Ibni Almarhum Sultan Badlishah, at Istana Anak Bukit, Kedah. At the audience, Minister Balakrishnan also met Raja Muda of Kedah Duli Yang Teramat Mulia Tengku Sarafudin Badlishah Ibni Sultan Sallehuddin, Kedah Menteri Besar YAB Dato' Seri Utama Mukhriz Bin Tun Dr Mahathir, and Tunku Laksamana of Kedah Yang Teramat Mulia Dato' Seri Diraja Tunku Shazuddin Ariff Ibni Sultan Sallehuddin. During the audience, the Sultan of Kedah and Minister Balakrishnan reaffirmed the longstanding friendship between Singapore and Kedah, and looked forward to expanding cooperation with each other, including in having more exchanges between government officials, business leaders, and youth. Minister Balakrishnan invited the Sultan of Kedah and Menteri Besar Mukhriz to visit Singapore at a mutually convenient time.

Minister Balakrishnan also hosted tea for five Kedah State Executive Council members. At

the tea, Minister Balakrishnan had fruitful discussions on potential areas of further cooperation, including on tourism and investment opportunities.

Dr Balakrishnan told Singaporean media after his meetings in Kedah state capital Alor Setar that: "Most of our interactions are at the federal level; we decided we do need to engage at the state level. This is the first trip of many to come."

In the evening, Minister Balakrishnan travelled to Penang and visited the constituency of Member of Parliament for Permatang Pauh YB Puan Nurul Izzah Anwar. He was hosted a tour of the constituency and service centre, which was followed by dinner.

In Penang, Minister Balakrishnan called on the Governor of Penang His Excellency Tun Dato' Seri Utama (Dr) Haji Abdul Rahman Bin Haji Abbas, and Penang Chief Minister YAB Tuan Chow Kon Yeow. Minister Balakrishnan also met several Penang State Executive Council members.

1. Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr Vivian Balakrishnan's audience with the Sultan of Kedah Kebawah Duli Yang Maha Mulia Al-Aminul Karim Sultan Sallehuddin Ibni Almarhum Sultan Badlishah. Also present at the audience were Raja Muda of Kedah Duli Yang Teramat Mulia Tengku Sarafudin Badlishah Ibni Sultan Sallehuddin, Kedah Menteri Besar YAB Dato' Seri Utama Mukhriz Bin Tun Dr Mahathir, and Tunku Laksamana of Kedah Yang Teramat Mulia Dato' Seri Diraja Tunku Shazuddin Ariff Ibni Sultan Sallehuddin.

2. Dr Balakrishnan calls on Penang Governor His Excellency Tun Dato' Seri Utama (Dr) Haji Abdul Rahman Bin Haji Abbas.

3. Dr Balakrishnan's meeting with Penang Chief Minister YAB Tuan Chow Kon Yeow.

4. Tea hosted by Dr Balakrishnan for Penang State Executive Council members YB Dato' Ir. Hj. Ahmad Zakiyuddin Bin Abdul Rahman, YB Prof. Dr. Ramasamy A/L Palanisamy, and YB Zairil Khir Johari.

5. Tea hosted by Dr Balakrishnan for Kedah State Executive Council members YB Tan Kok Yew, YB Mohd Asmirul Anuar Bin Aris, YB Ooi Tze Min, YB Sunmugam A/L Rengasamy, and YB Mohd Firdaus Bin Ahmad

6. Dr Balakrishnan's dinner with Member of Parliament for Permatang Pauh YB Puan Nurul Izzah Anwar.



Photos: Singapore MFA



## INTERVIEW **HE Guillaume Kavaruganda**

### A Privilege & Pleasure to Serve

The Rwandan Ambassador to Singapore looks back on four memorable years stationed in Singapore. He shares with IN Diplomacy Editor-in-Chief Ms Nomita Dhar some of the ups and downs as a career diplomat here at the Island Republic

**Please share some of the highlights of your experience here in the past four years.**

On the political side, I think it must be the two visits of H.E. the President of Rwanda Mr. Paul Kagame in Singapore in September 2015 and January 2019. Another highlight was the visit of the Minister of State in Charge of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation Olivier Nduhungirehe during the High Level Ministerial Exchange in 2018.

Rwanda also had the opportunity to play host to the then Deputy Prime Minister Tharman Shanmugaratnam in June 2018 and his delegation which included by the way a trade mission.

The DPM signed in Kigali, Rwanda, the Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT), which is a major legal instrument for the protection of Singapore investors in Rwanda; there was also signed the Bilateral Air Services Agreement (BASA) which allowed Rwandair and Singapore Airlines to use the Rwanda and Singapore airspace and carry passengers in both respective countries.

I am also happy to note during my tenure Singapore investments in Rwanda have increased and Rwandan exports to Singapore are in a good position, ranking sixth worldwide. We export mainly coffee, tea, minerals and honey. The number of Singaporean visiting Rwanda has increased year by year as well as the so-called 'Friends of Rwanda' from Singapore.

Something that I do hope will happen is that Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong will visit Rwanda next year 2020 during the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting that will take place in Kigali, Rwanda.

**Can you share more about the profile of Singapore investors in Rwanda?**

On an individual level, we noticed that there are more Singaporean business ladies who have invested in Rwanda and in such sectors as farming in the chicken industry, honey making, the financial sector and so on. We are not sure why but we do hope that more Singapore men will also take notice of the growing investment opportunities and do the same. The number of Singaporean private companies investing is increasing as well as the greater amounts they are investing there. I am also happy to report that many of them realized the returns on their investments sooner than they have expected.

**We have heard how some have described Rwanda as the 'Singapore of Africa'; how so?**

Singapore is among very few countries who have succeeded to pass from a poor country to a rich one in a very short period of time. In 1994, with the end of the Genocide against the Tutsi, Rwanda was considered as a failed state. In the last 25 years, we have worked hard and succeeded so far in alleviating the numbers of poor people in the country. But a lot remains to be done.

Some other 'best practices' aspects of Singapore that are similar to Rwanda is long term planning for the future and the timely execution and completion of planned projects. We make sure (projects) start and end as scheduled. It is a common experience in less developed countries, especially when many projects are funded by donors, they tend to start late and end very late mainly because of the slow disbursements of funds.

**What are some of the things you will miss about Singapore?**

Since my residence is close to Watten Estate I love to walk at night in the neighborhood (the heat is less at this time), or bring along a book and read in the nearby coffee shop. The people and shops in the neighbourhood are used to my habits and by now the waiters bring me a hot latte and sandwich without asking! For food, I will miss the bakuteh (pork bone soup). I don't think I will find this dish back home.

*The Rwandan High Commissioner (3rd from right) at one of the many farewell gatherings to wish him goodbye*



**You are also heavily involved in the Diplomatic Corps here. How has it been?**

The Diplomatic Corps in Singapore is very united, more than anywhere I have been posted before. The Dean is playing a big role in making the life of diplomats more fruitful and enjoyable.

**Do you have a message for Singaporeans about Rwanda?**

Please bear in mind that Rwanda is a very safe country, with a good climate and where it is easy to do business. Come and see for yourself. Visit Rwanda, trade and invest with us. You will not regret it.

**After Singapore, where are you headed now?**

I joined Rwanda's foreign service 21 years ago. I have been posted in Washington D.C., Geneva, Netherlands and Singapore. After nine years of being posted abroad I have to go back to the country's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Once in Rwanda they will let me know where they need me to serve.

*"Precisely four years ago, I arrived in Singapore to commence my new position as the Rwandan High Commissioner. I was previously in the Netherlands and had spent 5 years there. Besides Singapore,*

*I was also the non-resident Rwandan High Commissioner to Australia, New Zealand and non-resident Ambassador to Indonesia.*

*In my 21-year long career in diplomacy, I was a civil servant, serving Rwanda in different countries and in different capacities in Washington D.C, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Singapore and twice in the headquarters of the Rwandan Ministry of Foreign Affairs. I have always found it a pleasure to serve.*

*The posting in Singapore though is a special one, for it was not only rich in experience, but also gratifying, enjoyable and fulfilling in all aspects.*

*The team at the Rwandan High Commission in Singapore is small, but a very dedicated one, eager to find solutions rather than excuses. Together with them, the High Commission has achieved a lot and I am grateful to them."*

*- Extract from H.E. Guillaume Kavaruganda, formal Farewell Note, August 2019*





# Indonesia 74th Independence Day Diplomatic Reception

22nd August 2019

Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in Singapore



The year 2019 marked the return to the presidency for HE Joko Widodo and by August a return to “business as usual” for Indonesia as it continues its development plans for the future. At its 74th Anniversary of the Proclamation of Independence Diplomatic Reception at the expansive Embassy’s Ripta Loka hall, the Republic of Indonesia’s Ambassador to Singapore, HE Ngurah Swajaya, described in his Welcome Address how the relatively peaceful election process and outcome has shown once again that: “Democracy, peace and stability; the rule of law reign supreme in such a large country as Indonesia.”

He highlighted how the new government has placed great priority in new infrastructure and human resource development programmes. He quipped, “In that regard I am very glad to have the Minister of Education HE Ong Ye Kun to be the guest of honour today!” Minister Ong Ye Kun was accompanied by his parliamentary colleagues Prof Fatimah Lateef and Ms Tin Pei Ling.

In his address, Minister Ong acknowledged the “excellent bilateral relations” between Singapore and Indonesia. He shared that earlier in the month Singapore had invited President Joko Widodo and Ibu Iriana together with the leaders of Brunei and Malaysia to attend Singapore’s Bicentennial National Day Parade. He said: “Their participation in this commemorative occasion reaffirmed the close friendship and deep historical ties between Singapore and our close neighbour.”

Full report & more photos visit  
[www.indiplomacy.com](http://www.indiplomacy.com)

