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US President Biden: Raising Our Climate Ambition



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**Celebrating 55 Years of
Shared History and Ties**

AMBASSADOR INTERVIEW

**H.E. Ignacio Concha:
Chile to be Powerhouse in
Green Tech Production**





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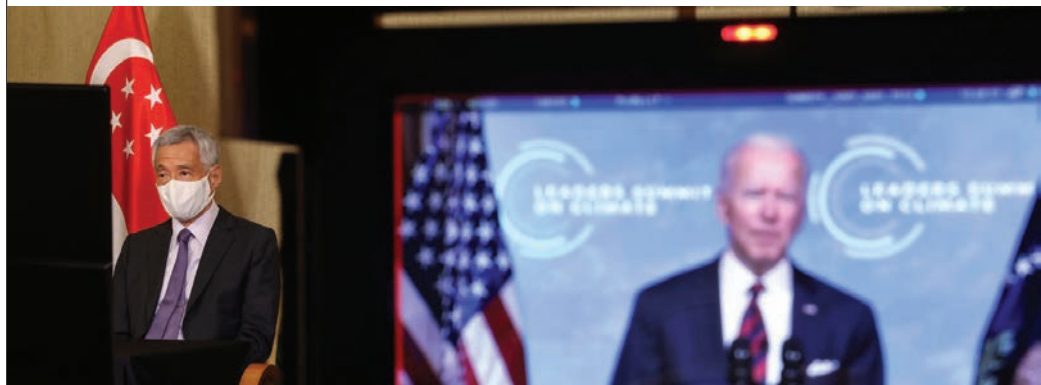
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Presentation of Credentials

President Halimah Yacob received the credentials of the Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates H.E. Jamal Abdulla Al Suwaidi and Ambassador of the Republic of Angola H.E. Daniel Rosa on 30th March 2021 at the Istana.

H.E. Jamal Abdulla Al Suwaidi Ambassador of United Arab Emirates to Singapore



PRIOR to his accreditation to Singapore, Ambassador Jamal Abdulla Al Suwaidi served as the Deputy Manager in the Office of the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the UAE since 2019 and as the Head of the Political Content & Media Section at the Office of the Minister from 2015 to 2019.

Before joining the UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation in 2013, Ambassador

Al Suwaidi worked in the maritime and telecommunications sectors in the UAE.

Ambassador Al Suwaidi holds a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration from the University of Sharjah.

He is married and has two daughters.

H.E. Daniel António Rosa Ambassador of Republic of Angola to Singapore



From 2011 to 2015, Ambassador Rosa was the Director of the Directorate of the America, Oceania, and the UN at the Angolan Ministry of External Relations.

Ambassador Rosa's previous overseas postings include the Angolan Permanent Mission to the United Nations in New York (2006-11) and the Angolan Embassies to France (1997-2006), Côte d'Ivoire (1994-1997),

Russia (1989-1994), and Portugal (1980-1983). During his stint at the Angolan Permanent Mission to the United Nations in New York, Ambassador Rosa coordinated Angola's involvement in the United Nations General Assembly First Committee and the United Nations General Assembly Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations.

Ambassador Rosa has a Bachelor's degree in Political Science from the Escuela Superior de Partido Comunista de Cuba, "Nico López", Cuba. He is married.



Singapore's national flower is a hybrid orchid - the Vanda Miss Joaquim

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.

India's 6th Raisina Dialogue: Singapore Stresses Establishment of Common Rules & Standards to Fight COVID

Dr Vivian Balakrishnan was invited to the Dialogue and following are excerpts from his conversation with Rory Medcalf, the Professor and Head of the National Security College, Australian National University on 14th April 2021

Reviving Travel

"To revive travel, there are efforts currently underway to develop mutual recognition of health certificates, and to ensure that there is interoperability and verification across borders and across systems. Singapore has also developed a globally interoperable Healthcert digital standard. This is based on blockchain technology for COVID-19 test results and vaccine certificates."

"At a broader level beyond the technology, this actually underscores the need to establish common rules and common standards in order to facilitate cross-border digital transactions, and this will also extend to areas such as e-payments and data flows. This is why Singapore has taken the effort to conclude Digital Economy Agreements with Australia, Chile, and New Zealand. We are actively exploring more of such agreements with other partners. I am also glad that the WTO is also working to create new rules to govern the global digital economy."

US-China Tensions and India's Role

"In Southeast Asia, it will be all the more crucial to maintain ASEAN unity and Centrality amidst this greater geopolitical competition, even as we deal with our own internal challenges, sharpened by COVID-19. If ASEAN Member States can hold together, maintain ASEAN Centrality, maintain our relevance, then the long-term prospects for our region are very good. We have 650 million people, a growing middle class, and a fast-growing digital economy. ASEAN Member States will press on with economic integration, the ASEAN Community Blueprints, and

we will continue to expand cooperation within ASEAN and with our external partners as well. All this, we hope, will reinforce the concentric circles of an open and inclusive regional architecture, which includes mechanisms like the East Asia Summit and the ASEAN Regional Forum."

India Strong Supporter

"In this context, India has a crucial role to play amidst all these trends, and in helping to shape the post-COVID-19 world. I am aware that there is a surge in cases, which continues to pose an immense challenge worldwide, including in India, but we hope that this will not slow down the momentum of global cooperation. India has in fact been one of the strongest supporters of global vaccine cooperation. India's strong pharmaceutical sector has quickly risen to the challenge of vaccine manufacturing. It has supplied more than 64.5 million doses to over 80 countries, including 18 million doses provided through the COVAX facility."

"In the digital economy and beyond, Indian companies have tremendous growth potential, and have an important role to play in stimulating global recovery. With its wealth of engineering talent, and a robust digital infrastructure, India's digital and innovation space has thrived and is really ready for lift-off. I am happy to note that India is doing more to encourage foreign investments; this will create more jobs and will boost India's target of a US\$5 trillion economy by 2025. So, I do hope, and here I am making a plea, I hope that India will reassess regional trade pacts like the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, and even the Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific

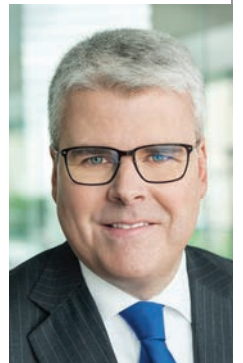
Partnership. These trade pacts will give Indian companies a platform to showcase their strengths and access even larger markets. Indian conglomerates like Tata, Reliance, Bharti, Adani, TVS, Zomato, DLF, and Forbes Marshall are already globally competitive."

"ASEAN-India relations have also been enhanced in recent years, under Prime Minister Modi's Act East Policy, and by his administration's support for ASEAN Centrality. India has also supported ASEAN's recovery efforts, including by contributing US\$1 million to the ASEAN Response Fund, so there are certainly good prospects for greater cooperation. In August this year, Singapore will commence..."

For the full report visit
www.indiplomacy.com

Singapore's New Honorary Consul in Frankfurt

THE Singapore Government with the agreement of the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany, has appointed Dr Markus Rasner as Singapore's Honorary Consul in Frankfurt, Germany, with jurisdiction in the German Federal States of Baden-Württemberg, Hesse, North Rhine-Westphalia, Rhineland-Palatinate, and Saarland.



The Honorary Consul will support the work of Singapore's Embassy in Berlin and work alongside the Honorary Consulates in Hamburg and Munich. The appointment of the Honorary Consul in Frankfurt will further enhance Singapore's deep and longstanding ties with Germany.

Dr Rasner, 47, is a Partner and Head of the ASEAN and China Desks at law firm Oppenhoff, and also a member of the Executive Board of the German Asia-Pacific Business Association (OAV). As Honorary Consul, Dr Rasner will perform representational duties and notarial functions as well as extend consular assistance to Singaporeans. In view of the prevailing COVID-19 restrictions in Germany, visitors to the Honorary Consulate are reminded to make appointments beforehand and abide by local public health regulations.

About



It is India's premier conference on geopolitics and geoeconomics and hosted by the Observer Research Foundation (ORF) in partnership with India's Ministry of External Affairs in New Delhi. This year's edition was in a hybrid format with physical and digital discussions. For more info as well as reports and publications to download visit: orfonline.org

Ambassador Interview

H.E. Ignacio Concha: Chile Ready to be Powerhouse in Green Tech Production Technology

Ambassador Ignacio Concha updated Publisher and Editor-in-Chief Nomita Dhar on milestones in bilateral ties that will be set by this year and how Chile is advantageously placed with ample wind, solar and water resources for "green hydrogen" production!



AMBASSADOR Concha presented his credentials to President Halimah Yacob last September but as with many other things that were postponed by the current pandemic **IN Diplomacy** was not able to catch up and interview the career diplomat who found the presentation ceremony of credentials here rather memorable no thanks to COVID.

He remembered how the whole ceremony had to be cut very short sans the inspection of the National Guard of Honour: "It took just about 10 to 15 minutes! Normally we diplomats attach great importance to the presentation of credentials because it is so important for us personally and the country we represent but considering COVID it is completely understandable."

Back in Chile, the Ambassador was happy to report the COVID situation is "under control" according to the latest statistics with seven million of the country's 18 million people already receiving at least one dose of the vaccine. The health authorities estimated a return to some level of normalcy possibly sometime in June said the ambassador as by then about 75 percent of the population will be fully vaccinated.

Ambassador Ignacio hails from the city of Santiago in Chile - the country is famous for its red wines and pisco (brandy) but after talking with the Ambassador we realise that Chile is also on its way to be just as famous as a global force in the production of "Green Hydrogen".

Unprecedented Agreement

On 15th February 2021, Chile's Minister of Energy and Mining Juan Carlos Jobet

and Singapore's Second Minister for Trade and Industry, Dr Tan See Leng, signed a MOU to facilitate cooperation on Green Hydrogen. According to the Embassy this was an "unprecedented collaboration agreement" that seeks to foster cooperation between Singapore and Chile to promote the development of hydrogen as an alternative energy source. Areas of collaboration include management, technology, and financ-



Presentation of Credentials ceremony at the Istana on 29th Sept 2021: (From left): Mdm Blanca Eugenia A. Andrade De Amesti, Ambassador Ignacio Concha and President Halimah Yaacob

Brief Bio Ambassador Ignacio Concha was previously the Consul General of Chile in Shanghai, China from 2017 to 2020. He graduated from the Diplomatic School of Spain and the Diplomatic Academy of Chile. He holds a Bachelor's Degree in Political Science from Universidad Rafael Landivar (Guatemala). A career diplomat, Ambassador Concha has served in the Embassies of Chile in Argentina, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Spain and Venezuela, and the Permanent Mission of Chile to the United Nations (New York). Concha also served as Consul General of Chile in New York, Melbourne, Sydney and Gothenburg.

ing in hydrogen exploitation, as well as collaboration in the development of supply chains.

Ambassador Concha said the agreement showed: "We have moved up the step ladder in our relationship. In addition to this we are now finalising the access for Singapore's entry

into the Pacific Alliance (PA) which is a significant milestone in relations with Chile, Colombia, Mexico and Peru who are members of the PA. Most likely it will be finalised by this year. Moreover, our President H.E. Sebastián Piñera, is planned to be in Singapore this year in August for the World Economic Forum Special Annual Meeting.

Bilateral Relationship

With regards to bilateral relationship between Chile and Singapore the Ambassador said: "We share a special relationship with Singapore which we consider as the entry point for Chile to ASEAN and the Asian countries while Chile for Singapore is the gateway to the Latin American continent."

Another insight by the Ambassador of this relationship in business is that: "Because of the COVID pandemic a great part of business is moving from the physical to digital. Towards this end we signed another MOU with Singapore (and New Zealand) last year - the Digital Economy Partnership Agreement (DEPA) that establishes common frameworks for digital trade. This is also related to another development where we are laying a physical cable for a dedicated digital connection between Latin America, chiefly Chile, with Australia and to the Asian Pacific countries."

The Ambassador was also happy to note that Singapore was very interested in being part of...

For the full interview visit
www.indiplomacy.com



US President Biden on Raising Our Climate Ambition

United States President Biden launched the first session of the virtual Leaders Summit on Climate with an announcement that the US will halve its greenhouse gas emissions within this decade

TO enshrine this commitment, the US President submitted a new “nationally determined contribution” (NDC) under the Paris Agreement setting an economy-wide emissions target of a 50-52% reduction below 2005 levels in 2030.

President Biden had invited 40 world leaders including Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong to attend the Summit on 22nd and 23rd April 2021.

Secretary of State Blinken conveyed a strong sense of urgency in tackling the climate crisis, noting that this is a critical year and a decisive decade to take action. He noted the U.S. resolve to work with other countries to engage in all avenues of cooperation to “save our planet.”

Participants noted the need to work rapidly over the course of this decade to accelerate decarbonization efforts and are taking a range of actions to that end. Announcements during this Session included, among others:

■ **Japan** will cut emissions 46-50% below 2013 levels by 2030, with strong efforts toward achieving a 50% reduction; a significant acceleration from its existing 26% reduction goal.

■ **Canada** will strengthen its NDC to a 40-45% reduction from 2005 levels by 2030; a significant increase over its previous

target to reduce emissions 30% below 2005 levels by 2030.

■ **India** reiterated its target of 450 GW of renewable energy by 2030 and announced the launch of the “U.S.-India 2030 Climate and Clean Energy Agenda 2030 Partnership” to mobilize finance and speed clean energy innovation and deployment in this decade.

■ **Argentina** will strengthen its NDC, deploy more renewables, reduce methane emissions and end illegal deforestation.

■ **The United Kingdom** will embed in law a 78% GHG reduction below 1990 levels by 2035.

■ **The European Union** is putting into law a target of reducing net greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% by 2030 and a net zero target by 2050.

■ **The Republic of Korea**, which will host the 2021 P4G Seoul Summit in May, will terminate public overseas coal finance and strengthen its NDC this year to be consistent with its 2050 net zero goal.

■ **China** indicated that it will join the Kigali Amendment, strengthen the control of non-CO2 greenhouse gases, strictly control coal-fired power generation projects and phase down coal consumption.

■ **Brazil** committed to achieve net zero by 2050, end illegal deforestation by 2030, and double funding for deforestation enforcement.

Continued on page 7...



PM Lee: Unleashing Climate Innovation

The PM welcomes return of US leadership and commitment to a multilateral climate solution and shares what Singapore is doing for its part

SINGAPORE Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong participated in the Virtual Leaders Summit convened by US President Joe Biden on 23rd April 2021. He thanked President Joe Biden for organizing the Summit and on the US rejoining the Paris Agreement.

Prime Minister Lee spoke on the topic of “Unleashing Climate Innovation”, and shared Singapore's experiences in harnessing innovative technologies to overcome the Island Republic's constraints as a small city-state and fulfil the country's obligations under the Paris Agreement. This included efforts to quadruple Singapore's deployment of solar energy by 2025 and address long-term adaptation issues such as rising urban temperatures. Prime Minister Lee also underscored Singapore's commitment to help the global push for sustainability through green finance.

ASEAN 5-Point Consensus on Myanmar

Following close discussions at the ASEAN Leaders' Meeting held on 24th April 2021 at the ASEAN Secretariat in Jakarta, the regional grouping proposed a plan to facilitate a peaceful solution for the people of Myanmar



Photo: MCI / Chwee

THE ASEAN Leaders' Meeting was chaired by HM Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah of Brunei Darussalam. In the Chairman's Statement released on the situation in Myanmar, the Leaders reached consensus on the following:

- First, there shall be immediate cessation of violence in Myanmar and all parties shall exercise utmost restraint.
- Second, constructive dialogue among all parties concerned shall commence to seek a peaceful solution in the interests of the people.
- Third, a special envoy of the ASEAN Chair shall facilitate mediation of the dialogue process, with the assistance of the Secretary General of ASEAN.
- Fourth, ASEAN shall provide humanitarian assistance through the AHA Centre.
- Fifth, the special envoy and delegation shall visit Myanmar to meet with all parties concerned.

The Chairman Statement has also expressed "our deep concern on the situation in the country, including reports of fatalities and escalation of violence."

Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong along with other ASEAN leaders were able to share their views directly with Myanmar's Senior General Min Aung Hlaing who also attended the meeting.

PM Lee was reported in the press to have said that ASEAN member states have a collective duty to uphold peace, security and stability in the region and cannot be indifferent to what is happening there in Myanmar.

He was quoted as saying: "Daily news reports indicate fatalities and injuries so far have cumulatively added up to hundreds, if not in the thousands. There is also a worsening shortage of food, medical supplies and energy. The prospect of a humanitarian disaster is unfolding before us."

...continued from page 6

■ **South Africa** announced that it intends to strengthen its NDC and shift its intended emissions peak year 10 years earlier to 2025.

■ **Russia** noted the importance of carbon capture and storage from all sources, as well as atmospheric carbon removals. It also highlighted the importance of methane and called for international collaboration to address this powerful greenhouse gas.

Investing in Climate Solutions

The second session was devoted to Investing in Climate Solutions and President Biden stressed the importance of developed countries meeting the

New Vietnamese FM Bui Thanh Son

Singapore FM Dr V. Balakrishnan congratulated FM Bui on his appointment in a telephone call on 16th April 2021



A Singapore Ministry of Foreign Affairs press statement said in the telephone call: "They reaffirmed the excellent relations between Singapore and Vietnam and exchanged views on international and regional developments. They expressed appreciation for the mutual support rendered amid the COVID-19 pandemic and agreed to further strengthen the Strategic Partnership between Singapore and Vietnam, including by enhancing cooperation to mitigate the disruption caused by COVID-19 in our region. Despite COVID-19, bilateral trade flows are stable and Singapore remains the top ASEAN investor in Vietnam. The Ministers also looked forward to the safe resumption of essential business and official travel between Singapore and Vietnam."

The 59-year old Deputy Foreign Minister was made Foreign Minister and is a seasoned diplomat. He was the envoy at the Vietnam embassy in Singapore from 2000 to 2003. He was also the deputy-department chief and deputy director of what is now the Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam. He holds a Bachelor's degree in diplomacy and a Master's degree in international relations.

collective goal of mobilizing \$100 billion per year in public and private finance to support developing countries. He also announced that the Administration intends to seek funding to double, by 2024, annual U.S. public climate finance to developing countries, compared to the average level of the second half of the Obama-Biden Administration (FY 2013-2016). This would include tripling public finance for adaptation by 2024. President Biden also called for an end to fossil fuel subsidies and announced that his Administration will undertake a series of steps to promote the measurement, disclosure, and mitigation of material climate risks to the financial system.

Report and photo source: U.S. Department of State

Dr V Balakrishnan: China Views

Dr V. Balakrishnan shared his thoughts in a hybrid press conference following extensive discussion he had with China's State Councillor and Minister of Foreign Affairs Wang Yi in Wuyishan, Fujian, China

ON his first working visit to China since the start of the pandemic, Singapore's foreign minister gave a brief summary to reporters in a doorstep interview of the "very open, extensive and in-depth discussion" he had with Minister Wang Yi. Minister Balakrishnan has known Minister Wang Yi for several years and said that "we have been able to have some very open and constructive conversations – sincere, no holds barred." Following are some extracted highlights from the press session covering several topics:

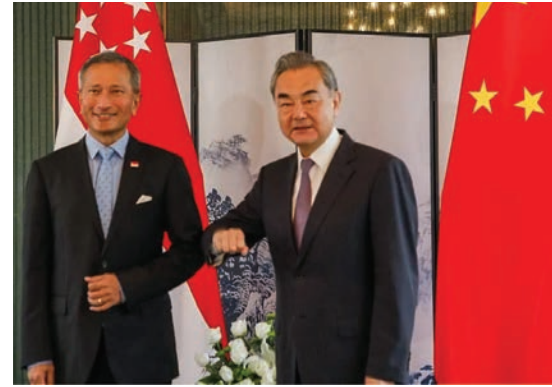
Health Certification

"One of the things we discussed was mutual recognition of health certification. I want to emphasise that this goes beyond vaccination status, and into serology, PCR (Polymerase Chain Reaction) nucleic acid tests, and on the rest of it. There will need to be verifiable, authorised sources of this information. We need to be able to exchange relevant subsets of this information in a way that would facilitate safe

travel for all the people concerned. We spent a fair amount of time on this topic."

Investments

"Singapore has been the largest investor in China since 2013. I expect that we will maintain this position for some time to come. The renewed strategy within China – what they call a "dual circulation" strategy – also may present some opportunities for us. For instance, for their domestic circulation – for their domestic economy – the fact that we have already invested in a significant way within China gives our companies with niche expertise the opportunities to participate in the growth of their domestic economy. On the other hand, as far as the external dimension is concerned, Singapore remains a very good portal for Chinese companies which want to access Southeast Asia and the markets beyond. In fact, we noted that one quarter of China's investments in Belt and Road destinations flows through Singapore."



Dr Vivian Balakrishnan with China's State Councillor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi. Photo: Singapore Ministry of Foreign Affairs

ASEAN-China Dialogue

"We, of course, looked at regional issues. ASEAN is celebrating our 30th anniversary of ASEAN-China Dialogue Relations this year. We are planning some commemorative events. I would also add that last year, we marked the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Singapore and China. Unfortunately, we could not proceed with a State Visit as planned. But we are looking for another opportunity, hopefully later this year, at an opportune time, for President Halimah Yacob to make a State Visit to China".

Celebrating 55 Years of Shared History and Ties between US and Singapore

Chargé d'Affaires Mansour launches USSG55 campaign celebrating 55 years of diplomatic relations between the US and Singapore



(Left): Chargé d'Affaires Mansour in his welcome video message. (Clockwise from above): The USSG55 site also features photos from the past such as that of Minister of Foreign Affairs Dr. V. Balakrishnan meeting then U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry in 2016. Cultural exchanges such as those of the members of the San Francisco Ballet on the War Memorial in Queen Elizabeth Walk in 1960 and that of U.S. Consul General Mr. Avery F. Peterson congratulating Mr. Geoffrey Abisheganaden as the winner of a leadership grant to tour the US in 1959.

STARTING in April 2021, the US Embassy in Singapore will showcase a combination of digital and traditional media elements branded with #USSG55 that showcases the United States and Singapore's shared history. To kick off the campaign, a dedicated website will serve as a portal for the year's events, programs, press releases, photographs, and more, for example the USSG55 website features bilateral milestones

all the way back to the 1800s. Other highlights coming up will include symposiums featuring themes such as security, economics, and people-to-people ties to underscore the strength of the bilateral cooperation and explore ways to advance the partnership. There will also be a photo exhibition, cooking workshops celebrating common food culture and connections as well as articles on the shared history in-

cluding facts and figures on the bilateral partnership on social media platforms. Chargé Mansour said, "The past 55 years of partnership are just the beginning. Through our defense and security agreements, our longest free trade agreement in Asia, and the deep ties between our people, our enduring relationship brings strength and stability to the United States, Singapore, and the entire Indo-Pacific region."