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SINGAPORE

## Events in Full Bloom in the Garden City



### Also Inside

Austria, Czech,  
Spain, Türkiye  
and Uzbekistan  
National Days



SINGAPORE  
PM Lee Hsien  
Loong Visit to  
KSA

ITB ASIA 2023  
Navigating the  
Future

PRESENTATION  
OF CREDENTIALS  
Italy, Finland and Sweden



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# CONTENT

## COVER STORY

**05** Events in Full Bloom in the Garden City

## VISITS

**03** PM Lee Visit to KSA: Singapore-KSA Relations Upgraded to Strategic Partnership

## FACETIME IN OCTOBER

**04** Thai Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin visit to Singapore

SMS Sim Ann visit to Archipelagic and Island States Forum

Dr Maliki Osman attends 23rd Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)

## EVENTS

**03** Presentation of Credentials Italian Republic, Republic of Finland and Republic of the Kingdom of Sweden

**04** Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim visit to Singapore for Leaders' Retreat

Dr Maliki Osman visit to Finland for 50th Anniversary celebration

DPM Lawrence Wong working trip to US

**PUBLISHER**  
Sun Media Pte Ltd

**EDITOR-IN-CHIEF**  
Nomita Dhar

**EDITORIAL**  
Ranee Sahaney  
Syed Jaafar Alkaff

**ADVERTISING & RESEARCH**  
Lovelyn Palec  
Zahrotul Fauziah  
Laurentia T. Pribadi

**DESIGN & LAYOUT**  
Jeet Padhiyar  
Syed Jaafar Alkaff

**PHOTOS**  
Singapore Ministry of Culture and Information, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Michael Ozaki

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

Advertising enquiries:  
Tel: (65) 6735 2972  
Email: [business@sunmediaonline.com](mailto:business@sunmediaonline.com)

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Singapore at the 2023 Arctic Circle Assembly in Iceland

Permanent Sec. Albert Chua at the inaugural Singapore-Lao PDR Bilateral Consultations in Vientiane

## EVENTS NATIONAL DAY CELEBRATIONS

**06** Uzbekistan - Singapore Growing Ties  
Night of Spanish Splendour  
Czech National Day and Tribute to Bilateral Friendship  
Austrian Heritage and Solidarity  
Türkiye National Day: Continued Support

**07 ITB ASIA 2023**  
Navigating the Future

**08** Malaysian Arts & Culture  
Indonesia-Singapore US\$9 Billion Renewable Energy Project

34th SGIFF

Art is in the Air  
For Book Lovers

## EVENTS

## PRESENTATION OF CREDENTIALS: ITALY, FINLAND AND SWEDEN

The following diplomats are the first to present to President Tharman Shanmugaratnam their letters of credentials on 31st October 2023 at the Istana



- Prior to this posting, the Ambassador of the Italian Republic to Singapore, H.E. Dante Brandi, led the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation's (MoFA) communication coordination unit from 2021 to 2023, focusing on public diplomacy, social media, disinformation and strategic communications. He has served as Italy's Consul-General in Vietnam; head of the economic office at the Italian Embassy in London and was the Alternate Executive Director for Italy at the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (2013-2018); and he has also served as Chief of Staff at the Embassy in Washington, D.C. (2007-2010). He is married and has four children.



- Prior to this posting, the Ambassador of the Republic of Finland, H.E. Juha Markkanen, served nearly seven years at the Finnish MFA's Trade Promotion Unit. He had also served as Director of the Information Unit in the Finnish MFA's Department for Communication and Culture; Editor-in-Chief for the Finnish MFA's trade policy magazine; and First Secretary at the EU-Secretariat in Finland. Ambassador Markkanen's previous overseas postings include Consul-General in Los Angeles; Deputy Head of the Embassy in Stockholm (2010-2013); Counsellor at the Embassy in Tokyo (2000-2004); and Second Secretary in Berlin (1992-1996). He is married and has two adult children.



- Prior to this posting, the Ambassador of the Republic of the Kingdom of Sweden, H.E. Anders Sjöberg, oversaw the strategic affairs programme at the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs' (MFA) Department for Trade Promotion, Nation Branding & Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). He previously served as Sweden's Ambassador to Tanzania, Burundi (non-resident) and the East African Community, and Afghanistan. Other past appointments include Head of Section for South Asia at the Swedish MFA's Dept. for Asia and Pacific; Deputy Head of Mission in New Delhi, India; and Deputy Director at the Swedish MFA's Department for Global Development. He is married and has two children.

## VISIT

## SINGAPORE - KSA RELATIONS UPGRADED TO STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

PRIME Minister Lee Hsien Loong visited the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on 18th October 2023 where he met Crown Prince and Prime Minister, HRH Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and attended the ASEAN -Gulf Cooperation Council Summit in Riyadh on 20th October 2023. During PM Lee's talks with the Crown Prince, they agreed to upgrade relations between both countries to a Strategic Partnership. This will allow the deepening and expansion of mutually beneficial cooperation across all fields. PM Lee also conveyed his appreciation to HRH for the support given to Singaporean pilgrims performing the Haj. Singapore also expressed its support for the Kingdom's bid to host the 2034 World Cup.

The two sides welcomed the good progress made during the third session of the Saudi - Singapore Joint Committee (SSJC) in Riyadh on 17th October 2023. Both sides discussed ways to enhance partnerships and cooperation in various fields such as connectivity, digital economy and innovation, energy, and industry. In the economic, trade and investment fields, the two sides reviewed challenges in the global economy and discussed the common economic interests between the Kingdom and Singapore. The two sides welcomed the growth in the value of bilateral trade in 2022 by 51% as compared to 2021.



They stressed the importance of cooperating to enhance and diversify bilateral trade by tapping on and improving the Gulf Cooperation Council – Singapore Free Trade Agreement, as well as intensifying collaborations between their private sectors, in various fields including energy, digital economy, financial services, agricultural and food industries, and transport and logistics.

## FACETIME IN OCTOBER 2023



H.E. Srettha Thavisin, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand, made his first official visit to Singapore on 12th October 2023. He met President Tharmar Shanmugaratnam and Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong and engaged in fruitful discussions, emphasizing the robust relations between Singapore and Thailand. Both leaders recognized the potential for further collaborations.



Singapore's Senior Minister of State (SMS), Ministry of Foreign Affairs as well as National Development, Ms Sim Ann was at the 1st High-Level Meeting of the Archipelagic and Island States (AIS) Forum in Bali on 11th October 2023. The inaugural meeting was chaired by President Jokowi. SMS Sim Ann said Singapore welcomed the opportunity to participate and discuss the existential issues faced by small island developing states like Singapore and highlighted the need for a more concerted global effort to mitigate the problems of climate change.



Minister in the Prime Minister's Office, Second Minister for Foreign Affairs, and Second Minister for Education, Dr. Maliki Osman, was at the 23rd Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) meeting on 11th October 2023. He urged IORA members to collaborate in advancing sustainable development and reiterated Singapore's support for Sri Lanka's IORA Chairmanship and met Sri Lanka's Foreign Minister Ali Sabry.

## EVENTS



Prime Minister and Minister of Finance of Malaysia, Dato' Seri Anwar Ibrahim, visited Singapore for the 10th Singapore-Malaysia Leaders' Retreat (29th - 30th Oct 2023). Substantive agreements were reached in areas such as SME development, intellectual property rights and tackling cross-border crime. Both countries are also working towards finalising an agreement by January 2024 that relates to the next stage of the Johor-Singapore Special Economic Zone.



Dr Maliki Osman co-hosted a joint reception with the Finnish State Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of Defence Lauri Tierala to commemorate the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Singapore and Finland at the historic Engel Hall in Helsinki. The joint reception was held in conjunction with Minister Maliki's study visit to Finland to learn more about various aspects of Finland's education system.



Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance Lawrence Wong was in the US (5th to 15th Oct 2023). He visited Arizona, then New York where he launched a new Global Innovation Alliance node led by Enterprise SG. He was in Washington to meet US Cabinet Secretaries and senior officials, attend the inaugural US-Singapore Dialogue on Critical & Emerging Technologies, and participated in a dialogue at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.



Singapore's Minister for Defence, Dr Ng Eng Hen, was at the 10th Beijing Xiangshan Forum on 30th October 2023. Dr Ng engaged in meaningful discussions with senior officials from the People's Liberation Army including China Institute for International Strategic Studies Chairman and People's Liberation Army Deputy Chief of Joint Staff LG Jing Jianfeng and various defence ministers from ASEAN and the wider region.



Senior Minister of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of National Development, Sim Ann attended the 2023 Arctic Circle Assembly in Iceland (18 - 20 Oct 2023). Singapore's participation is part of its ongoing engagement of the Arctic region. She also met Icelandic Foreign Minister Bjarni Benediktsson and was accompanied by Special Envoy for Arctic Affairs Sam Tan and Singapore diplomat Lim Thuan Kuan.



Singapore's Permanent Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Singapore, Albert Chua, was on a working visit to Lao on 12th Oct 2023 where he co-chaired the inaugural Singapore-Lao PDR Bilateral Consultations (SLBC) with Lao's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Thongphane Savanphet. They reaffirmed the warm relations between both countries.

# EVENTS IN FULL BLOOM IN THE GARDEN CITY

*The type and setting for many events organised by embassies here are getting more creative. They are done with greater imagination and style!*

## Chrysanthemum Charm @ Gardens By The Bay

SINGAPOREANS had the opportunity to experience the vibrant culture of Mongolia at the Gardens By The Bay from 30th September to 1st October 2023. It was presented in collaboration with the Embassy of Mongolia in Singapore. It was inspired by the beautiful grasslands of Mongolia and featured 80 varieties of chrysanthemums and other flowers of Mongolia.



## Colombia Biodiversity Exhibition @ Gardens By The Bay

THIS was a unique exhibition that showed the vibrant diversity and unique flora of Colombia through captivating works of art. It is being held from the 18th of October to 31st December 2023. Visitors can see beautifully rendered species such as the golden dart frog, the blue anole lizard and the Chiribiquete emerald hummingbird that were all created using over 6,000 preserved roses from Colombia. The exhibition was opened by Deputy Prime Minister Heng Swee Keat who said "Singapore and Colombia may be on different sides of the world, but we are joined by our strong people-to-people and trade links, as well as rich biodiversity. Do take this opportunity to learn more about Colombia's unique flora and fauna!"



also pays tribute to the brave navigators of the Acapulco-Manila Galleon who first connected two worlds separated by the Pacific Ocean. The incredible exhibition which was held from 20th Oct to 5th Nove 2025 was curated by Lidia Riveros to celebrate this emblematic Mexican tradition in Singapore. The Day of the Dead is celebrated on the 1st and 2nd of November in Mexico and is likened to a family reunion but the guests of honour are dead ancestors!



## Day of the Dead: (Dia de Muertos) Exhibition @ Museum of Asian Civilisations

A corner of the Museum of Asian Civilizations has been devoted to Mexico's traditions for remembering the dead. The Day of the Dead



## Uzbekistan - Singapore Growing Ties

THE Embassy of the Republic of Uzbekistan in Singapore – together with friends, invited guests, Uzbek citizens and members of the diplomatic corps – hosted the 32nd Independence Day celebrations at the Shangri-La Hotel’s Tower Ballroom on the 4th of October 2023. The Guest of Honour representing the Singapore government at the event was Mr Heng Chee How, the Senior Minister of State for Defence. He was accompanied by Singapore Members of Parliament Ms Tin Pei Ling and Mr Lim Biow Chuan.

The day marks the anniversary of Uzbekistan gaining independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. The



occasion marks a significant national milestone and Uzbekistan’s Ambassador to Singapore, H.E. Kakhramon Shakirov, in his welcome address commemorated it by expressing his appreciation of the close and growing bilateral ties in trade and diplomatic relations between Singapore and Uzbekistan.

## Night of Spanish Splendour

ON 16th October 2023 H.E. Ambassador Maria Mercedes Alonso Frayle hosted the Spanish National Day celebrations at the Conrad Centennial Singapore’s Grand Ballroom which was a testament to the rich cultural exchange between Spain and Singapore where traditional Spanish music, delectable cuisine, and the warmth of shared experiences made this a jubilant evening and a testament to the enduring friendship between these two nations. Representing Singapore was Singaporean Senior Parliamentary Secretary Baey Yam Keng.



## Czech National Day and Tribute to Bilateral Friendship

On 25th October 2023, H.E. the Ambassador of the Czech Republic in Singapore Michaela Fronkova hosted the marking of 105 years of Czech independence together with the 50th anniversary of Czech-Singapore diplomatic ties! The Ambassador expressed the hope that the next semicentennial will be filled with fruitful cultural, economic, political and people-to-people exchanges. The Guest of Honour representing the Singapore government was Mr Chee Hong Tat, the Singapore Minister of Transport. The evening witnessed cultural exchanges and friendly diplomatic dialogue and a fitting tribute to the unwavering partnership that continues to flourish

between the Czech Republic and Singapore as well as their shared aspirations.



## Austrian Heritage and Solidarity

Amidst the elegant ambiance of Andaz Hotel Singapore, the Austrian Embassy in Singapore warmly welcomed distinguished guests to its National Day Reception on 26th October 2023. This annual celebration not only paid homage to Austria's rich cultural heritage but also commemorated a pivotal moment in the nation's history: the adoption of the constitutional law on permanent neutrality in 1955.

Austria's Ambassador to Singapore H.E. Peter Guschelbauer welcomed Singapore's Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office, Home Affairs and Sustainability and the Environment, Mr Desmond Tan, who was accompanied by his Parliamentary colleagues

Ms Nadia A. Samdin and Dr Tan Wu Meng. The event was a resounding success, offering an evening of delectable Austrian cuisine (particularly Kaiserschmarrn, a traditional Austrian dessert pancake) and live music by Ms Leandra Lane that transported attendees to the heart of Austria.



## Türkiye National Day: Continued Support

On 26th October 2023, the Turkish Ambassador to Singapore H.E. Mehmet Burcin Gonenli and his spouse Mrs Aneta Katarzyna Afekt Gonenli welcomed guests for the country's National Day celebrations which were held at the Gardens By The Bay. Singapore's Senior Minister of State for the Ministry of National Development and the Ministry of Communications and Information, Mr Tan Kiat How, represented the Singapore Government. The Minister conveyed the Island Republic's support for Türkiye following the earthquake that occurred in February



this year. The contributions for humanitarian relief and reconstruction efforts served as a testament to the enduring friendship and shared aspirations shared between Turkey and Singapore.

### EVENTS

## ITB ASIA 2023 - Navigating the Future

ON the morning of 25th October 2023, the bustling aisles of the ITB Asia International Tourism Trade Fair and Conference (alongside MICE Show Asia and Travel Tech Asia) were thrown open heralding the offerings from a diverse array of stakeholders from every facet of the tourism industry, encompassing tourist destinations, airlines, hotels, and travel technology innovators. The accent on technology was also augmented by the opening keynote addresses from Hermione Joye, Sector Lead, Travel and Vertical Search APAC at Google, and James Liang, Co-founder and Executive Chairman of the Board at Trip.com Group Ltd. IN Diplomacy presents some of the pictorial highlights of the event.



# Spotlight on Malaysian Arts & Culture

THE Malaysian Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture (MOTAC) organised the Malaysia-Singapore Triennial Cultural Showcase 2023 from 6th to 8th October 2023 at Marina Square with lively cultural performances, cooking and handicraft demonstrations. Many Singaporeans were ready to book their holidays through the many tour companies that offered travel packages to East and West Malaysia. On hand to witness the launch of the festivities was the High Commissioner of Malaysia H.E. Dr Azfar bin Mohamd Mustafar.



# Indonesia & Singapore in US\$9 Billion Renewable Energy Project

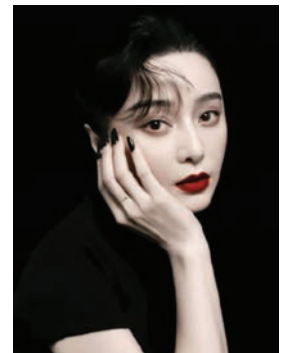
A milestone for the new and renewable energy (NRE) sector as PT Marubeni Global Indonesia, a key player in Batam with National Strategic Program (NSP) status, has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Singapore's prestigious NRE company, Tuas Power. The signing ceremony took place on 23rd October 2023 and under this transformative partnership, Tuas Power is set to import environmentally friendly electricity generated by Marubeni in Batam. Marubeni, a subsidiary of the Wiraraja Group, will make substantial contributions by generating 4.1 GWp of solar energy and storing an additional 10 GWp in a cutting-edge Battery Energy



Storage System (BESS). The total investment for this ambitious project is estimated at a remarkable US\$9 billion.

# 34th SGIFF Returns with a Bang

There will be 101 films from 50 countries screened from 30th November to 10th December 2023 at this year's 34th Singapore International Film Festival (SGIFF). They include the premier of 20 movies that will showcase the "diversity and innovation of global filmmaking" say the organisers. Highlights include the premier of three Singapore films and the return of two prestigious awards Cinema Icon and The International Federation of Film Critics (FIPRESCI) Awards. The former will be awarded to Chinese star Fan Bingbing (pictured far right) who will be at the SGIFF to receive it. The opening film from Malaysia *Tiger Stripes* made history at Cannes by winning the prestigious Grand Prix prize at the Cannes Film Festival Critics' Week. For more info and tickets visit [sgiff.com](http://sgiff.com)



# ART is in the Air

Art lovers, collectors and artists will be happy to note that the 16th edition of the **Affordable Art Fair** will be back from 10th to 12th November 2023. As it continues its mission to make contemporary art accessible to both seasoned collectors and new enthusiasts it is presenting an eclectic mix of artists and galleries, immersive workshops, and enlightening talks. From the 19th to 28th of January 2024 the **Singapore Art Week** takes over with 130 art experiences.

For more information visit [indiplomacy.com](http://indiplomacy.com)

# For Book Lovers

The 26th edition of the Singapore Writers Festival (SWF) promises to be a literary extravaganza with an array of international speakers joining the lineup. Organised by Arts House Limited (AHL) and commissioned by the National Arts Council (NAC), this year's festival is set to deliver unexpected outcomes, surprise endings, and big reveals. The SWF will be from 17th to 26th November 2023. Expect a roster of international literary heavyweights and an unforgettable finale.

