

IN DIPLOMACY

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SINGAPORE



State Visits
Kazakhstan President
Kassym-Jomart Tokayev

Malaysia King H.M. Sultan
Ibrahim Sultan Iskandar

Collaborative Interview Series
World Opportunities Forum, Diplomatic Ball and Awards
In conversation with Singapore Manufacturing Federation President Mr Lennon Tan, commemorating **25 Years of Sun Media** and **100th Edition IN Diplomacy**



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Illuminating Diplomacy: Singapore Shines with Cultural Exchange and Economic Opportunities



Welcome to this edition of *IN Diplomacy*, where we delve into the world of diplomatic relations and cultural exchange. Singapore, a hub of international diplomacy, is abuzz with activity, and we're excited to share the latest developments with you.

On the cover we bring you a glimpse of the 10th edition of *i Light Singapore*, a stunning display of global art, is currently illuminating the city-state, promoting sustainability and environmental awareness through cultural diplomacy.

Singapore has also hosted high-level diplomatic visits, welcoming President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev [Page 4] and H.M. Sultan Ibrahim Sultan Iskandar [Page 6]. Cooperation continues to grow with these nations.

In this edition, we launch a new series in partnership with Singapore organizations, starting with the Singapore Manufacturing Federation, to amplify opportunities for Singapore businesses and embassies, facilitating growth and collaboration.

We extend a warm welcome to the newly appointed ambassadors from Congo, Peru, Ethiopia, and Belarus, wishing them success in their new roles.

For our esteemed ambassadors and visiting guests, we highlight the convenience of ASEAN's short-distance travel options, showcasing the charms of Penang and Langkawi.

Join us as we explore the world of diplomacy, cultural exchange, and economic opportunities in this edition of *IN Diplomacy*. Happy reading!

Nomita Dhar

Publisher Sun Media Pte Ltd

Editor-in-Chief Nomita Dhar

Editorial

Ranee Sahaney
Syed Jaafar Alkaff

Advertising & Research

Lovelyn Palec

Design & Layout

Padhiyar Jeet Pratapray
Syed Jaafar Alkaff

Photos Singapore Ministry of Culture and Information | Ministry of Foreign Affairs | 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

Advertising enquiries:

Tel: (65) 6735 2972

Email:

business@sunmediaonline.com

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Presentation of Credentials

The following diplomats presented their letters of credentials to President Tharman Shanmugaratnam on 28th May 2024 at the Istana



H.E. Francisco Tenya-Hasegawa
Ambassador of Peru



H.E. Jacques Jean Luc Nyanga
Ambassador of Congo



H.E. Fekadu Beyene Aleka
Ambassador of Ethiopia

Brief introductory bios available online at
www.indiplomacy.com

FACETIME in May 2024



His Majesty Sultan Ibrahim, King of Malaysia, visited Singapore from 6-7 May 2024. He met with President Tharman Shanmugaratnam, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, and Deputy Prime Minister Lawrence Wong. They celebrated strong bilateral ties and unveiled commemorative stamp designs for the Johor-Singapore Causeway centennial. His Majesty also toured Parliament and the Thomson-East Coast line. The visit included discussions on economic collaboration and cultural exchange programs.



Malaysian Foreign Minister Dato' Seri Utama Mohamad Hasan visited Singapore from 27-28 May 2024. He met with President Tharman Shanmugaratnam, Prime Minister Lawrence Wong, and Senior Minister Lee Hsien Loong. An official lunch was hosted by Foreign Minister Dr. Vivian Balakrishnan, joined by Senior Minister Zaqy Mohamad. This visit marked his introductory visit and maintained the momentum of high-level bilateral exchanges. Both sides discussed enhancing cooperation in various sectors and reaffirmed their commitment to strong bilateral relations.



Cambodian Minister of Labour Heng Sour visited Singapore under the S R Nathan Fellowship from 22-23 May 2024. He met with Ministers Chan Chun Sing, Dr. Tan See Leng, and Dr. Vivian Balakrishnan. He received a briefing on workforce policies and toured AI and robotics innovation centers at Temasek Polytechnic. The visit fostered bilateral relations and provided insights into Singapore's workforce strategies. Discussions also covered potential collaborations in vocational training and technology.



Defence Minister Dr. Ng Eng Hen visited Jordan on 19 May 2024. He met with King Abdullah II, Prime Minister Dr. Bisher Al Khasawneh, and Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi. Dr. Ng also visited the Jordanian Armed Forces Headquarters. He thanked Jordan for supporting Singapore's humanitarian aid to Gaza and discussed regional security, highlighting the strong defence ties between the two countries. Future military cooperation and joint exercises were also on the agenda.



Dr. Mohamad Maliki Osman attended the SIDS4 in Antigua & Barbuda from 27-30 May 2024. The conference theme was "Charting the Course Towards Resilient Prosperity," focusing on sustainable growth, climate change, and digital technologies. Minister Maliki held bilateral meetings on the sidelines, accompanied by officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to discuss collaborative partnerships. Key topics included resilience-building and leveraging digital technologies for sustainable development.

Kazakhstan President Visit Provided Strong Impetus to Bilateral Relations



On his first State Visit Kazakhstan President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev also addressed the Kazakhstan-Singapore Business Forum and delivered the 46th Singapore Lecture - this was the first Singapore Lecture delivered by a Central Asian leader

Kazakhstan President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev made his first State Visit to Singapore from 22nd to 24th May 2024. President Tokayev is no stranger to Singapore. He served as a diplomat here in the 1970s, visited as Foreign Minister in 2004, and Chairman of the Senate in 2016. In fact, he has met all four of Singapore's Prime Ministers!

As part of the visit, President Tokayev was hosted at a State Banquet by President Tharman Shanmugaratnam. He also met with PM Lawrence Wong and SM Lee Hsien Loong. He also addressed the Kazakhstan-Singapore Business Forum with DPM Heng Swee Keat, and delivered the 46th Singapore Lecture (*"Kazakhstan and Role of Middle Powers: Fostering Security, Stability and Sustainable Development"*) which was moderated by SM Teo Chee Hean. This was the first Singapore Lecture delivered by a Central Asian leader.

The Kazakhstan President said during his visit, "We attach great importance to our multifaceted cooperation with Singapore. We have a long tradition of close ties. I am personally involved in the history of the relationship with Singapore. As a young diplomat in the 1970s, I had the honour of serving in Singapore."

Singapore's Prime Minister Mr Lawrence Wong highlighted the significant potential for mutually beneficial collaboration to be further enhanced. According to the Prime Minister, the economies of the two countries are complementary, and Singapore can serve as a gateway for Kazakhstan to expand its interaction with ASEAN countries, while Kazakhstan can facilitate Singapore's rapprochement with the countries of Central Asia.

Flagship Projects

President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev and PM Lawrence Wong welcomed the implementation of such flagship projects as Alatau City (G4 City) in Almaty region with the participation of the Singaporean company Surbana Jurong, as well as the partnership between PSA International and Kazakhstan Railways aimed at increasing the potential of the Trans-Caspian international transport route.

They paid special attention to strengthening cooperation in education and science, including strengthening inter-university cooperation, student exchange, etc. At the end of their meeting, President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev invited the Prime Minister to pay an official visit to Kazakhstan.

Memoranda and Agreement

President Tokayev and Prime Minister Lawrence Wong took part in a ceremony to witness a symbolic exchange of documents between Mr Murat Nurtleu, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan, and Ms Grace Fu, Singapore Minister for Sustainability and the Environment as well as Minister-in-charge of Trade Relations.

- An MoU was signed by the governments of Kazakhstan and Singapore on economic cooperation.
- Memorandum of intentions between Kazakhstan's Ministry of Internal Affairs and Singapore's Ministry for Home Affairs
- MoU between Kazakhstan's Ministry of Justice and Singapore's Ministry of Law on cooperation in the field of intellectual property rights protection.
- MoU on legal cooperation between Kazakhstan's Ministry of Justice and Singapore's Ministry of Law.
- MoU between Kazakhstan's Ministry of Science and Higher Education and Singapore's Ministry of Education on the cooperation in the field of higher education.
- Agreement on cooperation for distribution and translation of Singapore standards between Kazakhstan Institute of Standardization and Metrology (Kazstandard) and Enterprise Singapore.

SMF President Lennon Tan: Showcasing Singapore - The Shining Little Dot

The President of the Singapore Manufacturing Federation (SMF), Mr Lennon Tan, discussed the Federation's efforts in increasing standards and reach of manufacturers here and in overseas markets and on investment opportunities that will be presented at the World Opportunities Forum this August. Following are excerpts from the interview



SMF President Mr Lennon Tan with interviewer Ms Nomita Dhar, Publisher of IN Diplomacy magazine

Recently, there was news that Astra-Zeneca is going to invest over S\$1 billion in manufacturing in Singapore. There are some who think that Singapore is known more for services than manufacturing. Would you like to change that perception?

While Singapore is well-known for its services sector, which contributes to about 16% of our economy, it's important to note that manufacturing is actually the largest pillar, contributing around 20% on average.

How does SMF facilitate businesses in the manufacturing sector, especially in Singapore?

The SMF, founded in 1932, has grown from 17 companies to about 5,000 members across 10 diverse industry groups that now include medical and life sciences which is now our second largest sector. We engage with our members through organized industry groups, each with its own committee, focusing on networking and events. Additionally, we have horizontal activities that cut across all industry groups, addressing policies and international collaborations.

How does the relationship between the government sector and the private sector work in Singapore?

The Singapore government takes a consultative approach, working closely with companies and workers. We have a tripartite relationship, meaning the government, companies, and workers collaborate. SMF is often consulted on policy changes, especially those related to manpower, ensuring that we work in sync to benefit the manufacturing sector.

You are a successful businessman yourself. How do you see things differently as a leader in the manufacturing sector?

Leading the SMF requires a broader perspective compared to running a single business. We must consider various factors that affect manufacturing, such as rising costs and geopolitical influences. Despite these challenges, we strive to keep manufacturing relevant in Singapore by maintaining a delicate balance between productivity and cost.

How do you engage with other countries and their embassies to facilitate international business?

We collaborate with embassies and organisations like Sun Media to introduce investment opportunities and engage with international diplomats and businesses. We organize events, mission trips, and networking platforms to foster these relationships and help our members explore overseas markets.

Are you connected with other trade associations globally, and how do you work with them?

Yes, we collaborate with international trade associations through events, exhibitions, and mission trips. We create opportunities for businesses to interact and explore collaborations, which can lead to significant trade and investment opportunities.

Sun Media has been working with diplomatic missions for the last 25 years. We are organising the World Opportunities Forum and a Diplomatic Ball to celebrate the 100th issue of IN Diplomacy to commemorate these milestones. How can SMF support and participate in these events?

These events sound exciting and optimistic. Congratulations on your 100th issue. We would be happy to support and participate, providing our members with opportunities to explore new business avenues and celebrate this significant milestone with you. Thank you for the invitation.

For transcript and video of interview visit www.indiplomacy.com

Illuminating Connections

i Light Singapore brings Artistic Diplomacy and Sustainable Innovation to fore

This year, i Light Singapore marks a decade of illuminating the power of art and sustainability, transforming Marina Bay and neighboring precincts into a vibrant spectacle of light, sound, and art. The 10th edition of this iconic festival promises an unforgettable experience, with an expanded footprint that includes the Tanjong Pagar district for the first time.

Under the theme "Cyclical Nature," this year's festival features 17 interactive art installations by 25 local and international artists, all exploring the potential of everyday objects for re-design, restoration, and repurposing. The color green, symbolizing nature and the environment, serves as the inspiration for this edition.

As visitors wander through the festival grounds, they will encounter thought-provoking installations that highlight pressing environmental issues, from the fashion industry's contribution to global pollution to the impact of construction waste. Interactive experiences abound, including a fun, illuminated game of tennis and a glowing yoga ball installation that encourages playful interaction and community building.

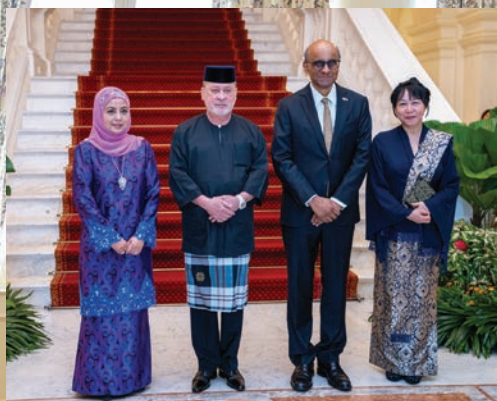
The festival's expansion into Tanjong Pagar brings new excitement, with installations like "BottleBlooms" featuring solar-powered plastic blossoms upcycled from over 1,000 PET bottles, and "Hidden Garden" dressing trees with light art inflatables, paying tribute to Singapore's beautiful flora and fauna.

i Light Singapore's milestone edition celebrates not only sustainable art but also cultural diplomacy, fostering exchange and collaboration among artists from around the world. With its inclusive and immersive experiences, this festival has become a beloved signature event in Singapore's cultural calendar, transcending borders and inspiring us to embrace sustainability and artistic expression.

Join the celebration from 31st May to 23rd June 2024, as i Light Singapore shines bright, illuminating the power of art and sustainability to bring people together and create a better future.

Malaysian King's First State Visit

H.M. Sultan Ibrahim, King of Malaysia, first overseas State Visit reinforced the good progress made in bilateral relations and also coincided with the centennial anniversary of the Singapore-Johor Causeway



(Above): H.M. Sultan Ibrahim with then Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong cementing the good progress in bilateral relations. (Inset): The King and Queen of Malaysia with President Tharman Shanmugaratnam and First Lady



(2nd and 3rd from top): Launch of SG-Johor Causeway Centenary Commemorative stamps which will be issued in June. Early photo of the Causeway being built in 1923; today the Causeway processes about 415,000 crossings a day! (Above): Dr Vivian Balakrishnan accompanying the King on a tour of the Singapore Parliament

During the 2-day State Visit, H.M. Sultan Ibrahim Sultan Iskandar had the distinction of being the first King of Malaysia to observe the Singapore parliament in session. His Majesty was also hosted by Speaker of Parliament Mr Seah Kian Peng on a tour of the Parliament Chamber.

The King was accompanied on the visit by the Queen of Malaysia Raja Zarith Sofia, Malaysia's Minister of Transport Anthony Loke, and other senior Malaysian officials.

The King met President Tharman Shanmugaratnam, then Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance Lawrence Wong, where they welcomed the countries' long-standing and multifaceted bilateral ties and the good progress that has been made in bilateral cooperation.

They also welcomed the upcoming centennial of the Johor-Singapore Causeway in June 2024. To kick off the commemorative activities, His Majesty and President Tharman unveiled the

designs for commemorative stamps jointly issued by SingPost and Pos Malaysia to mark this anniversary.

Before leaving Singapore, the Majesties were hosted by Minister for Transport Chee Hong Tat to a train ride on the Thomson – East Coast line to Woodlands North Station, which is the Singapore terminus for the Johor Bahru – Singapore Rapid Transit (RTS) Link project.

Former Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong recalled in his social media post that he was glad to have met His Majesty who had conferred the Dato' Sri Paduka Mahkota Johor, Johor's highest honour a year ago. He noted "Singapore and Malaysia share a close friendship, underpinned by historical ties and strong relationships between our governments and businesses. In January, PM Anwar Ibrahim and I observed the completion of the Johor Bahru-Singapore Rapid Transit System (RTS Link) connecting span and witnessed the signing of the Johor-Singapore Special Economic Zone (JS-SEZ)."

Photos: Bernama, MFA, MCI (Ngau Kai Yan and Lim Sin Thai) and National Archives of Singapore

Welcome Meetings with Korea, Thailand & Panama Ambassadors

In a series of meetings, the Korean, Thailand, and Panamanian Ambassadors to Singapore met with Sun Media Singapore Editor-in-Chief, Ms. Nomita Dhar



(From l to r): Korean Ambassador H.E. Hong Jin-Wook, Thai Ambassador H.E. Ms. Ureerat Chareontoh and Panama Ambassador H.E. Enrique V. González

On 13th May 2024, **Korean Ambassador H.E. Hong Jin-Wook**, emphasized the robust economic relationship between Korea and Singapore, highlighting potential growth areas in technology, innovation, and infrastructure development.

He also stressed the importance of cultural exchanges, tourism, educational collaborations, and deepening people-to-people ties during his term.



On 14th May 2024, **Thai Ambassador H.E. Ms. Ureerat Chareontoh**, expressed optimism about the future of bilateral ties, built on shared cultural and economic interests. She emphasized cooperation in trade and investment, tourism, innovation, and regional issues, and is enthusiastic about broadening interactions to optimal levels during her term in Singapore.

On 21st May 2024, **Panamanian Ambassador H.E. Enrique Villegas González**,



discussed ongoing efforts to strengthen Panama-Singapore bilateral relations, highlighting strong collaboration in trade, maritime sectors, and educational exchanges. Panama established diplomatic relations with Singapore in 1981.

Both nations have focused on enhancing trade, investment, and technological exchanges. Notably, Singapore and Panama rank top in ship registries worldwide and have ongoing maritime collaborations.

Timor-Leste 22nd Year of Independence

In May, as Timor-Leste marks its 22nd year of independence, the nation is preparing for its anticipated entry into ASEAN. Timor-Leste Ambassador to Singapore, His Excellency Alexandre Vital da Cruz Araújo Tilman, highlighted the country's recent WTO membership and its strategic goals in a letter, emphasizing the significance of this year in celebrating independence and setting the stage for further integration into regional systems.



of the botanical gardens' scenic beauty, their renditions of Chopin, Paderewski, and Moniuszko's compositions captivated the audience, transporting them on a musical journey that honored Poland's rich cultural heritage.



Europe Day 2024

On May 10, 2024, the EU Delegation to Singapore celebrated Europe Day with a grand reception at the Conrad Centennial Hotel. The event featured a speech by EU Ambassador H.E. Iwona Piórko, a screening of the European Film Festival trailer, and performances of national anthems and folk dances. Singapore's Minister for Transport and Second Minister for Finance, Chee Hong Tat, was the guest of honour, along with over 300 guests, including nearly 40 Ambassadors and High Commissioners.



Anniversary of Poland's May 3rd Constitution

In a harmonious celebration marking two significant occasions, the enchanting melodies of renowned Polish composers resonated through the lush surroundings of the Singapore Botanic Gardens. As Poland commemorated its 20-year membership in the European Union and the anniversary of the historic May 3rd Constitution, attendees were treated to a mesmerizing performance by the talented duo of Katarzyna Borek on piano and Elzbieta Wolenska on flute. Against the backdrop

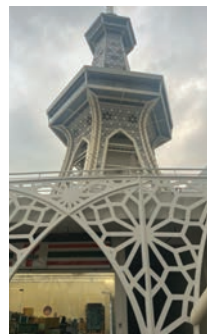
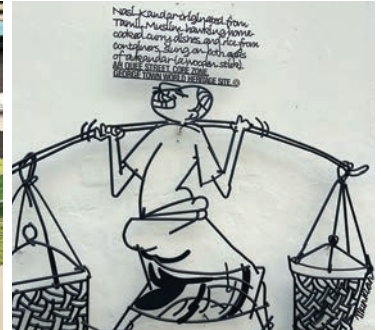


Singapore-Philippines 55th Year of Diplomatic Relations Celebrations: HERSTORY

The Republic of the Philippines and the Republic of Singapore celebrated 55 years of diplomatic relations with a special viewing of the "HERSTORY" Art Exhibit by Filipino artist Jef Albea, followed by a commemorative luncheon. Hosted by His Excellency Medardo G. Macaraig, Philippine Ambassador to Singapore, at the Pan Pacific Singapore Hotel on May 16, 2024, the event was attended by esteemed guests from the Singapore government, the diplomatic community, and the Embassy's institutional partners.

Hop on to Penang and Langkawi and Get Rejuvenated!

By Nomita Dhar



(Top row): Some Penang highlights of the trip included great food and art on many streets of the state capital George Town
(Second row): Rich in natural attractions with beautiful waters that surround Langkawi which has a total of 99 islands!

Escape Singapore with a quick getaway to Malaysia! We invite the diplomatic community and visiting guests to discover the charms of Penang and Langkawi, from street food to stunning beaches and vibrant night markets. Join us as we uncover the highlights of these two destinations and find your next escape!

Getting to Penang is a breeze, with direct flights from Singapore's Terminal 4. And with the favourable exchange rate, you'll get great value for your money. From mouth-watering hawker food to comfortable stays, Penang has something for everyone.

We started our journey with a visit to **D'Tomato Street**, where food was served in a mobile orange *tuk tuk* serving up fresh and delicious *Nasi Kandar*. The aromatic rice, paired with tender meat and spicy sauces, was the perfect introduction to Penang's culinary delights. For our stay, we chose **The George**, a new establishment with an old-worldly charm inspired by Raffles Hotel Singapore.

But we discovered that Penang has more to offer than just food and art. We took a city **trishaw ride** and experienced the sights and sounds of the past. We were able to visit Penang's famous tram and forest trail to get up close and personal with the local flora and fauna. And of course, no trip to Penang would be complete without trying some of the local hawker options – from *Char Kway Teow* to *Laksa*, and everything in between.

Next, we headed to Langkawi, an island with a special tranquil vibe, bringing instant peace. We stayed at the luxurious **Pelangi Beach Resort**, built in the 1980s for the Commonwealth Leaders' Retreat. The resort is rich in biodiversity, has great dining options and stunning views. We went on a super luxurious Sunset Cruise by **Tropical Charters**, which was a magical sailing experience and took an eco-trip to **Kubang Badak Biogotrail**, where we also savoured fresh seafood caught at a unique crab farm.

We also visited **Maha Tower**, the jewel of Langkawi's skyline, and followed it up with a visit to **Dream Forest Langkawi**, where we enjoyed an immersive time in the rainforest experiencing the folklore of Langkawi through enchanting light, sound and multi-sensory technology; this was followed by a dinner in the forest, complete with a campfire and roasting marshmallows! We rounded up our trip to Langkawi with a ride on the **Langkawi Cable Car** and a walk on the **Eagle Nest Sky Walk**, where we walked gingerly on the glass panels with the forest under our feet.

Don't miss out on this incredible opportunity to unwind and rejuvenate in Penang and Langkawi. Book your flights and accommodation today and get ready for an unforgettable adventure.

Travel note: This trip was organised by *Tourism Malaysia* and is part of a series of ASEAN adventures from Singapore, bringing diplomats and their families to explore the region's hidden gems.



A Langkawi 'must' - day and sunset cruises, island hopping to secluded beaches