

## STATE VISIT BY MALAYSIAN PRIME MINISTER ANWAR IBRAHIM



### FEATURING

■ Indonesia as ASEAN Chair: Launch Theme & Priorities

■ Visit by Vietnamese PM Pham Minh Chinh

■ INTERVIEW  
High Commissioner of Malaysia Dato' Dr Azfar Mohamad Mustafar



■ 9th Meeting of Singapore Honorary Consuls-General



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## Pratomo: Pres Widodo Visit Coming Up

The Indonesian Embassy in Singapore organised the 'Nusantara: A City of Opportunities' seminar on 17th February 2023. **IN Diplomacy** spoke to the Indonesian Ambassador H.E. Suryo Pratomo who shared some highlights of developments in the coming months

NUSANTARA: A City of Opportunities hybrid event was held to attract Singaporean investors to look at the opportunities to take part in its development. According to Ambassador Pratomo: "Yes this is a good opportunity. The Chairman of the Capital City Authority has already explained in detail about the potential opportunities. We are building our new capital with a Smart and Sustainable 'Forest City' approach. And next month President Joko Widodo will be presenting this project himself in Singapore to promote Nusantara. It's very impressive and potential investors should not get left behind."

Referring to the upcoming Leaders' Retreat on 16th March 2023, the Ambassador said that President Joko Widodo in his meetings with Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong will continue follow ups on the matters already reached in Bintan last year, especially about the Flight Information Region, Defense Operation Agreement, and the Extradition Treaty. He continued: "We also look forward to improve the 40% level of investment growth achieved. It would be excellent if we can continue to grow at the same rate this year. Last year, Singapore was again Indonesia's largest

investor with a record exceeding US\$10 billion. Altogether we ended 2022 receiving US\$13.3 billion in FDI (Foreign Direct Investment) from Singapore."

The issue of continued economic growth is an important one for Indonesia as well as for ASEAN. As the ambassador said while talking about Indonesia's ASEAN Chairmanship: "In January, President Widodo launched our chairmanship for 2023 with the theme: 'ASEAN matters: Epicentrum of Growth.' We will be working hand-in-hand with our fellow ASEAN members to keep this region one of the most peaceful regions in the world with the condition that we can continue our development and create prosperity for our people."



### G20 Experience

Indonesia has also benefitted greatly from its successful experience of the G20 Presidency last year and has applied some of this experience to its ASEAN Chairmanship. One example, said Ambassador Pratomo, was when the President asked the private sector to be more involved and that was why he asked the Chairman of the Chambers of Commerce and Industry in Indonesia (KADIN), Bapak Arsjad Rasjid, to start organising business road shows; first to Singapore, next Manila and then on to all of the other ASEAN countries to set up the same idea with the other ASEAN Chambers of Commerce. He said: "The road shows will cover topics related to digitalisation, sustainability, health resilience, food security and trade facilitation. We hope this initiative will continue even after Indonesia's chairmanship and the results benefit all the people in ASEAN. This is what President Jokowi is now working towards - not just plans, but concrete outcomes felt by the people. That's the main objective Indonesia hopes to accomplish with our chairmanship."

For the podcast of the interview and transcript (if available) visit:

[www.indiplomacy.com](http://www.indiplomacy.com)

**Podcast Note:** The following interviews can also be found at **IN Diplomacy** website: (1) H.E. Kakhramon Shakirov (Uzbekistan Ambassador and Dean). (2) H.E. Dato' Dr Azfar Mohamad Mustafar (Malaysian Ambassador) and (3) H.E. Ngurah Swajaya (Indonesia's Representative at ASEAN-IPR)

## ASEAN FM Retreat in JKT: Top Priorities

ASEAN FOREIGN MINISTERS' RETREAT  
4 FEBRUARY 2023  
ASEAN, JAKARTA



SINGAPORE'S Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dr Vivian Balakrishnan (pictured right), attended the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Retreat in Jakarta, where members deliberated on ASEAN's priorities and agenda which included the Timor-Leste membership to the grouping and the situation in Myanmar.



The 32nd ASEAN Coordinating Council Meeting and the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Retreat was held on 3rd to 4th February 2023 where discussions held by the Foreign Ministers centered on ASEAN's priorities including Indonesia's Chairmanship priorities and deliverables, Timor-Leste's ASEAN membership and the situation in Myanmar.

The Foreign Ministers also reaffirmed the importance of working together to facilitate an inclusive post-pandemic recovery and advance ASEAN's Community-building efforts.

Minister Balakrishnan emphasised that Singapore will work with Indonesia and fellow ASEAN Member States to create opportunities for all the people and businesses in the digital, green, and blue economies. Minister Balakrishnan welcomed Timor-Leste Minister of Foreign Affairs and Co-operation, Ms Adaljiza Albertina Xavier Reis



Magno's (pictured left) involvement in the ASEAN meetings as an Observer, and reiterated Singapore's continued support for Timor-Leste's preparations to join ASEAN. Elaborating on the Timor-Leste's ASEAN membership Minister Balakrishnan said:

"What made this meeting different was the participation, for the first time, of Timor-Leste as an observer. Our leaders gave in-principle approval for ASEAN membership. They are in the process of transiting through an objective, criteria-based roadmap. On a bilateral basis, I reassured the foreign minister of Timor-Leste Singapore stands in full support. We have an ASEAN Readiness Support package for Timor-Leste, to help enhance their capability, human resource development, as well as diplomatic and economic tools so that Timor-Leste eventually can participate fully in all the responsibilities and obligations of ASEAN membership. Their presence at this first meeting was important."

## Ngurah Swajaya: ASEAN Next Steps

In this episode of IN Diplomacy PODCAST, Representative of Indonesia to the Governing Council of the ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation (ASEAN-IPR), H.E. I Gede Ngurah Swajaya, spoke on highlights of ASEAN development and



Indonesia's role in ASEAN. This includes topics on Indonesia's ASEAN Chairmanship, Indonesia's stance on global issues, relationship between ASEAN and Indo-Pacific, and how ASEAN faces criticism by the general public.

“ASEAN (with the exception of Myanmar) can also be the best option to strengthen the resilience of the global supply chains, because we have all of the factors that are needed to accomplish this such as people, stability, resources etc, We are engaged with all parties and all the major players in the world”

- Ngurah Swajaya

# Malaysian PM Anwar Ibrahim's First State Visit to Singapore

The 1-Day State Visit featured a packed itinerary that accomplished much to reiterate the importance of both countries working together to deepen ties in mutually beneficial areas of cooperation



PM Lee hosted a lunch for PM Anwar Ibrahim and his delegation

**Visit concluded:**

1. Framework of cooperation in digital economy
2. Framework of cooperation in green economy
3. MoU on cooperation in the field of personal data protection, cybersecurity and digital economy

THE State visit by Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim was his first after having assumed charge as Malaysia's 10th Prime Minister last November. An official ceremony welcomed the Prime Minister at the Istana, where he called on President Halimah Yacob. Their meeting took stock of the wide-ranging cooperation between both sides and discussed collaboration in other emerging areas. Singapore is Malaysia's largest foreign investor and President Halimah said, "Despite the challenging economic times ahead, PM Anwar and I agreed that our two countries should work even more closely together and maintain regular channels of communication among our leaders and people." The Singaporean President is scheduled to visit Malaysia in March.



As per official State tradition a special orchid naming ceremony was held in honour of PM Anwar and his wife, Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail. The orchid, named *Dendrobium Anwar Azizah*, has velvet purple petals (Photos: MCI / Terence Tan)

The 1-Day visit also included an official luncheon in PM Anwar Ibrahim's honour hosted by Singaporean Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong. While welcoming the Malaysian Prime Minister, PM Lee said: "Our two countries share a relationship quite unlike any other. They are bound by geography and our shared history. Our peoples have deep family and cultural ties. The Causeway and the Second Link are among the busiest border crossing points in the world.

Over the years, our two governments have deepened our cooperation in almost every domain. We work together in health, education, culture, supply chain, connectivity, and many other areas. On trade, we are each other's second largest trading partners. Singapore is the largest foreign investor in Malaysia, with over S\$56 billion in direct investments. This reflects our confidence in the Malaysian economy, including the 'can-do' spirit and enterprise of many young and digitally savvy Malaysians. "During the course of their meeting

Prime Minister Dato' Seri Anwar Ibrahim and Prime Minister Lee witnessed the inking of three agreements between Singapore and Malaysia.

"As close friends and neighbours, the destinies of Singapore and Malaysia are intertwined. When we work constructively together, we produce win-win outcomes with tangible benefits for our peoples and businesses. I am confident that with Prime Minister Anwar's support, Singapore-Malaysia relations can reach greater heights," Prime Minister Lee said.

PM Anwar said both sides needed to explore new areas of cooperation as they tackled outstanding issues. He cited food security as one such area, adding that he hoped Singapore would "use Malaysia as the heartland to produce for the

benefit of both countries". He further shared that: "My cabinet team is very clear ... not only [do] we want to continue the relations, we [also] want both Singaporeans and Malaysians to understand we are two great countries and two great neighbours that we can do so much more for the benefit of our people."

Accompanying Datuk Seri Anwar on his visit were Minister of Transport Anthony Loke, Minister of International Trade and Industry Tengku Zafrul Aziz, Minister of Foreign Affairs Zambrly Abdul Kadir, Minister of Communications and Digital Fahmi Fadzil, Premier of Sarawak Abang Haji Abdul Rahman Zohari, and Menteri Besar of Johor Onn Hafiz Ghazi.

“As close friends and neighbours, the destinies of Singapore and Malaysia are intertwined. Cheers to the enduring friendship and cooperation between our countries!”

- Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong



(Above row, from left): PM Anwar Ibrahim's visit coincided with a Chinese New Year tradition - the tossing of yusheng for peace and prosperity. Signing of Framework agreements - representing Singapore: Minister of Trade & Industry Gan King Yong and Minister of Communications & Information Josephine Teo

# Malaysia and Singapore Explore New Areas of Growth

Malaysia's High Commissioner to Singapore H.E. Dato' Dr Azfar Mohamad Mustafar takes the measure of investment opportunities, digital and green economy, tourism, education, healthcare and people-to-people connectivity as the building blocks for stronger ties between the two nations. Interview by **IN Diplomacy** Publisher and Editor-in-Chief Ms Nomita Dhar



## **CONGRATULATIONS** on a very successful trip and visit of your Prime Minister to Singapore. Singapore and Malaysia are excellent partners, great neighbours. What went behind the scenes in preparation for this visit?

The Prime Ministers already know each other well. Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim was Malaysia's Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister in the late 1990s. As it was custom for a new PM of Malaysia to visit neighbouring countries we have been preparing for this visit since he was sworn in as Prime Minister. It did take a little bit more time than usual for us to organise but this was due to scheduling conflicts on both sides.

## **Can you tell us more about the three MoUs signed and what is happening to get into actuality?**

Singapore and Malaysia relations have been very close. We are close neighbours and this close relationship is also the anchor of our economic relations; so, the MoUs signed were related to the digital and green economy, including energy. These MoUs involved digital trade, cyber security, personal data protection and so on. Both sides will establish a working group to implement these MoUs, and we expect the first meeting will be in March.

## **Can you share your thoughts on the composition of the delegation Prime Minister Anwar brought with him to Singapore?**

The Prime Minister was in Indonesia and Brunei before he came to Singapore but it was in Singapore that he brought the most number of ministers and senior officials. Of course, there was our Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of Trade, Minister for Communications and Digital and we had also the Chief Minister of Johor and Premier of Sarawak. The size of the delegation also reflects the importance we place in Singapore relations.

PM Anwar's visit marked a good start in our relations so that we can move forward with Singapore to explore new areas of growth and so on and so forth. The visit has been well received on both sides.



“The size of the delegation also reflects the importance we place in Singapore relations”

- Dato' Azfar Mohamad Mustafar  
on the Malaysian PM visits to neighbouring countries Malaysia brought the most number of ministers and senior officials for Singapore

## **What can businesses look forward to in 2023?**

We hope with the MoUs on the digital and green economy signed between our two countries will result in new heights. I am happy to report - the S\$150 billion mark for 2022 for the total amount of trade between Singapore and Malaysia was achieved.

## **High Commissioner, causeway traffic has returned to pre-COVID levels. Is more being done to facilitate the movement of people at the causeway?**

The causeway is one of the busiest in the world with many Malaysians commuting daily and this issue was discussed by both Prime Ministers and they agreed to find solutions especially during peak hours. A few ideas were discussed but now we are

waiting for the technical agencies to look into this. One idea was to expand the numbers of counters. The other is to ensure a more efficient flow of vehicles and so on. As mentioned by PM Anwar he too hoped that Malaysians working in Singapore do not need to leave their homes as early as 4am but can instead spend more quality time with their family. So, both sides have agreed to work closely on this issue.

## **There are also many from Singapore who travel to Malaysia for education to schools in Iskandar. During COVID it was difficult for them to travel. Are there going to be any new developments in terms of education cooperation?**

Yes! Education is also one of the important pillars in our people-to-people relationship and there are a number of leading educational institutions in Iskandar established by companies from Singapore in Malaysia. We see this trend will continue to grow. Of course, during the pandemic travel had to be restricted but many schools in Iskandar have student dormitories and residential complexes to house them. They are not so badly impacted in terms of their education; only they cannot commute during that period. But, you know, things are getting back to normal and we see this sector strengthening.

## **Another aspect of our relationship which has taken off is in the medical field. Some hospital chains from Singapore have expanded to Malaysia and medical tourism and general medical services are on offer. Is the government supportive of this trend?**

We all know the costs of living and of medical treatments have risen tremendously in Singapore. I think these hospitals can probably bring down the cost of medical services for Singaporeans seeking treatment in Malaysia. This will be win-win for both sides. Singapore businesses can grow in Malaysia and Malaysians (and any foreigner) can avail themselves

For the full interview and podcast visit:  
[www.indiplomacy.com](http://www.indiplomacy.com)

# Vietnam's PM Pham Minh Chinh Official Visit to Singapore

Vietnam and Singapore reiterate their commitment to strengthen and expand their bilateral agenda to enhance the cooperative mechanisms in the years to come

A ceremonial welcome at the Istana kicked off the Official Visit of His Excellency Pham Minh Chinh, Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, to Singapore from 8th to 10 February 2023. Prime Minister Chinh called on President Halimah Yacob and later met Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, who also hosted an official lunch. A special ceremony for the traditional naming of an orchid in their honour was held for Prime Minister Chinh and his wife Mdm Le Thi Bich Tran. The new orchid hybrid has been named the Papilionanda Pham Le Tran Chinh.



During their meeting both President Halimah and Prime Minister Chinh reaffirmed the excellent relations between Singapore and Vietnam. These ties have been, underpinned by multifaceted cooperation across many sectors including trade and investment, finance, security and defence, energy, sustainability, and close people-to-people ties.

With both nations commemorating the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations and the 10th anniversary of our Strategic Partnership this year Prime Minister Lee and Prime Minister Chinh sought to reaffirm Singapore and Vietnam's shared commitment to strengthen and expand their bilateral agenda. Both leaders also welcomed the extensive and robust economic

cooperation between Singapore and Vietnam, and agreed to step up cooperation in new and emerging areas such as renewable energy, carbon credits, and the digital economy. Furthermore, both Prime Ministers discussed ways to enhance the cooperative mechanisms between Singapore and Vietnam in the years to come. Prime Minister Lee expressed Singapore's continued support for Vietnam's human resource development and capacity building.

Both leaders oversaw the signing of several Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) including

- MOU on the Green-Digital Economic Partnership between the Government of Vietnam and the Government of Singapore
- MOU on Economic and Trade Cooperation Workplan between the Singapore Ministry of Trade and Industry and the Vietnam Ministry of Industry and Trade



- MOU on Maritime Cooperation between the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore and the Maritime Administration of Vietnam
- Renewed the MOU on Youth Cooperation between the National Youth Council of Singapore and the National Committee on Youth of Vietnam.
- The Intellectual Property Office of Singapore and the Intellectual Property Office of Vietnam, in conjunction with Prime Minister Chinh's visit, announced the launch of a pilot Collaborative Search and Examination Programme.
- The S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies signed an MOU with the Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam to promote cooperation in research and academic exchanges.
- The Singapore Business Federation is planning to hold the 7th Singapore Regional Business Forum, its flagship annual event, outside of Singapore for the first time in Hanoi this year.

Prime Minister Chinh also met with Speaker of Parliament Tan Chuan-Jin and Singaporean parliamentarians at Parliament House. Meetings were also lined up with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance Lawrence Wong and Senior Minister and Coordinating Minister for National Security Teo Chee Hean. Prime Minister Chinh also took time out to visit the Smart Nation CityScape exhibition.

## INTERVIEW

### Dr V Balakrishnan on 50th Anniversary of Diplomatic Ties with Vietnam

Prior to PM Pham Minh Chinh's visit, Singapore's Foreign Minister gave an interview to the Vietnam News Agency on Singapore-Vietnam ties. Following are extracts from the interview

**ON bilateral ties Dr V. Balakrishnan said:** "The ties between Singapore and Vietnam have grown from strength to strength since we established diplomatic relations 50 years ago. We are longstanding friends and close partners that enjoy wide-ranging cooperation in many areas, both bilaterally and at multilateral fora. I

am heartened that the bilateral relationship has continued to expand and evolve to tackle new challenges over the past decade. Our linkages are particularly strong in trade and investment. The 12 Vietnam-Singapore Industrial Parks (VSIPs) across Northern, Central, and Southern Vietnam have attracted USD 17 billion in investments and created over 300,000 jobs. The VSIP is an enduring icon of our bilateral partnership which is built on the close friendship and consultations between the late Mr Lee Kuan Yew and former Vietnam Prime Minister Vo Van Kiet, who had asked Mr Lee to advise Vietnam on its economic opening in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

Even as we strengthen cooperation in traditional areas such as trade and investment, there remain many opportunities to work together in new growth areas like the digital economy, renewable energy, carbon credits, green financing, cybersecurity, and sustainable infrastructure. I would encourage interested parties to explore collaboration in these areas, to establish mutually beneficial partnerships that advance the interests of both countries."

### On prospects of future Singapore-Vietnam cooperation Dr V. Balakrishnan commented:

There are two areas in which there is much scope for closer collaboration between Singapore and Vietnam. First, we need to accelerate our cooperation in the digital economy. This is a priority for both Singapore and Vietnam, and encompasses many new areas such as cybersecurity, cross-border data flows, smart cities, innovation, artificial intelligence, and digital payments. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the crucial role of digital trade and e-commerce in ensuring supply chain resilience and business continuity. During the series of high-level exchanges last year, leaders on both sides also agreed on the importance of accelerating cooperation in digital transformation.

Second, sustainable development. Like COVID-19, climate change is a global issue that can only be tackled through the collective effort of governments and people worldwide. Singapore is keen to work with Vietnam in renewable energy, carbon credits, and sustainable infrastructure with the ambitious goal of achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050.



(From left): Dr Vivian Balakrishnan, Minister Alexandra Hill Tinoco and Ambassador Arturo Alfonso Acevedo Valencia

## Official Opening: El Salvador Embassy

7 February 2023

H.E. Alexandra Hill Tinoco, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of El Salvador, on her maiden visit as foreign minister to Singapore, together with her Singapore counterpart, Dr. Vivian Balakrishnan, officially opened El Salvador's resident embassy here on 7th February 2023. In their remarks during the opening they welcomed the improvement in relations between El Salvador and Singapore as well as the appointment of H.E. Arturo Alfonso Acevedo Valencia as El Salvador's ambassador to Singapore. During her working visit to Singapore (from 6th - 8th February 2023) H.E. Alexandra Hill Tinoco also discussed ways to strengthen bilateral ties between the two nations in areas such as agriculture, the digital economy, and finance, as well as the mutual sharing of best practices in governance and the enhancement of people-to-people exchanges. Minister Dr. Vivian Balakrishnan also encouraged El Salvador to use Singapore as a springboard to expand its engagement in Southeast Asia.

## Warm Send-Off for Australian High Commissioner In Singapore

9 February 2023

HOSTED by H.E. Mr. Kakhramon Shakirov, the Ambassador of Uzbekistan to Singapore and the Dean of the Diplomatic and Consular Corps here, a farewell dinner was held in honour of H.E. William Hodgman, the High Commissioner of Australia to Singapore, to mark the end of the Australian High Commissioner's tenure in Singapore. The High Commissioner took charge of his official duties in March 2020, during the height of the pandemic and had strongly advocated for and achieved increased economic, trade, and business relations, not just between Australia and Singapore but also between Singapore's foreign business communities. Along with making Singapore Australia's fifth-largest trading partner and strengthening the country's close defense ties, Will Hodgman's leadership was essential in launching the Singapore-Australia Green Economy Agreement (GEA).



## Singapore @ Uttar Pradesh Global Investors Summit 2023

10 - 12 Feb 2023

UNDER the auspices of Enterprise Singapore 21 local firms and 58 business delegates arrived in India to attend the Uttar Pradesh Global Investors Summit, held in the state capital of Lucknow from 10-12 February. The fruitful ties between Enterprise Singapore and India resulted in the signing of six MoUs at the prestigious event. Enterprise Singapore has been in close ties with India in varying scopes of partnerships since the "Make in India" initiative was introduced in 2014 by the Indian Government as one of the other ways paved to establish a business-friendly ecosystem in India. The visiting firms and delegates also got an opportunity to visit the Smart City Command Control Center to gather knowledge and insights on the potential for further prospective partnerships.



Mr. Lennon Tan (left) and Datuk Onn Hafiz bin Ghazi

## Johor - Singapore Business Forum 2023

13 February 2023

THE Singapore Manufacturing Federation's (SMF) Johor-Singapore Business Forum held on 13th February 2023 set the base for expanding collaborative links and promoting investment opportunities in Johor. Menteri Besar (Chief Minister) of Johor, Malaysia, Datuk Onn Hafiz bin Ghazi, chaired the meeting which attracted leaders from prominent manufacturing set ups, trade organisations, and chambers (TAC). They held fruitful conversations with the Johor delegation led by Datuk Onn Hafiz. Mr Lennon Tan, President of the SMF, said, "His visit has provided immense value for our members by opening up new investment opportunities and strengthening their business relationships in Malaysia. With the manufacturing sector looking to recover from the challenges of the past year, this visit is a timely encouragement for businesses to expand beyond Singapore and find new avenues for growth." His working visit to the SMF was part of a three-day tour to Singapore from 12th to 14th February 2023. Johor will work closely with Singapore to explore new ventures that can take their economic ties to the next level, said Datuk Onn Hafiz. He also had a meeting with Foreign Minister Dr Vivian Balakrishnan and Minister in the Prime Minister's Office (and Second Minister for Foreign Affairs) Dr Mohamad Maliki Osman.

For the full reports of the above events visit [www.indiplomacy.com](http://www.indiplomacy.com)

EVENTS



## 9th Meeting of Singapore Honorary Consuls-General and President’s Annual Diplomatic Reception

13 - 18 February 2023

Singapore currently has 34 Honorary Consul-Generals (HCG) appointed in 29 countries. This year 27 of them were able to attend the 9th Meeting of Singapore HCGs which was held from the 13th to 17th of February 2023. The last one was held in July 2019 before the COVID pandemic. During the Meeting the HCGs engaged in separate dialogues with Deputy Prime Minister and Coordinating Minister for Economic Policies Heng Swee Keat and Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr Vivian Balakrishnan respectively. They also met with officials from MFA, Ministry of Communications and Information (MCI), Ministry of Sustainability and the Environment (MSE), Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI) and Immigration & Checkpoints Authority, and visit the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) Singapore City Gallery and the Maritime & Port Authority (MPA) Port Operations Control Centre.

On 14 February 2023, in appreciation of the valuable contributions, President Halimah Yacob and Mr Mohamed Abdullah Alhabshee hosted a tea reception for them and their spouses at the Istana. The HCGs and their spouses also met with Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong and Mrs Lee. Together with the diplomatic corps in Singapore, the HCGs and their spouses they attended the President’s Annual Diplomatic Reception at the Istana on 18th February 2023.

The President’s Annual Diplomatic Reception, hosted by President Halimah Yacob, was held to thank the High Commissioners, Ambassadors, Honorary Consuls-General, and representatives of international organisations for their many contributions towards promoting understanding and building bridges between Singapore and the world. Prime Minister Lee in his remarks on social media said “Being a small country, we value our excellent bilateral relations with many countries. We must continue to foster mutual trust, create more opportunities to deepen cooperation and strengthen our people-to-people relations.”



## Türkiye Devastated By Earthquakes: Singapore Reaches Out

EARLY Monday (February 6) morning, a 7.7-magnitude earthquake struck Kahramanmaraş province in Türkiye affecting more than 13 million people in 10 provinces. Nine hours later it was followed by another quake with a magnitude of 7.6, causing massive damage in Adana, Adiyaman, Diyarbakir, Gaziantep, Hatay, Kilis, Malatya, Osmaniye, and Sanliurfa. The earthquake was also felt in several neighbouring countries, including Lebanon and Syria. In his address from the State Information Coordination Center in Ankara, to the people across the country, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said: “We’re facing one of the biggest disasters not only of the history of the republic but also of our geography and the world.” The President further announced that the country has declared a state of emergency in 10 provinces for three months in order to expedite search and rescue operations and other efforts.

Singapore’s Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dr. Vivian Balakrishnan, has written to the Foreign Ministers of Turkey and Syria to express his condolences in the aftermath of the earthquake. In a follow-up to this the Singapore Civil Defence Force (SCDF) sent 20 SCDF personnel from the Operation Lionheart (OLH) contingent, including officers from the elite Disaster Assistance and Rescue Team (DART), paramedic specialists, and a doctor headed to Adana, Turkey, at 2.05 a.m. on February 8 to assist with relief.

The Turkish Embassy in Singapore also published information regarding the need for donations for the earthquake victims. It also urged Singaporeans who wished to assist Turkey to make monetary donations through authorized channels such as the following:

- **Presidency For Humanitarian And Emergency Situation Management**  
<https://www.afad.gov.tr/depremkampanyasi2>
  - **Turkish Red Crescent**  
<https://www.kizilay.org.tr/Bagis/BagisYap/404/pazarcik-depremi-bagisi>
  - **The Presidency For Religious Affairs**  
<https://bagistdv.org/afet/deprem-25>
- Donation Channels in Singapore
- **Rahmatan Lil ‘Alamin Foundation (RLAF)**  
<https://www.rlafoundation.org.sg>
  - **Singapore Red Cross:**  
<https://www.redcross.sg/>