

Expanding Enhanced Partnership of Singapore and New Zealand



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Dialogue**

Interview

**New Dean:
H.E. Kakhramon
Shakirov Priorities**





PUBLISHER Sun Media Pte Ltd

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF Nomita Dhar

EDITORIAL Raneey Sahaney
Syed Jaafar Alkaff

**ADVERTISING
& RESEARCH** Jenny Tan
Ritu Koul

DESIGN & LAYOUT Syed Jaafar Alkaff

PHOTOGRAPHS Singapore's Prime
Minister Office, Ministry of
Culture and Information
and Ministry of Foreign
Affairs

Contact

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

Website www.indiplomacy.com

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

Photos appearing in this issue courtesy of:

- Singapore Prime Ministers Office
- Singapore Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Singapore Ministry of Communication
& Information
- Istana.org.sg



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Presentation of Credentials

The presentation of credentials to President Halimah Yacob at the Istana on 19th April 2022

H.E. Nikolay Rishatovich Kudashev, Ambassador of the Russian Federation



the then-USSR/Russia. He was posted to the USSR Embassy in Singapore from 1981 to 1985. Thereafter, he was posted to Manila from 1992 to 1996, and to New Delhi from 1999 to 2005. He was appointed Ambassador to the Philippines from 2010 to 2015, and was concurrently accredited to Palau, Marshall Islands, and the Federated States of Micronesia.

Ambassador Kudashev holds the diplomatic rank of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary. He graduated from the Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO), Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the USSR in 1981. He is married with one daughter, and also speaks Chinese and English.



PRIOR to his accreditation here Ambassador Nikolay Kudashev served as Ambassador to India from 2017 to February 2022. A career diplomat, he joined the diplomatic service in 1981 and has held various positions within foreign missions of

H.E. Chutintorn Gongsakdi, Ambassador of Kingdom of Thailand



PRIOR to his appointment as Ambassador to Singapore, Ambassador Chutintorn Gongsakdi was the Deputy Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand responsible for multilateral cooperation. He was appointed Ambassador-designate of Thailand to the Republic of Singapore since 23 February 2022. He arrived in Singapore on 25 March 2022.

His past professional experience has mostly been in multilateral and regional economic diplomacy, including ASEAN, APEC, OECD and WTO. He was seconded to the APEC Secretariat in Singapore during 2001-2004. As Ambassador of Thailand to the Republic of India during 2017-2020, his objective was to strengthen the Thailand-ASEAN-India relationship in all its dimensions.

He graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Economics from Victoria University, New Zealand and a Master of International Studies degree from Birmingham University, the United Kingdom. He is married to M.L. Piyawan Gongsakdi and has one daughter.



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

Why Diplomacy Matters

SINGAPORE has more than 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's mission is to communicate and be a bridge between the diplomatic community and Singaporeans.

PM Jacinda Ardern's Second Official Visit



PRIME Minister of New Zealand, Ms Jacinda Ardern made an Official Visit to Singapore from 18th to 20th April 2022. During the visit both Singapore and NZ reaffirmed the excellent level of bilateral relations which are underpinned by the Singapore-New Zealand Enhanced Partnership (EP) established during Prime Minister Ardern's last Official Visit to Singapore in 2019.

During her visit PM Ardern also called on President Halimah Yacob. A Singapore Ministry of Foreign Affairs statement released following the visit said the leaders discussed the strong COVID-19 cooperation between both sides, which demonstrated both countries are close partners who can rely on each other in times of need. They had an engaging conversation on the contributions and progress of women in both countries. They also discussed the importance of maintaining social cohesion, particularly in diverse, multicultural societies such as Singapore and New Zealand.

New Areas of Cooperation

Prime Minister Lee and Prime Minister Ardern reaffirmed the warm and excellent bilateral relations, which were upgraded to an Enhanced Partnership (EP) during Prime Minister Ardern's last visit in 2019. The Prime Ministers were pleased with the good progress made under the EP across the four pillars of trade and economics, security and defence, science, technology and innovation, as well as people-to-people ties. They also welcomed the close cooperation between Singapore and New Zealand during the COVID-19 pandemic, including an air freight connectivity partnership that brought food supplies into Singapore and sent essential medical supplies to New Zealand. The Prime Ministers agreed to explore new areas of

Expanding the Scope of the EP [Enhanced Partnership]

New 'Pillar on Climate Change & Green Economy' introduced areas such as:

- Energy transition technology
- Carbon markets
- Sustainable transport
- Waste management
- Sustainable aviation, business collaboration and
- Supply chain resilience.



cooperation to keep the EP forward-looking. They announced the establishment of a new pillar on "climate change and green economy" (see accompanying box above) under the EP.

Singapore and NZ Supply Chain Working Group

As the region adapts to evolving global trends and supply chain vulnerabilities, the Prime Ministers agreed that increasing economic resilience will be crucial. The Prime Ministers agreed to launch a Singapore and New Zealand Supply Chain Working Group. They asked officials, working closely with the private sector, to identify opportunities for collaboration in support of more productive, resilient, sustainable, and digitally enhanced supply chains for enterprises of all sizes and for improved food and energy security in both countries.

Vaccinated Travel Framework

The Prime Ministers also welcomed the timely launch of the Vaccinated Travel Framework by Singapore from 1 April 2022, and New Zealand's reopening of borders to visa-free countries, including Singapore, from 1 May 2022. The reopening of borders is an important step towards living with COVID-19, and is critical in restoring the people-to-people and business links between both countries and with the rest of the world. The establishment of a bilateral Working Holiday Scheme will allow young Singaporeans and New Zealanders to travel and work in each other's countries.

Singapore and NZ Prime Ministers focussed on bilateral cooperation in trade and economics, security and defence, science, technology and innovation, people-to-people links as well as introducing new areas of cooperation

For the full version of this article, accompanying reports including the Prime Ministers' Joint Statement and Interview with H.E. Jo Tyndall on the significance of the NZ PM go to:
www.indiplomacy.com

H.E. Jo Tyndall on NZ Prime Minister Visit

Following the successful visit by the PM of New Zealand Jacinda Ardern the High Commissioner of New Zealand to Singapore H.E. Jo Tyndall talks to *IN Diplomacy* publisher and editor-in-chief Ms Nomita Dhar about some of the highlights of the memorable visit and a personal insight into the much admired prime minister



(Above): H.E. Jo Tyndall
New Zealand Ambassador to Singapore

Congratulations on the very successful visit of Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern to Singapore. What in your opinion are the highlights of the visit?

THE fact that PM Ardern made Singapore her first stop speaks of the value New Zealand places on the bilateral relationship between our two countries. She also brought trade minister, Damien O'Connor, and a high-level business delegation. Meeting virtually has helped us get through the pandemic, but nothing beats face-to-face contact, and the

PM's visit was a clear signal that New Zealand is open for business (and open for travellers from Singapore from 2nd May 2022)

- This was her first overseas trip in over two years, so there were many memorable moments, but for me the following really stood out:
- PM Ardern having an orchid named after her – the 'Dendrobium Jacinda Ardern' is a beautiful bright pink.
- The unveiling of the imposing and jaw-dropping 'kūwaha' (carved doorway). This totara wood piece was created by the New Zealand Māori Arts and Crafts Institute, and now installed at the Gardens By the Bay Cloud Forest.
- The signing of the Sustainable Aviation Arrangement in front of the Jewel Rainfall Vortex at Changi Airport. The presence of CEOs of New Zealand and Singapore airlines and airports, as well as CAAS, underscored the sector's commitment to partnership to find ways to get to "net zero" emissions.



Unveiling of the Kūwaha Māori carving with PM Ardern (far right) and Minister, Prime Minister's Office, Second Minister for Finance & Second Minister for National Development and Leader of the House, Ms Indraneel Rajah (2nd from right) at the Cloud Forest at Gardens by the Bay. The Kūwaha represents a symbolic doorway, a threshold celebrating cultures, beliefs, and identities, and reaffirms the special connection between Singapore and NZ (Photo: Gardens by the Bay)

For the complete interview visit:
www.indiplomacy.com

Panama Expands Ties and Cooperation

THE Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Panama **Ms Erika Mouynes** was in Singapore for an Official Visit from 9th to 13th April 2022, as part of a visit to Asia. She called on Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong at the Istana where they reaffirmed the warm ties between Singapore and Panama.



FM Balakrishnan: Visit Deepened Relations with Germany



SINGAPORE'S Foreign Minister Dr Vivian Balakrishnan met his German Federal counterpart Ms Annalena Baerbock in Berlin on 4th April 2022 where they reaffirmed the strong and longstanding ties between both countries.

Dr Maliki @ Raisina Dialogue



MINISTER in the Prime Minister's Office, Second Minister for Foreign Affairs, and Second Minister for Education Dr Mohamad Maliki Osman visited New Delhi from 24 to 26 April 2022 to attend the 7th Raisina Dialogue. He spoke at a Raisina Dialogue fireside chat on "ASEAN and its Role in the Global Order", where he highlighted ASEAN's role in maintaining regional peace and stability, especially against the backdrop of an increasingly complex world order.

For the full reports of all the above visit:
www.indiplomacy.com

H.E. Kakhramon Shakirov: Top Priorities - Support Diplomatic Colleagues and Promotion of Bilateral & Multilateral Ties

The Ambassador of the Republic of Uzbekistan has represented his country in Singapore since 2018 and was recently appointed the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps in Singapore. In an interview with *IN Diplomacy's* Editor-in-Chief Ms Nomita Dhar, he speaks of the strong ties between the two countries and fresh areas of collaboration as well as his plans and initiatives following his new appointment

WE are honoured to have this discussion with you, particularly since you have just been chosen as the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps. How does it feel?

This is my first posting as an ambassador, and I never expected to be appointed the Dean representing the esteemed diplomatic corps in beautiful Singapore. For me, it's both a challenge and a huge opportunity.

The pandemic had put everything on standstill. Now that things are normalizing, what are the fresh responsibilities this new role brings?

First, the opening of borders and easing of restrictions. The Singapore government did a commendable job of taking care of the diplomatic corps during that very difficult period, ensuring that we were constantly updated on the latest developments and that we felt very safe here during that period.

Now we need to double the speed to make things happen between various embassies and countries represented here in Singapore.

Recollecting the COVID-19 period, how did you work with your diplomatic colleagues to ease issues that arose due to the pandemic?

This was mostly done online. We had zoom meetings, not only within the diplomatic corps and with friends, but for all communications with Singapore's ministry for foreign affairs, which did a commendable job of periodically briefing us on news and the measures being taken by the government during the pandemic.



"A lot is going on in international geopolitics, and not everything can be solved by discussions. How can you collectively work towards giving a better direction to the issues humanity faces right now? I feel this is best done through negotiations, collaborations, and a joint effort by all at the bilateral and the multinational level. Every country wants to help to maintain stability..."

As the new Dean, what is your role, and what is expected of you during your term?

My primary role is to support my colleagues, accelerate the embassy activities, and at the same time arrange joint events, with our friends from the government, business, and social circles and represent our country in some forums on the bilateral side and maybe some from the regional side. Also, to strengthen social activities in Singapore.

What are your plans for restarting these?

We will bring together members from embassies and consulates. This will be both a social gathering and a platform for discussions on bilateral issues between countries to discuss new ideas on deeper engagement, cooperation,

and collaboration with Singapore in this new post-COVID-19 era.

A lot is going on in international geopolitics, and not everything can be solved by discussions. How can you collectively work towards giving a better direction to the issues humanity faces right now?

I feel this is best done through negotiations, collaborations, and a joint effort by all at the bilateral and the multinational level. Every country wants to help to maintain stability. As ambassadors, we need to work to enhance cooperation with Singapore on various international issues at both the bilateral and multinational levels.

For the complete interview visit:
www.indiplomacy.com

EVENTS

India Parliamentary Speaker Meets Indian Community 24th Apr 2022

THE High Commiission of India welcomed the visit of the Indian Parliamentary Delegation led by Shri Om Birla the Speaker of the Lok Sabha or Lower House of Parliament.

One of the highlights was a meeting with the Indian Community and Friends of India reception (pictured right). During his visit the Speaker met his Singapore counterpart Mr Tan Chuan-Jin and he expressed the hope that "the strong and prosperous relationship between our two Parliaments will be further strengthened."



(Above row): Shri Om Birla interacted with members of Indian diaspora in Singapore where he commended them on their stellar contributions to the growth of Singapore which he described as "exemplary."

Hari Raya Open House by Malaysia High Commission 3rd May 2022



MALAYSIA is famous for its traditions celebrating Eid - which marks the end of the fasting month of Ramadhan - with great hospitality and food! With more COVID measures being now relaxed Malaysian High Commissioner to Singapore Dr Azfar Mohamad Mustafar was able to open the doors of Malaysia House to guests including the diplomatic corps in Singapore to sample and appreciate a slice of Malaysian life that included traditional Malaysian festive foods and drinks.

Wellness Campaign Launched by STB

3rd to 12th June 2022

SINGAPORE Tourism Board (STB) Inaugural Wellness Festival 2022 - a collaboration with Enterprise Singapore, Health Promotion Board, National Arts Council, Sentosa Development Corporation and Sport Singapore is the first-ever edition of the Festival and will feature more than 230 holistic wellness experiences islandwide.

For the first time Singapore curates a Wellness Festival to be held from 3th to 12th June 2022, to promote holistic wellbeing and Singapore as an Urban Wellness haven for Singaporeans, residents and returning International visitors.

Ms Ong Ling Lee, Executive Director, Sports & Wellness, STB said, "Wellness Festival Singapore is central to our push for Singapore to be an urban wellness haven, and we are excited to partner both the public and private sectors to showcase our breadth of accessible wellness offerings. As we emerge from the pandemic, we hope locals and visitors can rest and rejuvenate in Singapore, while discovering more of what our city has to offer."

For full list of events and programmes for the Wellness Festival visit:
www.wellnessfest.sg



Mr Alvin Tan (centre) the Minister of State, Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth & Ministry of Trade and Industry and Mr. Yap Chin Siang (far right) Deputy Chief Executive Singapore Tourism Board gamely participated in a Tai Chi workout

EVENTS

Pacific Alliance 11th Anniversary Celebrations

27th April 2022

ELEVEN years ago four countries: Chile, Colombia, Mexico and Peru, decided to form a deep integration mechanism to move towards the free circulation of goods, services, capital and people and the Pacific Alliance (PA) was born. Today, the PA has 61 Observer States and has successfully concluded negotiations with Singapore which became the Alliance's first Associate State.

This year Mexico holds the *pro tempore* presidency and the Embassy helmed the organisation of a special gathering to celebrate the anniversary at Canchita Peruvian Cuisine. The four members of the PA represented here in Singapore by their ambassadors are His Excellencies

Mr Raul Ignacio Concha Sepulveda (Chile), Mr Manuel Hernando Solano Sossa (Colombia), Mr Carlos Raul Vasquez Corrales (Peru) and Mr Agustin Garcia Lopez Loaeza (Mexico). Singapore was represented by Minister of State for Trade and Industry Mr Alvin Tan who shared in the festivities with the iconic drinks and dishes from the four PA nations.

PA Note: The PA nations combined GDP of more than US\$2 trillion makes it the eighth-largest economy in the world with a combined population of 230 million. There are currently estimated about 100 Singapore companies operating there in sectors such as trade, technology and innovation, and infrastructure.



(From top clockwise: Mr Alvin Tan Minister of State for Trade and Industry; Ambassadors Mr Manuel Hernando Solano Sossa (Colombia), Mr Carlos Raul Vasquez Corrales (Peru) Mr Agustin Garcia Lopez Loaeza (Mexico); Guest of Honour Minister of State Mr Alvin Tan addressing guests and Ambassador Carlos Vasquez Corrales with guest and Ms Nomita Dhar Publisher of IN Diplomacy

Third Philippines-Singapore Business & Investment Summit 27th April 2022



THE Philippines Embassy in Singapore spared no efforts to bring the top brass representing the country's economy and industry to present a compelling case for investors to seriously consider the Philippines as the destination for their investment funds. The 3rd Philippines-Singapore Business & Investment Summit webinar was opened by H.E. Joseph del Mar Yap (pictured above) brought also members of the Singapore business



(Above): Secretary of Dept. of Trade & Industry Mr Ramon Lopez; (right): Governor of the Central Bank of the Philippines Mr Benjamin E Diokno

leaders to also share their experiences in doing business in the Philippines. IN Diplomacy magazine will bring to its readers a special report to mark the Independence Day and coverage of the PSBS in the June 2022 issue.

Singapore HeritageFest

2nd to 29th May 2022



THE 19th edition of the Singapore HeritageFest (SHF) returns in May and is presented by the National Heritage Board. SHF 2022 will offer more than 120 on-site and online heritage experiences that can offer fascinating insights into the history of Singapore.

For the full programme of Singapore HeritageFest 2022 visit:
www.sgheritagefest.gov.sg