

# IN Diplomacy

MISSION TO COMMUNICATE

Published by



Supported by

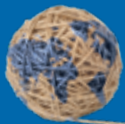


DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR CORPS SINGAPORE

Issue 57 December 2019  
[www.indiplomacy.com](http://www.indiplomacy.com)

## SPECIAL ANNUAL YEARBOOK EDITION

Featuring Bilateral Highlights  
of 27 Countries  
including



○ FABRICS ○ FASHIONS ○ NATIONAL DRESS



PLUS:

### SPECIAL COUNTRY SUPPLEMENT

Historic Singapore  
President's First  
State Visit to the  
Kingdom of  
Saudi Arabia

# CONTENTS



**PUBLISHER** Sun Media Pte Ltd

**EDITOR-IN-CHIEF** Nomita Dhar

**EDITORIAL** Ranees Sahaney, Syed Jaafar Alkaff, Nishka Rao

**DESIGN & LAYOUT** Syed Jaafar Alkaff, Dilip Kumar,  
Roshen Singh

**PHOTO CONTRIBUTOR** Michael Ozaki

**ADVERTISING & MARKETING** Swati Singh

**PRINTING** Times Printers Print Pte Ltd

## A note about

### PHOTO SOURCES & CONTRIBUTORS

Sun Media would like to thank

- Ministry of Communications & Information, Singapore.
  - Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Singapore.
  - All the foreign missions for use of their photos.
- Where ever possible we have tried to credit usage and individual photographers.

Supported by



**DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR CORPS SINGAPORE**

**PUBLISHING OFFICE** Sun Media Pte Ltd, 20 Kramat Lane

#01-02 United House, Singapore 228773

**Tel:** (65) 6735 2972 / 6735 1907 / 6735 2986

**Fax:** (65) 6735 3114

**E-mail:** admin@sunmediaonline.com

**Website:** www.indiplomacy.com

MICA (P) 071/08/2019

© Copyright 2020 by Sun Media Pte Ltd. The opinions, pronouncements or views expressed or implied in this publication are those of contributors or authors. They do not necessarily reflect the official stance of the Indonesian authorities nor their agents and representatives. The aim of this publication is to guide and provide general information. While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of all information contained, the publisher cannot be held liable for loss incurred in any way whatsoever by a company or a person relying on this information.

# IN Diplomacy

MISSION TO COMMUNICATE

www.indiplomacy.com

## PUBLISHER'S NOTE

› Ringing in 2020 on a Positive Note

2

## YEARBOOK SECTION

› Participating foreign missions share their highlights of the year and what their countries are famous for

4 - 56

## SPECIAL COUNTRY SUPPLEMENT

Page 46

### Singapore President's Historic First State Visit to Saudi Arabia



# Countries Represented in Singapore and Yearbook Country Contributors Locator

Diplomatic missions that have contributed to this issue are marked in **bold** and denoted by ●

## DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS

### Page Country

- |           |                        |           |                            |  |                                 |
|-----------|------------------------|-----------|----------------------------|--|---------------------------------|
|           | AFGHANISTAN            |           | ECUADOR                    |  | MICRONESIA, FEDERATED STATES OF |
|           | ALBANIA                |           | EGYPT                      |  | <b>26 MONGOLIA ●</b>            |
|           | ALGERIA                |           | EL SALVADOR                |  | MOROCCO                         |
|           | ANGOLA                 |           | ERITREA                    |  | MOZAMBIQUE                      |
| <b>4</b>  | <b>ARGENTINA ●</b>     |           | ESTONIA                    |  | MYANMAR                         |
|           | ARMENIA                |           | ESWATINI                   |  | NEPAL                           |
| <b>6</b>  | <b>AUSTRALIA ●</b>     |           | ETHIOPIA                   |  | NETHERLANDS                     |
| <b>8</b>  | <b>AUSTRIA ●</b>       |           | EUROPEAN UNION             |  | <b>28 NEW ZEALAND ●</b>         |
|           | AZERBAIJAN             |           | FIJI                       |  | NIGER                           |
|           | BAHAMAS                | <b>14</b> | <b>FINLAND ●</b>           |  | <b>30 NIGERIA ●</b>             |
|           | BAHRAIN                |           | FRANCE                     |  | NORTH MACEDONIA, REPUBLIC OF    |
| <b>9</b>  | <b>BANGLADESH ●</b>    |           | GABON                      |  | <b>32 NORWAY ●</b>              |
|           | BELARUS                |           | GEORGIA                    |  | PAKISTAN                        |
| <b>11</b> | <b>BELGIUM ●</b>       |           | GERMANY                    |  | PANAMA                          |
|           | BENIN                  |           | GHANA                      |  | PAPUA NEW GUINEA                |
|           | BHUTAN                 |           | GREECE                     |  | PARAGUAY                        |
|           | BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA |           | GUATEMALA                  |  | <b>34 PERU ●</b>                |
|           | BOTSWANA               |           | GUINEA                     |  | <b>36 PHILIPPINES ●</b>         |
| <b>12</b> | <b>BRAZIL ●</b>        |           | GUINEA-BISSAU              |  | <b>38 POLAND ●</b>              |
|           | BRUNEI DARUSSALAM      |           | GUYANA                     |  | PORTUGAL                        |
|           | BULGARIA               |           | HOLY SEE                   |  | QATAR                           |
|           | BURKINA FASO           |           | HUNGARY                    |  | ROMANIA                         |
|           | CAMBODIA               |           | ICELAND                    |  | <b>40 RUSSIAN FEDERATION ●</b>  |
|           | CANADA                 |           | <b>16 INDIA ●</b>          |  | RWANDA                          |
|           | CHILE                  |           | <b>18 INDONESIA ●</b>      |  | SAMOA                           |
|           | CHINA                  |           | IRAN, ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF  |  | <b>42 SAUDI ARABIA ●</b>        |
|           | COLOMBIA               |           | IRAQ                       |  | SENEGAL                         |
|           | COMOROS                |           | <b>20 IRELAND ●</b>        |  | SERBIA                          |
|           | CONGO                  |           | ISRAEL                     |  | SEYCHELLES                      |
|           | CONGO, THE DEMOCRATIC  |           | ITALY                      |  | SLOVAKIA                        |
|           | REPUBLIC OF THE        |           | JAMAICA                    |  | <b>48 SOUTH AFRICA ●</b>        |
|           | COSTA RICA             |           | JAPAN                      |  | SPAIN                           |
|           | CÔTE D'IVOIRE          |           | <b>22 JORDAN ●</b>         |  | <b>49 SRI LANKA ●</b>           |
|           | CROATIA                |           | KAZAKHSTAN                 |  | SUDAN                           |
|           | CUBA                   |           | KENYA                      |  | SURINAME                        |
|           | CZECH REPUBLIC         |           | KOREA, DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S |  | SWEDEN                          |
|           | DENMARK                |           | REPUBLIC OF                |  | <b>50 SWITZERLAND ●</b>         |
|           | DJIBOUTI               |           | KOREA, REPUBLIC OF         |  | TANZANIA, UNITED REPUBLIC OF    |
|           | DOMINICAN REPUBLIC     |           | KUWAIT                     |  | THAILAND                        |
|           |                        |           | KYRGYZSTAN                 |  | TIMOR-LESTE                     |
|           |                        |           | LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC    |  | TONGA                           |
|           |                        |           | REPUBLIC                   |  | TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO             |
|           |                        |           | LATVIA                     |  | TUNISIA                         |
|           |                        |           | LESOTHO                    |  | TURKEY                          |
|           |                        |           | LIBERIA                    |  | TURKMENISTAN                    |
|           |                        |           | LIBYA                      |  | UGANDA                          |
|           |                        |           | LITHUANIA                  |  | UKRAINE                         |
|           |                        |           | LUXEMBOURG                 |  | UNITED ARAB EMIRATES            |
|           |                        |           | MADAGASCAR                 |  | UNITED KINGDOM                  |
|           |                        |           | MALAWI                     |  | <b>52 UNITED STATES ●</b>       |
|           |                        | <b>24</b> | <b>MALAYSIA ●</b>          |  | URUGUAY                         |
|           |                        |           | MALDIVES                   |  | <b>54 UZBEKISTAN ●</b>          |
|           |                        |           | MALI                       |  | <b>56 VENEZUELA, BOLIVARIAN</b> |
|           |                        |           | MALTA                      |  | <b>REPUBLIC OF ●</b>            |
|           |                        |           | MARSHALL ISLANDS           |  | VIETNAM                         |
|           |                        |           | MAURITANIA                 |  | YEMEN                           |
|           |                        |           | MAURITIUS                  |  | ZAMBIA                          |
|           |                        |           | MEXICO                     |  | ZIMBABWE                        |

## CONSULAR POSTS

- BARBADOS ○ BELIZE ○ BENIN ○ BOTSWANA ○ BURKINA FASO ○ CABO VERDE ○ EL SALVADOR ○ ESTONIA ○ ETHIOPIA ○ GEORGIA ○ GHANA ○ GUINEA ○ ICELAND ○ JAMAICA ○ KENYA ○ LEBANON ○ LITHUANIA ○ LUXEMBOURG ○ MADAGASCAR ○ MALI ○ MALTA ○ MAURITIUS ○ MOLDOVA, REPUBLIC OF ○ MONACO ○ MOROCCO ○ MOZAMBIQUE ○ NEPAL ○ OMAN ○ PALAU ○ SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES ○ SEYCHELLES ○ SLOVAKIA ○ SLOVENIA ○ SUDAN ○ TANZANIA, UNITED REPUBLIC OF ○ TONGA ○ UGANDA



# Narratives of Positive Engagement...



*Ms Nomita Dhar, Publisher  
& Editor in Chief*

Dear Friends,

Public Diplomacy and National Branding have an important role to play between nations during peace and towards it.

The popular perception of a Diplomat as well-read, well-travelled and well-dressed, the accomplished representative of a country is universal and is, more often than not, certainly not wrong. But we must also add, these men and women

of repute, with their small or larger teams, put their best foot forward, and have been an excellent link between Singapore and their nations. They bring to the table knowledge, access and a mandate to connect.

The engagements in culture, business and investments open windows for people-to-people contacts and improve lives and create livelihoods. This special edition of IN Diplomacy reports initiatives and engagements for many of them specifically of those with their resident missions here.

The Diplomatic Community in Singapore has pulled out all the stops to move forward by bringing to the fore its best skills in keeping dialogues and conversations going on a positive note, while leaning strongly on the cornerstones of its decades-long strong bilateral relationships.

No wonder it's been a hectic year for the many missions in Singapore as deepening of engagement has kicked off on multiple fronts, whether it has been the promotion of cultural diplomacy, tourism, trade and investment, on varied platforms. There have been many arrivals and departures in Singapore, of a steady stream of delegations and heads of state, to strengthen this growing narrative of constant engagement to keep the channels of conversations open.

It began in January with the first official visit by the Czech Prime Minister Andrej Babiš to Singapore and when he expressed his wish to see the Czech Embassy re-open here; right up to the first ever state visit of Singaporean President Halimah Yacob to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in November. Her warm reception there is an excellent case in point. At the end of the tour the President spoke highly of the extremely positive vibes she felt during the meetings and remarked that the leaders looked at Singapore as a role model as the Republic has been "very successful" in its development efforts despite its small size. IN Diplomacy marked the occasion with a special supplement to commemorate the visit in this issue (page 44 to 47).

There is no denying the pivotal role that Singapore has played in creating a neutral platform for dialogues for even the most contentious situations — and herein lies its strength. The positive results of this incredible balancing act is so richly evident in the number of countries from around the globe who are seeking to widen the scope of their bilateral ties with the island nation.

Such an approach is even more important given the far reaching impact of deeply concerning global situations such as trade imbalance, terrorism, security, politics, the economy, business, inter-racial relations and much more.

Today the world is getting smaller and yet each nation stands out for its own dynamic identity and cultural ethos; now more than ever is it imperative to nurture the spirit of understanding and cooperation to make this world a better place.

There are narratives galore of history and heritage, of cultural vivacity and the people, drawn from each nation, which enrich the tapestry of human engagement — and Singapore has been specially blessed to witness this incredible people-to-people connectivity, liberally showcased through many activities initiated all year round by its vibrant diplomatic community.

Finally, a note about this year's theme: Fashion, Fabrics and National Dresses. The clothes one wears can tell much about the country one's from and the messages are always Positive, Inspired and Creative... :





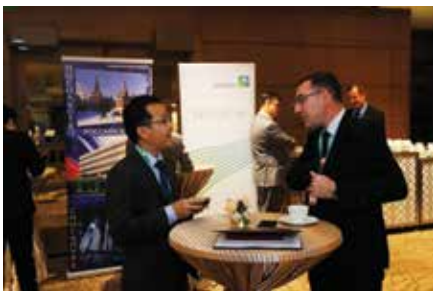
## WOF - A New Chapter for IN Diplomacy

We have always thought of Diplomatic Missions as a treasure trove of information on a country's trade, culture, investment climate and so on; in short, they provide all of us here a window to a world of opportunities. In the last two decades Sun Media's work and relationship with the diplomatic community here has also placed us in a very unique position to organise probably the first of its kind in Singapore - the World Opportunities Forum (WOF) held in May 2019.

It was a meaningful way to also mark our 20th Anniversary in business. In collaboration with several foreign missions with experts on various markets, stakeholders and potential investors they came to listen to presentations and panel discussions by an unprecedented number of 18 ambassadors and high commissioners in Singapore.

I have to again thank them for their support and express my admiration for their willingness to share a common platform to promote the opportunities that exist in their respective countries. The WOF created a very efficient and productive day for all who attended and the response to our survey for another forum in 2020 has been tremendous. We have gathered feedback from the early respondents who want to take the next step in linking potential investors directly to specific projects. This is challenging but a great way to promote a win-win scenario for the Twenty Twenties for everyone and is a truly positive note to start the new year.

The theme offered a thrilling window to another colourful aspect of a nation's cultural tradition and creative inspirations. For example, the Jordanian national dress tells the story of the deep attachment to land and is an important part of the history, identity and culture of the Jordanian people (page 22). Then there is the importance of, say Batik, to Indonesian culture which can be gauged by the very fact that the country even has a 'Batik Day' to celebrate these centuries old textile tradition (page 18); how many people are aware that Irish linens are so highly prized globally (page 20) or that sustainable fashion is a growing field in Finland, with two Finnish companies, introducing the world's first clothing made out of wheat straw in 2019 (page 14).





# A Slice of Argentina in Singapore

*Text and photographs by the Embassy of Argentina in Singapore*

The ties between Argentina and Singapore continue to be strengthened by mutual accord not only when it comes to politics and business — the attention to exciting new cuisines and beverages and cultural exchanges is adding a distinctive new flavour to this relationship



*Argentine National Day celebrations in May at The Clifford Pier: Ambassador Federico Barttfeld and representatives of the Singapore Government reaffirmed the excellent state of affairs between both nations*

**I**n the continuing effort to promote Argentine products in Singapore, the Embassy organized and participated in many signature events throughout 2019.

One of them was the second edition of the **Malbec World Day** held in April 2019 at CE LA VI, where 250 local representatives of the beverage and HORECA sectors had the opportunity to taste more than 100 of the best wines from the most renowned Argentine wineries. This activity, together with a Master Class on Argentine wines given by the International Wine Specialist Mr Hwee Peng Lim at the Shangri-La Hotel in November highlighted once again the remarkable place that wines from Argentina deserve in a very competitive market.

The **World Gourmet Summit 2019** in April served as a unique stage to showcase Argentine cuisine, especially the world-acclaimed Argentine beef. Thanks to Chef Martin Rebaudino from Roux Restaurant (Buenos Aires), local gourmants were treated to premium beef grilled in Argentine style, and also able to savour the unique flavor of wild caught sushi-grade Argentine red prawns. Ambassador of Argentina Federico Barttfeld turned chef for a 6 Hands Argentinian Gastronomy evening at Skai Restaurant much to the delight of local diners.



*Successful staging of the second Argentine Film Festival helped promote people-to-people ties*



In November, Ambassador Federico Barttfeld (fourth from left) awarded the 2019 Ambassador's Cup trophy at the Singapore Turf Club. Argentina is the main exporter of Polo horses in the world

Besides Argentine food and beverages, the Embassy also served as a link between Argentine technological companies and Singapore

potential partners, clients and investors. In March, representatives from one of the world's leading blockchain companies RSK, visited Singapore as part of an Argentine official delegation.

In **bilateral relations**, Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong visited Argentina at the invitation of the Argentine government to take part in the G-20 Leaders Summit. The private meeting held with then President of Argentina Mauricio Macri capped the visit and marked a significant milestone in boosting bilateral cooperation. The presence of Singapore government representatives during the Argentine National Day celebration in May also sealed the excellent relation between both countries.

Finally, the Embassy was active in **community engagement** through Argentine culture, art and sports. The first edition of the **Ambassador's Cup** (Polo), organized at the Turf Club in collaboration with Colts Polo & Riding academy; the full-house performance of the Grammy-awarded "**Quinteto Piazzolla**" at the Victoria Concert Hall; the photographic exhibition "**Flowers & Seeds from Argentina**" at the Botanic Gardens and the successful second edition of the **Argentine Film Festival** at The Projector, all brought Argentina closer to the local community.

## Fabric & Fashion of the Nation

### The Gaucho: Argentina's National Pride and Historic Icon



Traditional gaucho wear: *boina* (beret), *pañuelo* (scarf) and *bombachas* (baggy pants)

TRADITIONAL dress in Argentina is very much connected to the nation's socio-historical narrative and folklore. The *Gaucho* figure emerged in The Pampas of Argentina back in the 17th Century, after the Spaniards introduced the horse to the New World and became one of Argentina's national symbols of pride, having played a major role in the country's independence from Spain.

*Gauchos* have a long tradition of migrating for work. From the mid-1800s to the mid-1900s, this led them as far as Patagonia with the installation of enormous *estancias*, in a sort of South American version of the U.S. Wild West. This migration is clear in the many differences in *Gaucho* clothing according to their region of origin.

The traditional *Gaucho* dress includes a *boina* (beret), a *pañuelo* (scarf) and *bombachas* (pants). *Boinas* which are usually worn a little to one side of the head and come in many colours, are usually made of felt and crocheted in

wool or cotton. The best *pañuelos* are made of silk but polyester is also quite common. These are worn around the neck, often with a decorative clip known as a *anillo*; *pañuelos* are used mainly to protect a *gaucho's* neck from the wind and sun.

*Bombachas* are baggy work pants made of heavy-duty cloth, with pronounced darts or pleats in the front and rear and a small cuff at the bottom that is held snug around the ankle with a button. Old-school *gauchos* wear a *rastra* (leather belt) often decorated with coins. Footwear is traditionally the special leather boots which come with a short heel and a pointed tip that perfectly fit in the wooden stirrups frequently used with their saddles. Original cow leather boots were later replaced by those made from a colt, becoming an item of great excellence, crafted with pride by every *gaucho*. The modest canvas espadrille called *alpargatas* with its sole made of hemp, *esparto* or jute, came in much later, and is now a constituent part of the dress code of the country man and the urban worker for the daily *trajinar* (work chores) and even for Sunday fun.

*Mantas* (blankets) or ponchos are traditional *Gaucho* outerwear; hand-woven from raw wool by weavers in the area, it is normally found in natural colors or dyed using natural dyes from onions, yerba mate, berries, etc. The key advantage of raw wool is that even if it gets wet from the rain, it continues to generate heat. *Mantas* or ponchos are one of the most precious possessions for a *Gaucho*, as they provide protection in the harsh Patagonian conditions.



Children dancing in costume



# Australia-Singapore: Creating New Narratives of Accord

*Text and photographs by the Australian High Commission Singapore*

The spirit of harmonious interchange and cooperation on many fronts, has gone a long way in strengthening Australia-Singapore relations, which continue to find new avenues for dialogue and people-to-people interaction



*Australia Day 2019 at The Fullerton Bay Hotel's The Clifford Pier*

**I**t has been another great year for the Australian High Commission in Singapore. The High Commission started the year with a fabulous Australia Day celebration at the Clifford Pier, promoting Australian food, beverages and culture to its Singaporean friends. With more than 900 guests, it was one of the biggest Australia Days in Singapore yet!

In June, the High Commission welcomed Prime Minister the Hon Scott Morrison MP to Singapore, together with Foreign Minister and Minister for Women, Senator the Hon Marise Payne and Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment, Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham. Prime Minister Morrison and his colleagues met with Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong and his colleagues and the Australian and Singapore business community, as well as announcing closer Australia-Singapore collaboration on the digital economy.

Promoting Australia's science and innovation capability remained a key priority over the year. The High Commission partnered with CSIRO, Australian universities and innovative companies for an 'Australian Pavilion' at Innovfest Unbound 2019 during Singapore's Smart Nation Week. Australia's Minister for Industry, Science and Technology, the Hon Karen Andrews MP, addressed thousands of technology professionals at Innovfest and witnessed a MoU signing between CSIRO, SGInnovate and Austrade to increase deep tech collaboration. Australia's Chief Defence Scientist, Professor Tanya Monro, met with the local defence science community and the High Commission

supported a 'Women in Cyber' discussion panel during Singapore's International Cyber Week. In November, the High Commission partnered with Asian Scientist Magazine to present a discussion panel on the impact of STEM on society and business to celebrate one year since its Good Science = Great Business 2018 Festival.

The Regional Built Environment Forum 2019 brought together



*(From left to right): Margie Warrell, Miranda Tapsell and High Commissioner Bruce Gosper at the Singapore screening of 'Top End Wedding'*





*A special evening with the Lexus Melbourne Cup trophy*

Australian, Singaporean, regional and international built environment companies, business leaders, experts, decision-makers and officials. The Forum promoted Australia's and Singapore's built environment capabilities and explored how both countries can jointly support ASEAN's unfolding urbanisation story.

The High Commission supported three Australian film screenings. These were the premiere of the moving sequel to 'Storm Boy' in January; and, screenings of the heart-warming romantic comedy starring Miranda Tapsell, 'Top End Wedding', during NAIDOC Week and thought-provoking eco-documentary, 'BLUE', for Australia Now ASEAN 2019. The Australian High Commission supported



*Discussion panel at the Regional Built Environment Forum 2019*

MasterChef Singapore judge, and former MasterChef Australia finalist, Audra Morrice to dish up a cooking masterclass to Temasek Culinary Academy students, inspiring around 50 aspiring chefs.

In August, High Commissioner Bruce Gosper hosted a special evening with the Lexus Melbourne Cup trophy at his Residence for Singaporean alumni of Australian universities. Guests were able to network, reconnect and reminisce about their time in Australia and heard from 'Keeper of the Cup', Joe McGrath, and legendary racehorse trainer and five-time Melbourne Cup winner, Lee Freedman. The High Commission look forward to another fantastic year in 2020 in its great friendship with Singapore.

## Fabric & Fashion of the Nation Treasured Cultural Collectibles

INDIGENOUS culture continues to play a defining role in Australia's landscape. Two Australian fashion labels are incorporating Aboriginal designs into their creations to beautiful effect.

Since its arrival four years ago the distinctively Australian fashion and gift brand, Mainie, has captured the hearts and minds of discerning travellers and fashionable people the world over. Mainie co-founder, Charmaine Saunders is a descendant of the Gunggari Aboriginal people from the Maranoa River region of Queensland. Charmaine and her husband, Denis Keffe, have a shared vision to create meaningful "wearable art" featuring authentic Aboriginal artworks.

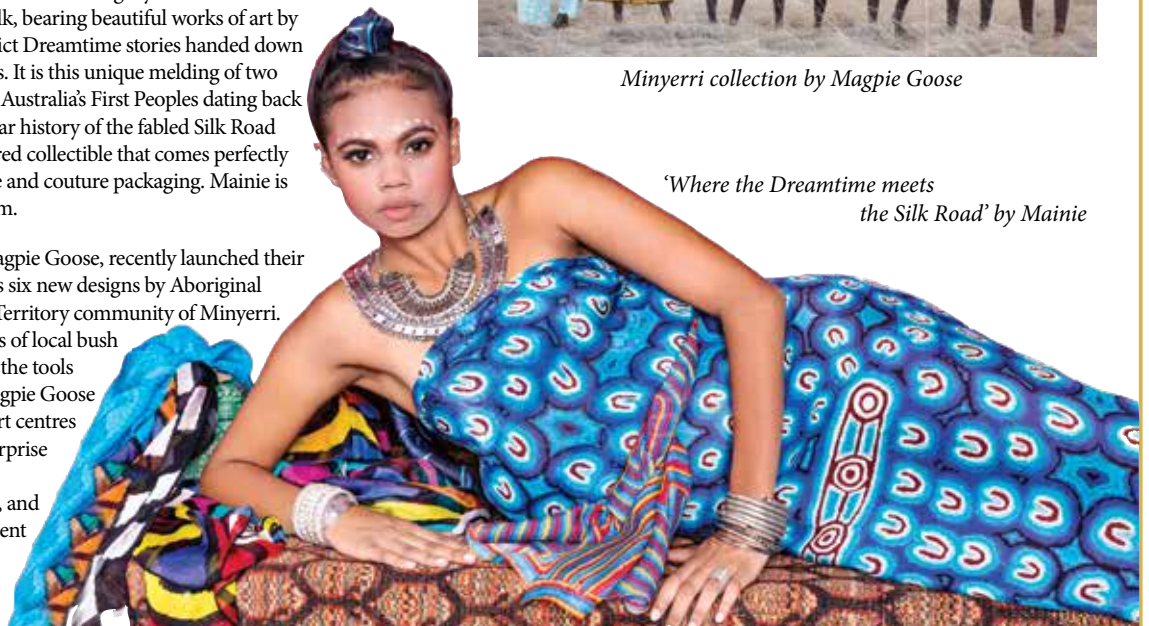
What makes Mainie so special is its cultural integrity: a careful combination of artisan crafted, hand-finished silk, bearing beautiful works of art by Aboriginal women artists that depict Dreamtime stories handed down to them through many generations. It is this unique melding of two cultures – the unbroken culture of Australia's First Peoples dating back over 60,000 years and the 4,700-year history of the fabled Silk Road – that makes each Mainie a treasured collectible that comes perfectly presented with its own provenance and couture packaging. Mainie is available online at [www.mainie.com](http://www.mainie.com).

Social enterprise clothing label, Magpie Goose, recently launched their Minyerri collection, which features six new designs by Aboriginal artists from the remote Northern Territory community of Minyerri. The designs tell rich cultural stories of local bush foods, native fish and wild life and the tools used to collect and cook them! Magpie Goose partners with remote Aboriginal art centres and individual artists to share enterprise and fashion as a new platform for generating income, sharing stories, and connecting cultures. Shop the current and previous collections at [www.magpiegoose.com](http://www.magpiegoose.com).



*Minyerri collection by Magpie Goose*

*'Where the Dreamtime meets the Silk Road' by Mainie*





# Angewandte in Dialogue with NTU: Creative Outpourings for a Better World

*Text and photographs provided by the Embassy of the Republic of Austria in Singapore*

Austria and Singapore together explore the landscape of design, fashion, art and cultural exchange to strengthen the people-to-people bond between the two countries and generate a new language of accord for the greater good



*Austrian Embassy presented the FASHION SHOW: Angewandte in Dialogue with NTU. The two universities have signed a cooperation agreement. (Photo: Penn Studio / Eric Eng)*

On the occasion of the Austrian National Day Reception 2019 the Austrian Embassy presented the **FASHION SHOW: “Angewandte in Dialogue with NTU”**. At the core of the festivities was the cooperation between the NTU and Austria’s University for Applied Arts — better known as ANGEWANDTE. In May 2018 the NTU and the Angewandte signed a cooperation agreement that regulates the exchange of students, teachers and provides the framework for common projects.

Amongst the teachers of the Angewandte over the years in the fields of architecture, design, fine art, and theory in the last decades were personalities such as Christian Ludwig Attersee, Jean-Charles de Castelbajac, Hans Hollein, Wilhelm Holzbauer, Karl Lagerfeld, Maria Lassnig, Wolf D. Prix, Jil Sander, Helmut Lang, Raf Simons and Hussein Chalayan. Currently heading Modeklasse are Luke and Lucie Meier, creative directors of Jil Sander.

The NTU School of Art, Design and Media looks for ways that help to explore, contemplate, and improve the world around us. It’s how we communicate our understanding of the natural, social, and built environments. ADM encourages students to respect sensitivities and ethics.

The Wearable Technology, Art and Design is an interdisciplinary course at ADM that welcomes students from different walks of life and disciplines, such as philosophy, engineering, film, animation, photography, with no experience in fashion or technology. They should apply critical thinking to develop their concepts based on environmental, economic, ethical or personal issues. While the designs cannot be worn every day, they can solve poetic, speculative or functional problems. The designs on showcase today reflect on the current situation in our environment and challenge

us to rethink fashion design as a new language.

The “Modeklasse of Angewandte” presented the work of three outstanding creatives, former and current students: Kenneth Ize who graduated from Modeklasse in 2015, Kenneth was among this year’s finalists of the prestigious LVMH prize for young fashion designers. Kenneth Ize has been featured in publications such as Vogue, the New York Times, W Magazine and many others. His latest accomplishment is a collaboration with Rihanna for her brand FENTY and Missoni.

Number two of the successful Modeklasse exports was Christoph Rumpf, named winner of the main prize at the 34th Hyères international festival of fashion, photography and fashion

accessories 2019. He is already making award-winning fantasy-filled fashion out of reimagined market stall discoveries. This victory is only the first step into a promising future in fashion design.

Louise Streissler is the third talent whose work was presented. She graduated from Modeklasse in June 2019. Louise is the winner of the Fred Adlmüller-scholarship. Remarkably she is the only student who has been awarded the price twice. This year her diploma collection won her the Rondo Award. With work experience from Acne studios, a Swedish brand, and Hussein Chalayan, Louise is a very talented and promising young designer and will no doubt leave her mark on the international fashion landscape.



*FASHION SHOW: Angewandte in Dialogue with NTU showcased what young upcoming Austrian designers are thinking in terms of fashion. (Photo: Penn Studio / Eric Eng)*



# Bangladesh-Singapore: A Thriving Bond

Text and photographs by the High Commission of Bangladesh in Singapore

Bangladesh showcases her rich heritage, vibrant culture as well as trade and investment opportunities

**S**ingapore and Bangladesh have been enjoying the warmest of relationships since the establishment of diplomatic ties in February 1972.

Mutual trust and cooperation have thrived over time and are well reflected in the fields of trade, training, culture exchanges, tourism, healthcare, and human resources. Recent high-level visits have expanded the scope of infrastructural development for regional growth as well as sharing of best practices aimed towards capacity building for good governance as well as other technical issues.

One of the prime focus areas of the Bangladesh High Commission in 2019 was to promote business relations between the two countries. The High Commission, in partnership with Singapore Business Federation (SBF), Enterprise Singapore (ENTERPRISESG), and the Institute of South Asian Studies, National University of Singapore (ISAS, NUS) hosted a day-long seminar on the socio-economic development of Bangladesh. The Seminar took place on 08 July 2019 in the auditorium of SBF. The objective of the Seminar was to highlight to Singapore investors and business community the recent phenomenal socio-economic development of Bangladesh and impress upon them to invest in and do business with Bangladesh by taking advantage of its liberal foreign investment regime and business policy.

A delegation comprising leading investors and business people from Singapore visited Bangladesh from 24 to 30 August 2019. Singapore Business Federation and Enterprise Singapore jointly organized the exposure visit. The objective of this visit was to gain a first-hand understanding of the market dynamics and emerging sectors in Bangladesh and establish useful business and official contacts through networking. The High Commission facilitated the exposure visit and arranged for the delegation meetings with business leaders in Bangladesh, and high officials of BIDA, PPP Authority, Ministry of Shipping and Ministry of Commerce of Bangladesh.

Cultural promotion remains another essential avenue for strengthening ties between the two nations. In November 2019, the Mission hosted a week-long food festival at the Mandarin Orchard Hotel from 11-17 November 2019. The unique event presented to the Singapore food lovers as well as the local Diplomatic Community with a plethora of savory Bangladeshi cuisines prepared by guest chefs from Bangladesh. The guests were also entertained with live flute playing and a short tour to the display center where Bangladeshi handicrafts, exportable, and traditional items were showcased.

Today, Singapore is Bangladesh's fourth-largest source of foreign direct investment, and its companies are showing increasing interest in the growing Bangladeshi market, particularly in the power, connectivity and



(Top): Warm and thriving relations: Bangladesh High Commissioner HE Md Mustafizur Rahman with Singapore's Foreign Minister Dr Vivian Balakrishnan. (Middle): Bangladesh's High Commissioner addressing a seminar on the country's socio-economic development. (Above): Cultural promotion, another essential avenue for building ties between both nations

infrastructure sectors. Two-way trade between the two countries stood well over US\$3 billion in 2018, although trade balance heavily tilted in favour of Singapore.

*Continued next page...*



*Continued from previous page...*

Singapore is a reliable destination for Bangladeshi workers. Presently, more than 1,30,000 expatriate Bangladeshi workers are working here in various sectors and contributing to the economies of both countries. Taking care of the welfare of the large community of Bangladeshi workers here is one of the High Commission's core responsibilities.

Today Bangladesh and Singapore are well connected through numerous daily flights and many Bangladeshi tourists visit Singapore daily, promoting people-to-people contact. Both the governments are committed to take the existing warm bilateral relations to a newer heights in the coming days and explore ways to deepen engagements for mutual benefits.



*A sampling of the delicious spreads at the Bangladesh Food Festival at Hotel Mandarin Orchard*

## Fabrics, Fashion & National Dress

### Exquisite Handwoven Fabrics



WEAVING is an age-old heritage of Bengal. The fine and varied handmade fabrics; the weaving skills of the crafts people of Bengal have been a great marvel and have drawn the attention of people around the world for centuries. Exquisite handwoven Muslin, Jamdani, raw silk as well as pure silks, a wide range of Khadi and extremely fine cotton have earned a place of honour for the artisans of Bengal all over the world. History and archaeological discovery have suggested that Bengal was famous in olden times for textile fabrics. Cotton was the chief material for textile work and produced in great abundance in Bengal. During the 1st Century CE, Dhaka Muslin became famous in Rome and was highly prized. Many other fabrics of Bengal were noted for their fineness of texture, the beauty of design, the intricacy of weaving, lightness of weight and durability. Muslin, Jamdani, Banarsi Saree, Cotton, Jute, Khadi, Tant (hand-loom), Khaki, Rajshahi Silk, Kota, Tassar Silk and Wool are trademark Bangladeshi fabrics that have stood the test of time.



*(From left to right): Bangladeshi cotton dress, sarees, Mujib coat and Jamdani sarees*

### Fashion Trends

Fashion trends in Bangladesh are constantly evolving and influenced by the country's colonial past, cultural heritage, Islamic roots, geographical location, socio-economic conditions and political experiences. Since 1971 when Bangladesh became an independent nation, many styles have come and gone but the one thing that has remained constant throughout the time is the obsession of the people of Bengal to look their best through thick and thin.

The obsession of Bengali women for gold jewellery dates to time immemorial. They also love to wear colorful sarees with matching blouse as well as a salwar-kameez set. The early 70s was the most colorful decade for fashion in the freshly liberated country. Singers and actresses were major fashion icons for the society. The global fashion trend in the 70s was towards psychedelic prints, vibrant colours, nets, shiny materials with bold designs and Bangladesh was not left uninfluenced. Long unkempt hair, thin eyebrows, bell-bottom pants, loop earrings were the current fad and Bangladeshi ladies embraced the trending mode with elan. In the 80's, polka dots in different colours and sizes reigned supreme. In the 90s, the women took inspiration from the Mughal era and Anarkalis and the really long kameez became rampant on the streets. Bengali ladies began tying their hair in a tight-up-do and dressed it up further with extensions. This era saw the rise of boutique shops, making their way into the local markets.

The 2000s saw a major rise in consumerism and Bangladeshis were found adopting a more western look. Jeans, slacks, tops, shirts were the major fashion items for everyday wear for women, while sarees became the chosen attire for celebratory occasions. Hairstyles became free flowing. However, hair colorings, permanent straightening or curling and highlights became rampant. Pure westernization had lost most of its charm and Bangladeshis became more interested in fusion, a perfect blend of both East and the West. Casual kurtis, pants, dhotis, etc. were basic dress up materials. Sarees were trending back again, only this time the blouses were altered in various ways to give a ravishing fusion look. Jacket blouses, net blouses, halter necks and many other designs became the highlight of a saree.

### National Dress

Traditionally Bangladeshi males wear Panjabis, Fatuas and Pajamas. Hindus wear Dhuty for religious purposes. Nowadays men dress in shirts and pants. In the rural household settings, men traditionally wear the lungi with a shirt, and a shirt-pant combination or suits on formal occasions. Saree is the main and traditional dress of Bangladeshi women, though, in present times, young women prefer adorning themselves in a salwar kameez combo rather than a saree. In urban areas, women can also be seen wearing western clothes. On formal

occasions, men wear suits while women wear business suits or sarees. The Mujib coat is now recognized as an iconic honour; it is a tailored sleeveless coat for men, featuring a high-neck and two pockets in lower part and with five six buttons. It was worn by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the founding father of the Nation.



# Belgium-Singapore: Working in Tandem with Current Times

*Text and photographs by the Embassy of the Kingdom of Belgium in Singapore*

This bilateral relationship has continued to garner benefits from a strong understanding and mutual desires to take on today's challenges and capitalize on new opportunities

It's been an eventful year with a flurry of activities: the Embassy kick-started 2019 by issuing the "Belgium Business Report". The report highlights the strong relationship between Belgium and Singapore. Indeed, Belgium-Singapore business ties are excellent and are set to enhance even further with the imminent entry into force of the EU-Singapore FTA. Currently, Belgium is the city-state's 5th largest trading partner in the EU while Singapore is our top trading partner in ASEAN.

March marked an important milestone in Belgium-Singapore ties: Belgium's SWIFT jointly launched a trial with the Singapore Exchange (SGX) to use blockchain technology for e-voting during shareholder meetings. SWIFT is a Belgian organisation that owns a platform which connects 11,000+ financial institutions to security firms and corporates in 200+ markets globally.

In the same month, the Embassy teamed up with Alliance Française to bring

Belgian Francophone movies to the Lion City. This resulted in the screening of "Nos Batailles". Meanwhile, the Ambassador opened the Spirou4rights exhibition together with Singaporean actor and comedian, Mr Hossan Leong.

In April, fellow Belgian and composer, conductor, educator and pianist, Mr Robert Casteels, performed "Time:Crystals" – supported by the Embassy – at the Visual Arts Centre Singapore. One month later, "Le Ciel Flamand",



*At the King's Day Reception - (Top): Mr Sam Tan, Minister of State, Singapore and HE Andy Dettaille, Ambassador of Belgium. (Above left): Rudi Mertens, Edith Mayeux, Zsofia Pales, Vittoria Volgare and HE Andy Dettaille, Ambassador of Belgium. (Above right): Mr Pascal Smet, State Secretary, Brussels-Capital Region calling on Mr Zaqq Mohamad, Minister of State, Singapore*

Belgium's contribution to the European Film Festival saw a strong turnout. Prior to the screening in the iconic National Gallery, the director was interviewed by The Straits Times.

Innovfest Unbound Singapore 2019 took place in June: ten Belgian startups rubbed shoulders with potential investors and clients at their pavilion. The high number of visitors indicated a clear interest in Belgian startups.

In August, the Antwerp Police Department signed a MoU with the Singapore Police Force to promote cooperation in the battle against transnational crime.

Mr Pascal Smet, State Secretary, Brussels-Capital Region, paid a working visit to the city-state in September. During this visit he met his Singaporean counterparts, as well as various stakeholders to discuss a.o. trade and investment opportunities and bilateral collaborations.

In October, Singapore's President Halimah Yacob met

with King Philip in Tokyo, Japan. The two Heads of State talked about ways to deepen Belgium-Singapore cooperation.

On November 14 finally, the Ambassador – supported by Katoen Natie, DEME, Solvay, Brussels Airport and BRICS – hosted the King's Day reception where 400+ guests enjoyed the very best Belgium has to offer in the iconic Victoria Theatre. Singapore's Minister of State, Mr Sam Tan, graced the event.

# Brazil and Singapore Make Waves Together in 2019

*Text and photographs by the Embassy of Brazil in Singapore*



*President Jair Bolsonaro met PM Lee Hsien Loong at the sidelines during the Osaka G20 talks*

**T**he year ended has been magnificent for the ties that bind the businesses and experts of Brazil and Singapore. Much that is noteworthy and transformational has been accomplished jointly.

Ambassador Flávio Damico, who has just ended his stint is being replaced by Ambassador Eugênia Barthelmess, who is set to inject new vigour into Brazilian projects here. President Jair Bolsonaro completed his first year in office, leaving an indelible mark in Brazil's globalisation agenda. A high point for bilateral relations was his encounter with PM Lee Hsien Loong during Osaka's G20 talks.

Other luminaries travelled to Singapore with specific agendas. The Lemann Foundation launched two trips to glean the framework of Singapore's educational success and also to source ways of upgrading Brazil's civil service and hence its governance, having seen Singapore's overall excellence in all its pursuits. ENAP, the National School of Public Administration, sent a similar team.

In business, logistics and exports, the Trade & Economic section of the Embassy worked feverishly. Aided by that team, delegates from Santos port enjoyed a busy schedule while seeking partnerships, benchmarks, automation, investments and more. Similarly Senator Roberto Rocha, from Maranhão state, came with a view to developing the Itaqui port and a coastal resort stretch.

A mission of retailers from Salvador sought digital solutions, in e-commerce, fintech, payments, inventory, blockchain and more. From Rio de Janeiro, its industrial federation, or FIRJAN, sent delegates to partner with technology hubs, from the Singapore Manufacturing Federation to R&D centres such as the Centre for Advanced 2D

Materials and the start-up 2D Materials Pte. Ltd., both led by Brazilians based here. Again, the Trade and Economic section of the Embassy secured good results.

One word is heard at every turn: innovation, reiterated by every delegate. INPI, the National Institute of Industrial Property, was present at Singapore's IP Week so as to understand intellectual property realities and to ink an agreement with the Intellectual Property Office of Singapore.

The dialogue toward a Singapore-Mercosur trade agreement has continued; it is aimed at materialising in the early 2020s. On the fun side, Brazilians provided some cheering moments at the PianoBotanica music event amidst the lush expanses of the Singapore Botanic Gardens. Speaking of nature, one sees in every mall in Singapore a counter offering a bowl of açaí, that wondrous Amazon berry. Clearly, from trade matters to skill-building, from business talks to musical enjoyment, and from innovation to natural products, Brazil and Singapore have much to celebrate together.



*President of INPI, Dr Cláudio Vilar Fur-tado, headed its delegation to participate in Singapore's IP (Intellectual Property) Week*



*From trade matters to skill-building, from business talks to musical enjoyment, and from innovation to natural products, Brazil and Singapore have much to celebrate together*



*The PianoBotanica concerts at Singapore's Botanic Gardens is a major attraction of Brazil's National Day celebrations*

## Fabric & Fashion of the Nation

### Brazil's Dazzling Fashions



*Colours for Brazil's colourful people*

AS a quasi-continental sized country, Brazil is a collection of regions, climates and terrains that are greatly in contrast to each other, therefore there is no one single dress or costume which qualifies as a national icon as such. Even the cattle herders of the parched-dry and hot hinterlands of the Northeast wear a very different attire from their gaúcho counterparts in the cold southern grassy fields that stretch endlessly. Likewise, a forest dweller deep in the Amazon basin will look



*(From left): Attire with attitude and a smile. Yellow football jersey, shared by all Brazilians*

nothing like the fishing communities on the country's Atlantic shores. Perhaps the best-known nationwide attire is the yellow jersey worn by Brazilian football fans.

The country's cattle herds gave rise to a resilient leather industry, which in turn has led, over the centuries, to a superior skill and quality in the Brazilian leather industry and its ensuing corollary, footwear and apparel such as jackets, belts, bags, purses and more. Those can be seen at the annual leather-fashion trade show Couromoda, an international-level event showcasing the country's best designs. Moving beyond leather, Cariuma, a Brazilian outfit in Singapore, markets casual footwear, as in the case of sneakers.



*Activewear for champions*

Turning to fabrics, Brazil has developed a solid manufacturing and design of garments sector for children, men and women. One of the country's lead exports is that of swimwear and activewear. The bold cuts of Brazilian bikinis are a coveted item for women the world over.

Some Brazilian brands of a higher quality have become upscale, famous high-end merchandise within the country itself, therefore known as must-have items among teenage girls and women, even if set at higher prices. Swanky malls in large Brazilian cities cater to the middle class,

but some brands have now gone overseas, taking to the world names such as Havaianas (flip-flops), Melissa (female footwear), Luiza Barcelos (female footwear), Hope (underwear), Osklen (casual wear), Cia. Marítima (beachwear), Rosa Chá (high-end dresses, outfits and beachwear), plus others that have left a Brazilian mark among fashion consumers worldwide.





# Education, Innovation and Sustainability from Finland

*Text and photographs by the Embassy of Finland, Singapore*



*Finland's Minister of Economic Affairs Katri Kulmuni (6th from right) visited Singapore 13-15 November during the SFFxSWITCH Week 2019*

In 2019, the Embassy of Finland's focus has been circular economy, promoted in cooperation with other Finnish Embassies in Southeast Asia. Finland was the first country to develop a national circular economy roadmap committing to a greener future for everyone. Finnish waste-to-value solutions, technologies for smart buildings and energy efficiency are especially suitable to Singapore and the region. In addition to circular economy, Finland continues to promote health technologies, education and science cooperation and smart city solutions among others.

Finland's Presidency of the Council of the European Union focused on 'Sustainable Europe – Sustainable Future'. To support the presidency's sustainability priorities, the Embassy introduced so-called challenges for adapting more sustainable habits by committing to Meatless Mondays and Green Meetings. The objective was to decrease our carbon footprint by reassessing our daily practices individually and by community action.

The Embassy of Finland continues to promote Finland's globally renowned education expertise. During the year, the Embassy has arranged delegations and events to discuss lifelong learning, student-centeredness, importance of play and digitalization of education. The Embassy also promoted higher education study opportunities in Study in Europe fair.

To promote trade and business collaboration, the Embassy of Finland participated in the Singapore Fintech Festival and Singapore Week of Innovation and Technology together with some 25 Finnish companies. The event week showcased Finnish expertise in the fields of fintech, health tech, smart cities and circular economy to more than 60 000



*The Embassy promoting higher education study opportunities in Study in Europe fair*



*The Embassy of Finland hosted a seminar on generating value from waste for a visiting Finnish delegation led by Minister of Economic Affairs Katri Kulmuni 14 November*



participants from 140 countries. Finland's Minister of Economic Affairs Katri Kulmuni visited Singapore during the week. Minister Kulmuni met with Mr S Iswaran, Minister for Communication and Information and Minister-in-charge of Trade Relations as well as Senior Minister of State for Health and Transport Lam Pin Min. Minister Kulmuni's visit highlighted Finnish know-how and promoted business and innovation cooperation between Finland and Singapore.

Throughout the year, the Embassy has been engaged in active cooperation with the Nordic Innovation House in Singapore. Together with the other Nordic embassies in Singapore, the Embassy of Finland contributed in organizing the first-ever Nordic Film Festival, featuring altogether eight Nordic movies. A Finnish comedy 'Heavy Trip' was the opening film and the festival ended in the jointly organized 'We Love the Nordics Party' at HUONE Singapore. Highlighting the end of the year the Nordic Embassies shared a slice of Nordic festive cheer with Nordic Christmas at Gardens by the Bay Flower Dome featuring Santa Claus Village from Rovaniemi, Finland.



*In September 2019, the Finland Embassy participated in the organising of the first-ever Nordic Film Festival in Singapore*

## Fabric & Fashion of the Nation

### Finnish Contemporary Fashion is Practical and Personal

FINLAND has reinvented itself in just one short century. Our national character and Northern heritage have boosted us to the top of all kinds of country rankings. Modern Finnish fashion was born during the heyday of Finnish design and architecture in the 1950s. Like Finnish design, Finnish fashion was practical, pared down and designed for everyday rather than celebratory occasions. Natural materials were, and still are important.

Sustainable fashion is a growing field in Finland. This year two Finnish companies, Fortum and Spinnova, introduced the world's first clothing made out of wheat straw. At the same time, Aalto University and University of Helsinki have developed Ioncell technology that turns used textiles, pulp or even old newspapers into new textile fibers sustainably and without harmful chemicals.



*Marimekko's designs. Photo: Marimekko*

In recent years, Aalto University has become one of the hottest design schools on the international scene – its students have enjoyed huge success globally. At the same time, Finnish fashion has achieved commercial success overseas. Examples include Marimekko with its highly personalized outfits with young and cheerful designs. The company has 14 stores abroad and has collaborated with many international brands. In mid-November Marimekko and Uniqlo announced their collaboration for a new limited edition collection celebrating Finnish winter traditions.

When it comes to more traditional style, Finland has more than 400 national costumes. The costumes are always handmade and every region has their own specific design. They are worn during celebrations and special occasions. The costumes are replicas of the dresses and outfits that the Finns wore in 1700s and 1800s.

The deeply personal nature of Finnish fashion differentiates it from the offerings of other countries. Finland offers high-level, artistic design that avoids the pitfalls of calculated commercialism.

*These three different Finnish National dresses spotted at the 101st Independence Day Reception of Finland at Chijmes Hall last year.*



# India: High Scale & Intensity Engagements

Text and photographs by the High Commission of the Republic of India in Singapore



❶ India's Minister of State Mr Hardeep Singh and Minister of External Affairs S. Jaishankar call on Singapore's Deputy Prime Minister Heng Swee Keat in September 2019. ❷ Ministers S. Jaishankar (orange tie) and Dr Vivian Balakrishnan (blue tie) at the India-Singapore Business & Innovation Summit. ❸ Singapore's Minister of Communication & Information and Minister-in-Charge of Trade Relations, Mr. S Iswaran, called on the Union Minister of Finance & Corporate Affairs, Smt, Nirmala Sitharaman in Delhi. ❹ A record-breaking attendance at this year's International Yoga Day. ❺ High Commissioner Jawed Ashraf joined Global Indian International School students at its Gandhi Centre to celebrate the Mahatma's 150th Anniversary. ❻ Ambassador Jawed Ashraf shares how India met the challenges posed by the age of 'digital disruption' at the World Economic Forum in May 2019

2019 was characterized by the usual high scale, frequency and intensity of bilateral engagement and local events as also new milestones in bilateral relations. In India, Prime Minister Modi returned to office on the strength of a larger mandate in the world's largest general election in April-May 2019. The process of bilateral engagement in Singapore, the inter-generational transition in leadership began this year.

## Ministerial Visits

Ministerial visits from Singapore included those of DPM and Finance Minister Heng Swee Keat, Minister of Law and Home Affairs K. Shanmugam, Minister of Education Ong Ye Kung twice, Minister of Communication and Information and Minister in-Charge of Trade Relations S. Iswaran four times, Minister for Social and Family Development and Second Minister for National Development Desmond Lee, Senior Minister of State for Defence and Foreign Affairs Dr. Mohammad Maliki bin Osman, Senior Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and Manpower Sam Tan, SMS for Health and Law Edwin Tong and Senior Minister of State Zaqy Mohammad. Visits from India to Singapore were made by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Minister of External Affairs Dr. S. Jaishankar and Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Civil Aviation and Urban Development and Hardeep Puri, MOS for Commerce and Industry. Delegations from

several Indian states also visited Singapore to foster closer economic partnership.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong also met in Osaka during G20 meet. PM Lee was among the six world leaders to speak at a special session at UNGA to commemorate the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.

## Trilateral Military Exercises

India and Singapore conducted their first trilateral exercise with Thailand and bilateral Air and Army exercises in India and naval exercise in Singapore. Prime Minister Modi gave away the awards in the second India-Singapore hackathon held in Chennai in September. Minister Iswaran launched the Global Innovation Alliance in Bengaluru in October.

## Fintech Milestones

Fintech, innovation and startups initiatives continued to grow. After RuPay, the Indian payment card, was launched in Singapore last year, one of India's QR payment app – BHIM, was successfully tested during Singapore Fintech Festival in November; it is ready for launch in early 2020. The two sides are collaborating on a cross-border digital hub for SMEs and building a digital financial inclusion architecture Global Stack, based on India's India Stack. India had the highest number of foreign participants in the Singapore Fintech Festival.

Here in Singapore, the year began with a massive Reception for India's Republic Day on January 26, which was attended by 1500 people.

A major highlight of year 2019 was the India-Singapore Business and Innovation Summit on 9-10 September 2019. The event had over 4,500 registered participants, 25 sessions, nearly 100 speakers, a startup exhibition with 90 startups from India and Singapore and a gala dinner for 1800 invited guests. Five Ministers and other dignitaries from India and Singapore participated in the event.

There were several other business and technology seminars throughout the year, including on Role of States in the Indian Economy; three on the Indian Budget; ET Leadership Summit; HT Leadership Summit; Opportunities in Financial Resolution in India; Opportunities for Singapore SMEs in India; Indian SME Exports to Southeast Asia; India's financial markets with Governor of the Reserve Bank of India; India's debt markets with Bloomberg; and, a roadshow on tourism in India. The Indian Mission here in Singapore was pleased to support Sun Media's "World Opportunity Forum" to mark its 20th anniversary.

## Mahatma Gandhi & Guru Nanak Anniversaries

The High Commission celebrated the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi through a series of events. This included a play on the



***“A major highlight of 2019 was the India-Singapore Business and Innovation Summit that had over 4,500 registered participants, 25 sessions, nearly 100 speakers, a startup exhibition with 90 startups from India and Singapore... Five Ministers and other dignitaries from India and Singapore participated in the event”***



life of Gandhi by Hum Theatre and a dance interpretation of Gandhi's famous Dandi March by Chowk Production, a Gandhi Film Festival by Tagore Society, tree planting at Global Indian International School and other events with local community organizations and schools.

The Mission also supported many events to mark the 550th birth Anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev, the founder of the Sikh faith. President Halimah Yacob launched the first Sikh Heritage Day in June. DPM Heng Swee Keat was the Guest of Honour at an event at the Central Sikh Gurudwara. Minister Iswaran launched the celebrations to mark the 550th anniversary.

The International Day of Yoga on June 21 was observed with a week-long yoga festival with over 175 sessions in 120 venues in Singapore.

#### Cultural Bonds

Culture provides a strong bond between Indian and Singapore. It was a major priority for the High Commission. This included support for the annual classical music and dance festival of the Singapore Indian Fine Arts Society (SIFAS), Dance India Asia Pacific by Apsara Arts and Kalaa Utsavam by Esplanade Theatre. India House hosted an Open House during the Singapore International Design Week in March and an art and sculpture exhibition in November.

High Commissioner joined H.E. President Halimah Yacob for Diwali lighting ceremony in Little India in September.

The High Commission organized an Indian Film Festival in collaboration with the National University of Singapore (NUS) in March and also supported the South Asia International Film Festival.

## Fabric & Fashion of the Nation

### Introduction to the Textiles of India

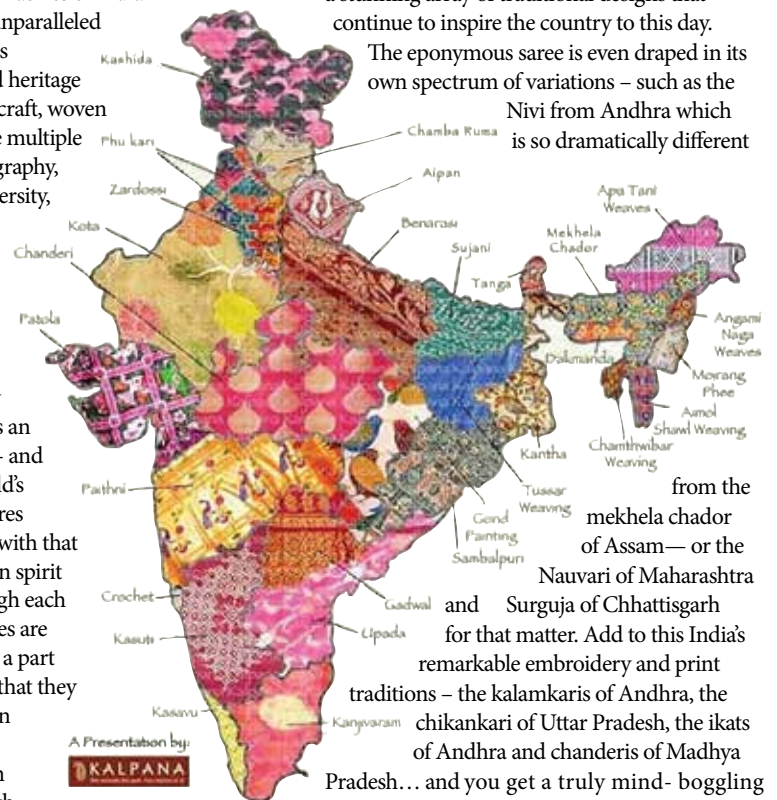
THE textiles or fabrics of India reflect India's unparalleled diversity and its millennia-aged heritage of culture and craft, woven together by the multiple threads of geography, climate, biodiversity, faiths, traditions, customs, art and techniques into a rich and varied tapestry that constitutes an extraordinary - and one of the world's largest - treasures of textiles, but with that uniquely Indian spirit running through each of them. Textiles are so intrinsically a part of life in India that they even became an instrument of India's freedom movement, with Mahatma Gandhi turning that iconic hand-spun Khadi fabric into a symbol of self-reliance and resistance to colonial rule.

Every region and, sometimes, even communities, have their very own unique textile tradition in terms of cloth, weave, dye, print, embroidery, painting and method of production - and sometimes it features more than one of these components. Religious functions, weddings, festivals, folk and classical dances of different regions and communities produced their own brand of textiles, sarees and clothes.

Thus, on almost every facet, the variations remain impossible to enumerate: whether it be the fabrics (silk, muga, tasar, eri, mulberry), cotton (Asian, Egyptian etc), wool (pashmina) or the weaves themselves. The regions pride themselves on a wide range of designs that are jealously guarded as family heirlooms - such as those luxurious kanjivarams of Tamil Nadu, the sublime Mysuru silks of Karnataka, the aristocratic Jamdanis of Bengal, the rustic tussar silks of Jharkhand, the divine Ajrakhs of Gujarat or the Kota Dorias of Rajasthan. India's textile landscape is a kaleidoscopic canvas showcasing

a stunning array of traditional designs that continue to inspire the country to this day.

The eponymous saree is even draped in its own spectrum of variations - such as the Nivi from Andhra which is so dramatically different



from the mekhela chador of Assam - or the Nauvari of Maharashtra and Surguja of Chhattisgarh for that matter. Add to this India's remarkable embroidery and print traditions - the kalamkari of Andhra, the chikankari of Uttar Pradesh, the ikats of Andhra and chanderis of Madhya Pradesh...

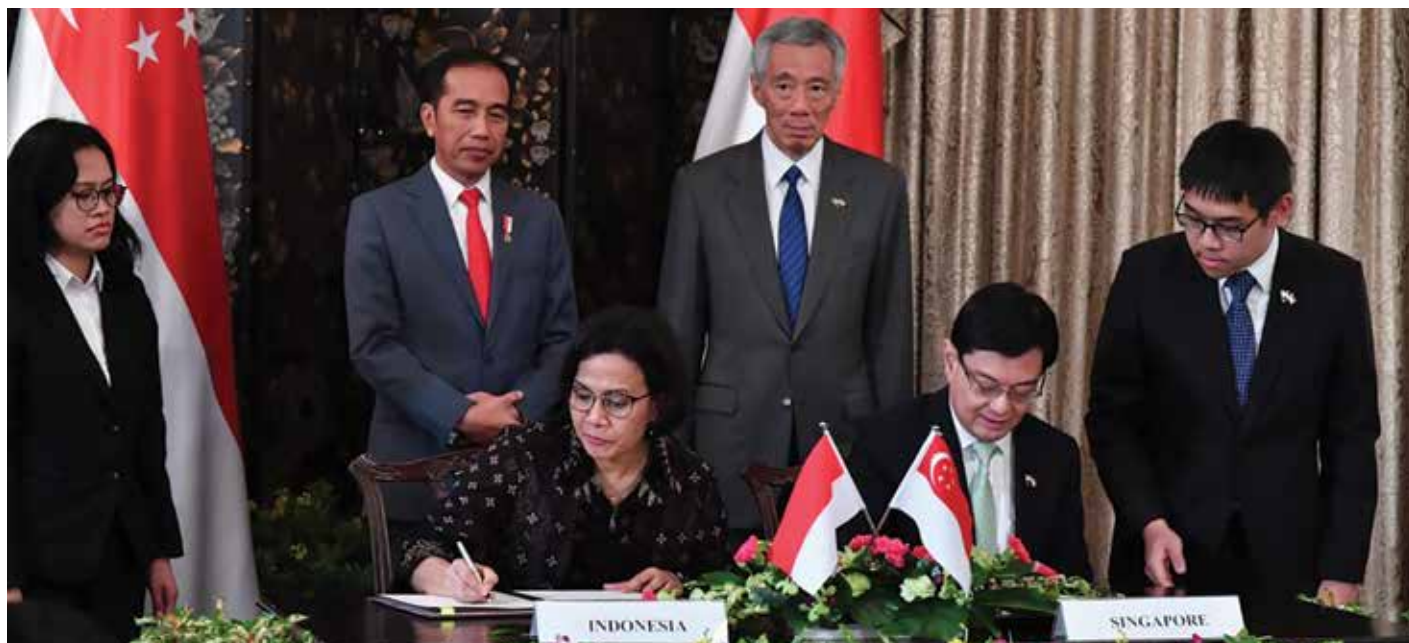
...and you get a truly mind-boggling array of fabrics sourced from around the country. Male attire isn't far behind in this dazzling diversity - there are the achkans and sherwanis, the lungis kurtas, angrakhas and dhotis, all of which have their separate genealogies, not to mention of the beautifully diverse head dress traditions - turbans, taqiyahs, safas, pagdis, phetas and the Gandhi cap.

Textiles make up one of the largest industries and sources of employment in India, covering cultivators, weavers, dyers, printers, embroiderers and designers that work across the value chain. In India, the textile industry combines the traditional with the modern. Traditional handloom and handicraft co-exist with small scale powerlooms and modern integrated industries that together turn out a wide range of fibres, yarn, fabric and apparel. Wrapping up with numbers, currently the Indian domestic textiles and apparel industry stood at US\$140 Billion in 2018 (including handicrafts) of which US\$100 Billion was domestically consumed while the remaining portion worth US\$40 Billion was exported to the world market.

# Indonesia-Singapore: Long and Always Relevant Bonds

*Text and photographs by the Republic of Indonesia Embassy in Singapore*

The lively friendship, a strong understanding and on-going dialogues on matters of mutual relevance have paved the way for a warm and enduring bilateral relationship



*President Joko Widodo during two substantive visits to Singapore (above) with PM Lee Hsien Loong at the Indonesia-Singapore Leaders' Retreat in October and (opposite page top) with Indonesian Embassy staff and nationals for Singapore's National Day in August*

**I**n 2019 the President of the Republic of Indonesia, Joko Widodo, made two important visits to Singapore, underpinning the importance of their position as friendly neighbours in this vibrant region.

The first visit was coincided with the National Day Parade (NDP) of Singapore held on 9th August 2019. President Joko Widodo and Ibu Iriana Joko Widodo were seated in the VIP enclosure at the Padang, among Singapore's high-ranking officials as well as Brunei Sultan, Hassanal Bolkiah, and the Malaysian Prime Minister, Mahathir Mohamad. President Joko Widodo's presence in the NDP portrayed the strong bond of friendship between Indonesia and Singapore.

President Jokowi paid his second visit to Singapore for the Indonesia-Singapore Leaders' Retreat on 8th October 2019. At the Joint Press Conference with Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, both leaders had committed to a number of agreements such as the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Indonesia and the Government of the Republic of Singapore on Electronic Data Exchange to Facilitate and Secure Trade; the MOU between National Archive of the Republic of Indonesia and the National Library Board of Singapore on Archive Cooperation; commitment to renew the Bilateral Liquidity Management Arrangement between Monetary Authority of Singapore and Bank of Indonesia; continue progress in Kendal Industrial Park and Nongsa Digital Park (NDP), as well as the progress on the negotiation of FIR realignment. The two leaders expressed their satisfaction on the strong economic ties between Indonesia and Singapore and the robust relationship between people of the two nations through educational, cultural, and institutional exchanges and linkages. Singapore is an important partner for Indonesia in terms of human



*Thumbs up for the 2nd Indonesia Investment Day. IID has grown to be a flagship event for investors in Singapore*

resources management and, moreover, skills improvement as well as human resources development, are considered as being top priorities of President Jokowi in his second term.

In 2019, the Embassy had organized and participated in various diplomatic activities in Singapore. One of the biggest events held by the Embassy was the 2nd Indonesia Investment Day (IID) on 26th July 2019 at Ritz-Carlton Millenia Singapore. The IID is a flagship and annual event, jointly organized by the Indonesian Embassy, Indonesia Investment Coordinating Board (BKPM), Bank Indonesia, Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KADIN)-Singapore Committee, and Singapore Business Federation (SBF). It provides a platform for both government and business entities to meet up with the representatives of the central and regional governments as well as investors. Investment is one of the main focus areas of President Jokowi





in his second term and Singapore is well known as being Indonesia's largest investor since 2014.

The 2nd IID highlighted Indonesia's strategy to develop industry 4.0, infrastructures related to development of 10 New Bali, and well as other infrastructures (affordable housing, toll way, water management, and MRT). This emphasis is expected to support the development of Indonesia's industrial and tourism sectors, where new emerging factors such as Artificial Intelligence, automation, and disruptive technology are needed to boost economic growth. The event featured the Indonesian Vice Foreign Minister A.M. Fachir as the keynote speaker; it was attended by more than 500 Singaporean businessmen. In total, the event managed to secure 50 investment packages (ready to offer projects) with investment potential values of more than US\$48 billion. Prior to the organizing of IID, on 23rd July 2019, the Indonesian Embassy held Rising Women Empowerment

Award ceremony at Orchard Hotel Singapore. The event was part of people-to-people diplomacy and aimed at bringing together the citizens of the two countries who have the awareness as well as role in women empowerment efforts. Among the recipients of the award were the Coordinating Minister for Human Development and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia, Ibu Puan Maharani, as the Eminent Women of the Year, and Mayor of Surabaya, Ibu Tri Rismaharini who received the Excellence Award (pictured above with Indonesian Ambassador to Singapore Ngurah Swajaya).



## Fabric & Fashion of the Nation

### Indonesia's Special Day for Batik



BATIK is a well-known art form from Indonesia. It's impossible not to be exposed to this colourful tradition if you visit or live in Indonesia. Batik is seen as a strong source of identity for Indonesians, regardless of their religion and race. Batik is made by drawing dots or lines using a pen-like tool called *canting* filled with liquid hot wax or using a printing technique or stamp. There are many different narratives linked to the tradition of batik, all depending on which province it hails from. The most traditional batik, known as *batik tulis*, is drawn using only *canting* and its colouring process involves the use of natural dyes. This is also the most expensive type of batik. Each province has its own pattern, technique, and colour preference. Although batik can be found in many provinces of Indonesia, batik from Java is the most renowned.

In 2009, UNESCO designated Indonesian batik as an Intangible Heritage of Humanity. Batik is also acknowledged in international events or forums as a

formal dress code. Many high ranking foreign officials wear batik when they meet with their Indonesian counterparts in Indonesia.

Indonesian people celebrate **Hari Batik Nasional** (Batik Day) on 2nd October. On this day, Indonesians dress in batik from head to toe. Batik Day is also used as means to increase the awareness amongst other countries, of batik as Indonesia's traditional fabric and arts. The Indonesian Embassy in Singapore celebrated the Batik Day in 2019 by having a Batik fashion show (pictured above ladies from the

*Indonesian Embassy show different batik styles*). Nowadays, batik is not only used as part of formal and ceremonial events, but also as part of daily wear by the young generation. Batik is also featured in various institutions uniforms, such as the national airline, banks, schools and offices in general. Some of the most famous batik patterns are *Kawung*, *Ceplok*, and *Parang*. *Kawung* is a very old design of batik consisting of intersecting circles. This pattern was reserved for the royal court member of the Sultan of Yogyakarta and also appeared carved into the walls of many temples in Java. *Ceplok* consists of a series of geometric designs based on squares, circles, stars, etc. *Parang* can be said to be the most famous batik pattern; it was once reserved exclusively for royal court of Central Java. The *Parang* design consists of slanting rows of thick knife-like segments running in parallel diagonal bands. Apart from featuring in fabrics this motif also appears in other mediums such as woodcarving and *gamelan*.

# Ireland - Singapore: Strong Friendship and Enriching Engagement

*Text and photographs by the Embassy of Ireland in Singapore*

A longstanding relationship which continues to be nourished by deepening investments in people-to-people interactions between the two nations



*Minister S Iswaran hosted Ireland's Minister for Business and Innovation, Heather Humphreys, with a trade mission of some 40 companies to Singapore in March 2019*

**I** 2019 was a busy year for the team at Ireland House in Singapore. The priority of the team, led by Ambassador Patrick Bourne, is to enhance the already strong friendship between Singapore and Ireland and to highlight all the great advantages that Ireland has to offer as a place to do business, invest, study and holiday.

The National Day event on St Patrick's Day, March 17th, was, as always, one of the most popular and enjoyable events of the diplomatic calendar. It was attended by Ireland's Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation, Heather Humphreys, and featured a showcase of sumptuous Irish food and drink products.



*When Irish Oysters are smiling...Showcase of Irish food and drinks at the National Day event on St Patrick's Day in March*



*Ambassador Bourne (5th from left behind the counter) welcomed a significant delegation of Irish cutting-edge Fintech firms in November 2019*

Two-way trade and investment was top of the agenda when the visiting Irish Minister met Minister S Iswaran during her visit. Trade between Ireland and Singapore grew to more than S\$10 billion, and the Ireland House team, which includes personnel from Enterprise Ireland and the Industrial Development Authority (IDA) Ireland played host to an ever-





At the Embassy's National Day event, St Patrick's Day, 17th March 2019 - (Above left): Inish Bia, importers and suppliers of Irish foods in Singapore, showcasing products at Ireland's National Day celebration (Above right): More Irish cheeses on display

growing traffic of Irish investors and innovators during 2019, including at the Fintech Festival in November.

Culture and the arts are very special calling-cards for Ireland and the Embassy engaged in an extensive programme of high-quality and high-profile events during the year to promote cultural links and exchanges with Singapore. The inaugural Irish Film Festival, in October, introduced the movie-lovers of the 'Red Dot' to the movie-makers of the 'Green Dot', and was a great success. On the literature front, the Irish Embassy celebrated the classics – James Joyce's *Ulysses* on Bloomsday – and the contemporary, with a visit by best-selling author John Connolly in August. As for music from Ireland, it can be covered in two characters... U2! Ambassador Bourne and his team were really proud to welcome Bono, The Edge, Adam and Larry for their first-ever Singapore concerts as a very busy year drew to a close. As they say in Ireland, 'Sláinte, meaning good health to all of you for the New Year ahead.



Teelings Irish Whiskey – the Spirit of Dublin

## Fabrics, Fashion & National Dress

### Irish Fabrics: Heritage and Hallmark of Quality and High Class Luxury



(From left to right): Linen Colmcille, Linen Kerry and Linen Shamrock

IRELAND is famous for the quality of its fabrics and particularly tweed and linen. Linen is cloth woven from, or yarn spun from, flax fibre. The genius of Irish designers, spinners and weavers has ensured that Irish linen continues to be a much sought-after symbol of quality and luxury the world over.

Companies such as Thomas Ferguson and Co Ltd continue to uphold this strong tradition and heritage of Jacquard weaving in Ireland. In recent times, as more mass-produced fabrics have become available for garments and household use, Irish linen makers have tended to concentrate on the quality end of the market, offering special and bespoke pieces for discerning customers. Irish linen makers attach great value to their brand and what we call today their 'IP'. Fabric which is woven outside Ireland and brought to Ireland to be bleached/dyed and finished cannot carry the Irish Linen Guild logo, a trademark that signifies the genuine Irish Linen brand.

The Irish Linen Guild has defined Irish linen as yarn which is spun in Ireland from 100% flax fibres. Irish linen fabric is defined as fabric which is woven in Ireland from 100% linen yarns. The skills, craftsmanship, and technology that go into spinning the yarn must be Irish, as is the case with Irish linen fabric; where the design and weaving skills must be Irish.

Accompanying photographs show some examples of Thomas Ferguson and Co. Irish table linen.

The reputation for quality has been developed through many generations of dedication and skill. This weaving expertise, combined with fine, high-quality yarns, and modern loom technology, produces a linen cloth that is exceptionally soft and fine, has a wonderful natural lustre, and yet is strong and durable enough to last a lifetime.

# Jordan-Singapore: Dialogues of Deepening Understanding

*Text and photographs by the Embassy of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to Singapore*

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan has a very special relationship with Singapore. Both play a pivotal role in promoting interfaith understanding and dialogue between different communities

**I**t was an exciting time for the Embassy of Jordan in Singapore when His Majesty King Abdullah II ibn Al Hussein of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan arrived in the city state for his third State Visit. The flurry of activity revolved around a tight agenda for the leader who was here at the invitation of President Halimah Yacob of the Republic, from 19 to 20 June 2019. One of the major highlights of the His Majesty's visit was his delivering the Keynote Address at the International Conference on Cohesive Societies on 20 June 2019. Also on the agenda was a visit to the Singapore Armed Forces Commandos on 19 June 2019 followed by a visit to Nanyang Technological University on 20 June 2019. King Abdullah II was also looking forward to his meeting with business leaders at a roundtable organised by the Singapore Business Federation.

Accompanying His Majesty on this State Visit were His Royal Highness Prince Hashim bin Al Hussein; His Royal Highness Prince Ghazi bin Muhammad; Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates Ayman Safadi; Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research Dr Walid Maani; Minister of Industry, Trade and Supply Dr Tariq Hammouri; and Minister of Digital Economy & Entrepreneurship Mothanna Gharaibeh.

A lavish welcome awaited King Abdullah II at the Istana. He was greeted warmly by President Halimah, when he came to pay a courtesy call on her.

In his keynote speech at the inaugural International Conference on Cohesive Societies, as a global leader in promoting interfaith understanding and dialogue, His Majesty spoke strongly about the need for people and nations to push back against the attack on interfaith harmony, mutual respect and trust. To add a greater thrust to his commendations King Abdullah II pointed out that every global challenge in the 21st century demands that countries and people resist hatred and exclusion. The conference, held from June 19 to 21, was aimed at promoting understanding between different communities.

President Halimah during their meeting thanked King Abdullah II for delivering the keynote address at the International Conference on Cohesive Societies. Both leaders agreed on the importance of inter-faith dialogue and tolerance, as well as the promotion of peace and harmony among different races. Both sides also discussed regional developments and counter-radicalisation.

On 20 June 2019 the high points of the meeting of King Abdullah II and PM Lee Hsien Loong were discussions on the developments in the Middle East. Both leaders also reaffirmed the strong bilateral cooperation in many areas, including education and efforts to promote inter-faith and religious moderation. King Abdullah II and PM Lee also exchanged views on ways to strengthen economic links between Jordan and Singapore, promote



*HM King Abdullah II being received by Ambassador Mahmoud Hmoud upon his arrival in Singapore*

***In his keynote speech at the inaugural International Conference on Cohesive Societies, as a global leader in promoting interfaith understanding and dialogue, His Majesty spoke strongly about the need for people and nations to push back against the attack on interfaith harmony, mutual respect and trust. To add a greater thrust to his commendations King Abdullah II pointed out that every global challenge in the 21st century demands that countries and people resist hatred and exclusion.***

mutual investments, cooperate in IT and furthering ties between their academic institutions.

His Majesty also met with Singaporean and Jordanian business leaders at a business roundtable, organised by the Singapore Business Federation and Enterprise Singapore. Amongst the officials at the roundtable were Singapore's Minister for Trade and Industry Mr Chan Chun Sing, also attending were 23 Singaporean and 24 Jordanian business leaders.



The roundtable emphasised the importance of benefitting from Jordan's and Singapore's positions as gateways to trade and investment to the Middle East and Southeast Asia respectively, taking into account the facilities contained in the Free Trade Agreement and the Bilateral Investment Treaty concluded between the two countries in 2004. Madam Halimah expressed her hope that the forum will "pave the way for more businesses to collaborate with each other, and help strengthen economic links and promote mutual prosperity of our two countries".

Madam Halimah lauded the King's role in promoting religious moderation and the importance of interfaith dialogue and tolerance. "I am confident that your wise words will have a positive and lasting impact, not just in our respective

regions but also in other parts of the world," she said. She further noted that: "In an increasingly polarised world where lines are drawn along ethnic, religious and other identities, we need strong voices of reason and advocates of peace among global leaders to protect our world from disintegrating. Your Majesty is one such voice."

Two Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) were signed during King Abdullah II visit. The first was on the Establishment of a Bilateral Consultation Mechanism to enhance communication between the officials of the two nations. The second MOU was on Water Resources Management which was signed by Jordan's Ministry of Water and Irrigation and Singapore's Ministry of the Environment and Water Resources.

## Fabric & Fashion of the Nation

### Madraga Tells a Story of Deep Attachment to the Land



(Above & right): You can tell what region the Madraga comes from by the style and embroidered patterns

THE *Madraga* - Jordan's lovely national dress - tells the story of the deep attachment to the land and is an important part of the history, identity and culture of the Jordanian people.

Embroidery in Jordan is one of the most important historical fine arts. *Madraga* is a handmade dress that is decorated with hand embroidered motifs and lines that are inspired by the surrounding nature, history, culture and heritage, which have influenced each region in Jordan to have its own distinctive style and patterns.

The colours and fabrics used in making the *Madraga* are rich in social, religious, economic and geographical connotations. Wealthy families used gold, silver and silk threads on expensive fabrics, while the impoverished families used cotton and wool threads to decorate and embroider their dresses. The colours of the dress and the colours of the embroidery also indicate whether a lady is single or married.

Some of these embroidered motifs and patterns are flowers, leaves, birds and wheat spikes, and sometimes undulations of mountains and valleys. You can tell what region the *Madraga* comes from by inspecting the style and the embroidered patterns that decorate it.

Nowadays, the *Madraga* comes in various colours and prints, and some are even embroidered by machines. They are designed in modern and traditional styles but still have the same motifs and the touch of the past.



# Malaysia: Visits Also for Future Collaborations

*Text and photographs by the High Commission of Malaysia in Singapore*

Continuous exchange of visits at all levels between Malaysia and Singapore ensures close ties remain as strong as ever



*(Above): Prime Ministers Lee Hsien Loong and Dr Mahathir Mohd at the Malaysia-Singapore Leaders' Retreat in April 2019. (Left): At the Singapore Bicentennial National Day Parade: Both Prime Ministers with their spouses. (Photo: Singapore PMO)*



Energy, Science, Technology, Environment and Climate Change (MESTECC). The exchange of visits between Malaysia and Singapore provided opportunities for both countries to discuss any issues of concern as well as possible future collaboration.

Both Malaysia and Singapore are now gearing up for the 10th Annual Leaders' Retreat which will be Singapore's turn to host.

Malaysia had also launched its Visit Malaysia 2020 campaign - which brings out the best of what the country has to offer to the world in a single, event-packed year. The year 2020 holds a special

**C**ontinuous exchange of visits at all levels between Malaysia and Singapore had taken place throughout the year 2019. The highlight of the calendar was the Working Visit of YAB Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, the Prime Minister of Malaysia to Singapore on 9 August 2019, to attend the 2019 Bicentennial National Day Parade. The Prime Minister together with His Majesty Sultan of Brunei and Indonesian President Joko Widodo and their spouses were invited by Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong to the said event.

There were also several other Ministerial Visits that took place such as the visits by YB Dato' Saifuddin Abdullah, Minister of Foreign Affairs; YB Lim Guan Eng, Minister of Finance; YB Datuk Seri Mohamed Azmin

Ali, Minister of Economic Affairs; YB Haji Mohamad Sabu, Minister of Defence; YB Zuraida Kamaruddin, Minister of Housing and Local Government; YB Dato' Dr. Xavier Jayakumar, Minister of Water, Land and Natural Resources; YB Anthony Loke, Minister of Transport; and YB Yeo Bee Yin, Minister of



*Malaysian Foreign Minister Dato' Saifuddin Abdullah and his counterpart, Dr Vivian Balakrishnan in a joint-press conference in January 2019*

place in the heart of all Malaysians as they reflect and celebrate all the nation's successes and challenges in transforming a once colonial land, into a thriving, multi-cultural and dynamic country. Having said this, Malaysia welcomes everyone to experience the country's numerous tourist attractions - natural bounty of beautiful beaches, islands and highland attractions, among others, to experience first-hand the warm hospitality and enjoy the culture, food, and festivals that Malaysians have to offer.



## Fabrics, Fashion &amp; National Dress

**Malaysia Melange - From Traditional to Tribal Attire**

Traditional attire  
(above from l): Malay  
baju kurung, Chinese  
cheongsam and Indian  
saree



From East Malaysia:  
(Left): Iban and (right)  
Orang Ulu traditional  
dresses



FROM magnificent tribal head-feathers with bark body-covers to antique gold-woven royal *songket* fabric, the array of Malaysia's traditional costumes and textiles are stunningly diverse and colourful.

In the early days, the aboriginal tribes wore native bark costumes and beads. With the advent of the ancient kingdoms, hand-loomed fine textiles and intricate Malay batik were used by the Malay royalty. As foreign trade flourished, costumes and textiles such as Chinese silk, the Indian *pulicat* or plaid sarong and the Arabian *jubbah* a robe with wide sleeves were introduced to the country.

Today, traditional attire such as the Malay *baju kurung/kebaya*, Indian *saree* and Chinese *cheongsam* are still widely worn.

The *baju kurung* is a knee-length loose-fitting blouse that is usually worn over a long skirt with pleats at the side. It can also be matched with traditional fabrics such as *songket* or batik. Typically, these traditional outfits are completed with a *selendang* (shawl) or *tudung* (headscarf). Another popular traditional costume is the *kebaya*, a more tight-fitting two-piece dress. This is often considered less formal. It is worn by the female flight attendants of Malaysia Airlines.

The traditional attire for Malay men is the *baju melayu*. The *baju melayu* is a loose tunic worn over trousers. It is usually complemented with a *sampin* - a short sarong wrapped around the hips. It is also often accompanied with a *songkok* or *kopiah*.

Comfortable and elegant, the traditional *cheongsam* or 'long dress' is also a popular contemporary fashion choice for ladies. Usually, it has a high collar, buttons or frog closures near the shoulder, a snug fit at the waist and slits on either one or both sides. It is often made of shimmering silk, embroidered satin or other sensual fabrics.

The *saree* is the world-renowned traditional Indian garment. A length of cloth usually 5-6 yards in width, the saree is worn with a petticoat of similar shade and a matching or contrasting *choli* or blouse. Typically, it is wrapped around the body such that the *pallau* - its extensively embroidered or printed end - is draped over the left shoulder. The petticoat is worn just above or below the bellybutton and functions as a support garment to hold the *saree*. Made from a myriad of materials, textures and designs, the *saree* is truly exquisite.

Popular with northern Indian ladies is the *salwar kameez* or Punjabi suit; a long tunic worn over trousers with a matching shawl.

The *kurta* is the traditional attire for men on formal occasions. It is a long knee-length shirt that is typically made from cotton or linen cloth.

With its diverse ethnic groups, Malaysia's largest state, Sarawak, has a plethora of unique tribal costumes. Using a variety of designs and native motifs, common materials for the *Orang Ulu* or upriver tribes are hand-loomed cloths, tree bark fabrics, feathers and beads. Sarawak is known for the woven *pua kumbu* of the Iban tribe, *songket* of the Sarawak Malay, colourful beaded accessories, traditional jewellery and head adornments.

Like Sarawak, Sabah is also blessed with a rich mix of ethnic groups. Each group adorns attire, headgears and personal ornaments with distinctive forms, motifs and colour schemes characteristic of their respective tribe and district. However, culturally different groups who live in close proximity may have similarities in their traditional attire. Notable hats and headdresses include the Kadazan Dusun ladies' straw hats, the Bajau woven *dastar* and the headdress of the Lotud man, which indicate the number of wives he has by the number of fold points!



# Mongolia: Singapore Leads in Regional Growth for Trade and Economic Ties

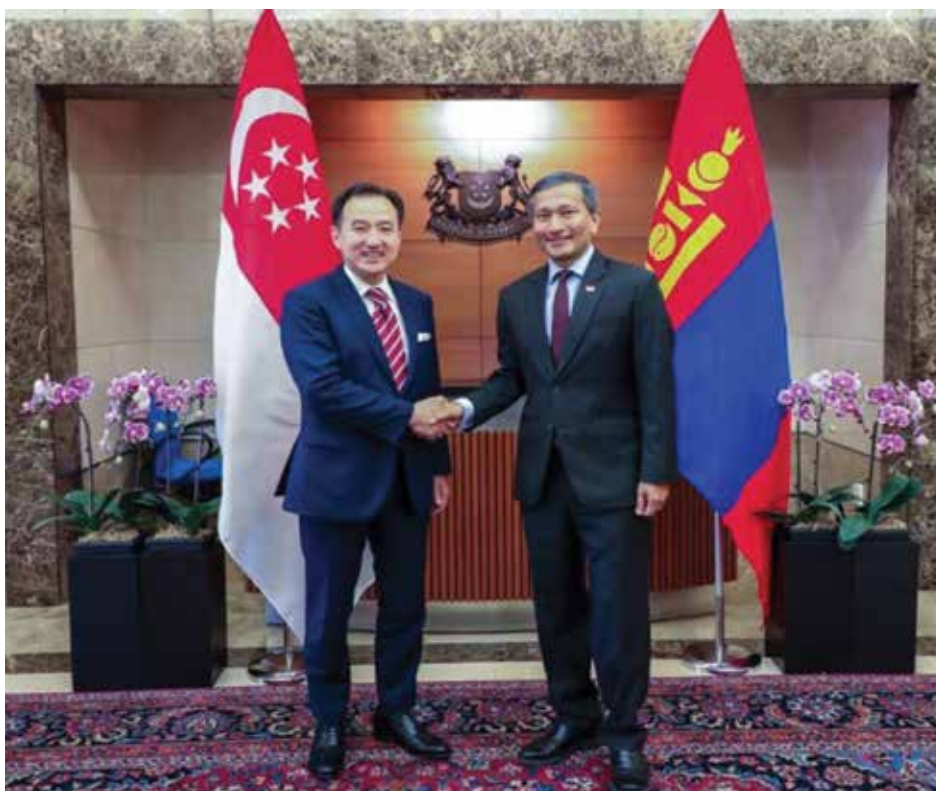
*Text and photographs by the Embassy of Mongolia in Singapore*

**M**inister for Foreign Affairs of Mongolia Damdin Tsogtbaatar made an Official Visit to Singapore in June 2019. Minister Tsogtbaatar called on Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance Heng Swee Keat, and met his counterpart, Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr Vivian Balakrishnan. During the meeting, the Foreign Ministers have discussed how Singapore and Mongolia can strengthen bilateral relations, including economy, trade and investments as well as cooperation in international arena. Minister Damdin Tsogtbaatar had also extended an invitation to Minister Dr Vivian Balakrishnan to visit Mongolia in 2020.

Trade and economic collaboration between the Republic of Singapore and Mongolia have steadily increased in recent years to reach US\$58 million in 2018, an increase of 31% from the previous year. Mongolia has a vested interest in expansion of mutually beneficial and complementary relations in all possible areas of economic cooperation. The increase in bilateral trade and economic ties with Singapore is higher compared to other Southeast Asian countries.

## Singapore-Mongolia Business Dialogue

In order to intensify this trend, the Embassy of Mongolia and the Singapore Business Federation (SBF) co-organised the "Singapore-Mongolia Business Dialogue" on 7 June 2019 in conjunction with a visiting delegation of close to 30 Mongolian enterprises, led by the Mongolian National Chamber of Commerce & Industries (MNCCI) and the Business Council of Mongolia (BCM). It was very pertinent and timely that the business dialogue was organized during the Foreign Minister Damdin Tsogtbaatar's official visit to Singapore, and it was the first such dialogue since the "Mongolia-Singapore Business Forum" in 2015. The aim of this business dialogue served as a platform for businesses from both countries to understand the investment climate and opportunities in the respective countries. The business dialogue had a total of 150 participants from the two countries that were representing both the public and private sectors. During the business dialogue, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Mongolia, His Excellency Damdin Tsogtbaatar delivered a keynote speech and provided an overview of the current foreign investment business environment in Mongolia. Ambassador Tumur Lkhagvadorj expressed optimism at further enhancing bilateral relations in his welcoming remarks.



*(Top): Mongolia's Foreign Minister Damdin Tsogtbaatar calling on his counterpart Dr Vivian Balakrishnan during his Official Visit in June 2019. (Above): Minister Damdin Tsogtbaatar gave the S.Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) Distinguished Public Lecture on Mongolia's foreign policy towards Asia*





*Presentations at the inaugural Singapore-Mongolia Business Dialogue co-organised with the Singapore Business Federation (from l to r): Foreign Minister Damdin Tsogtbaatar and Ambassador Tumur Lkhagvadorj*

Minister Damdin Tsogtbaatar gave a S.Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) Distinguished Public Lecture on Mongolia's foreign policy towards Asia. His Excellency spoke on Mongolia's transformation into a democratic country, its role in multilateral platform, recent economic developments and relationship with our two neighbouring countries, Russia and China, as well as our Third Neighbours.

### Upcoming the Big "Five-0"

Mongolia and the Republic of Singapore will mark the 50th Anniversary of the establishment of Diplomatic Relations in 2020. It is an important milestone to look forward to and to further deepen our bilateral relations.

## Fabric & Fashion of the Nation

### Deel - The Traditional Costume of Mongolia



DEEL is traditional Mongol clothing consisting of a long garment with long sleeve, a high collar, buttons on the right shoulder, belt, hat and boots. Every ethnic group has its own unique style, design and decorations, embodying specific features of their culture, origins and historic background. Deels are made from high quality silk, brocade, cotton, leather and cashmere. Deel accessories could represent the social status of the owner. For example, Deel buttons that are usually made with cloth tied into intricate knots can also be made with silver and gem stones. Head dressing of a female traditional Mongolian costume are made of gold and silver with coral, jade, pearls and gem stones.

On the other hand, Mongolian men carry "hoorog", or snuff bottles, made of onyx, agate and other stones and a Mongolian knife set, with a pair of ivory chopsticks, a gilt silver and coral toggle and a leather and silver belt pendant. Men wear tall boots with upturned toes, made from thick unbending leather and the tops are decorated with leather appliques. Deel can be adapted to different weather conditions and various lifestyle and social situations of the Mongolian people. For example, winter Deels are padded with sheep skin, while summer Deels are made with one layer of fabric, cotton or silk.

Nowadays, with modernization most city-dwellers wear the Mongolian traditional costume only for celebrations like Tsagaan Sar (Lunar New Year), Naadam Festival or for special occasions like graduation ceremony or weddings.





# New Enhanced Partnership Between NZ-Singapore

*Text and photographs by the New Zealand High Commission in Singapore*

The architecture of both countries' relationship is so designed that it has readily accommodated the impact of the changes that have been sweeping through the global political, economic and cultural landscapes down the years



*NZ Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern and Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong launched the Enhanced Partnership Programme in May*

It's been a busy year for the New Zealand High Commission. It kicked off by welcoming the new High Commissioner, HE Jo Tyndall, to Singapore in February. Since then, the High Commission has supported a number of ministerial visits and delegations from New Zealand, and hosted a range of events.



*One of the panel discussions from the week-long EP roadshow in NZ*

The centrepiece of this year's work has been the Singapore-New Zealand Enhanced Partnership (EP). Launched by Prime Ministers Jacinda Ardern and Lee Hsien Loong at the Istana in May, the EP both reaffirms the close relationship between Singapore and New Zealand, and outlines multiple ways which will deepen bilateral ties across four key areas – defence, trade, science and innovation, and people-to-people links. The High Commission has already stepped up its engagement with communities both in Singapore and New

Zealand to promote and profile the EP. Informal briefing sessions here in Singapore were complemented by a business-focused week-long EP Roadshow across four New Zealand cities, led by High Commissioner Tyndall and Trade Commissioner Hayley Horan.

While the Leader-led ceremonies to launch the EP were a real thrill, it has been even more rewarding to see a number of EP initiatives



*Opening of the NZ Pavilion at the Singapore Fintech Festival*



***The centrepiece of this year's work has been the Singapore-New Zealand Enhanced Partnership (EP). Launched by Prime Ministers Jacinda Ardern and Lee Hsien Loong at the Istana in May, the EP both reaffirms the close relationship between Singapore and New Zealand, and outlines multiple ways which will deepen bilateral ties across four key areas – defence, trade, science and innovation, and people-to-people links***

come to life in the second half of the year.

In October, the High Commission hosted New Zealand food and data scientists who were in Singapore for workshops with their counterparts that will kick-start two exciting research programmes under the science and innovation pillar of the EP.

The National Museum of Singapore and Te Papa Tongarewa, New Zealand's national museum, signed a Memorandum of Arrangement (MoA) that will pave the way for a close working relationship, to be kicked off in December by an immersive New Zealand exhibit, *Astrolabe-whakaterenga*.

Some aspects of the High Commission's job really allowed the High Commission to indulge in its passions. Highlights have included supporting the screening of New Zealand film *Vai*, posting a light-hearted "competitive" video with the High Commission's diplomatic counterparts for the recent Rugby World Cup, having its very first country pavilion at the Singapore FinTech Festival, and attending a fashion show by Singaporean designer, Jo Kilda. It's been a fast-paced, but exciting 2019 – so bring it on 2020, let's see what you have got.



## Fabric & Fashion of the Nation

### Greatly Influenced By Maori Culture



*(Above & right): A beautiful example of the Korowai that is quite distinctive of the New Zealand culture usually worn by heads of mission when presenting their credentials*

NEW Zealand's indigenous Māori culture is very important to the High Commission, and greatly influences how its staff dress on special occasions.

You may have seen a photo of High Commissioner Jo Tyndall during her credentials ceremony and wondered about the cloak she wore – this is known as a Korowai.

Korowai are often worn by our Heads of Mission when they present credentials to their host government's Head of State. The korowai showcases the distinctive New Zealand culture and highlights the value we place on our Māori heritage. The four korowai owned by the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs were hand-woven by members of different Iwi (Māori tribes), with most taking years to make. The Korowai worn by High Commissioner Tyndall during her ceremony was created by Edna Pahewa and is known as the Te Arawa korowai.

The Te Arawa korowai uses traditional red, cream and black colours. A close look reveals a Patiki (flounder) pattern woven into the cream panels –representing a wish for an abundance of food. The saw-edged pattern (known as the niho taniwha), seen in the border of the Korowai, represents the ability to deliver objectives effectively. Finally, the black hukahuka (tassle) design around the top of the cloak denotes leadership and authority.





# Greater Understanding of Nigeria

*Text and photographs provided by the High Commission of the Federal Republic of Nigeria in Singapore*

Nigeria continues to develop its excellent relationship with Singapore and continues to place a high priority on opening up opportunities for both countries

## Nigeria-Singapore Business and Investment Forum (NSBIF) 2019

The 59th Independence Anniversary Celebration of Nigeria kicked off with the Nigeria-Singapore Business and Investment Forum (NSBIF) 2019, organised by the Nigeria High Commission in collaboration with the Singapore Business Federation (SBF). Participants from Nigeria, Singapore, Australia, United Kingdom, Canada and China were able to interact and learn from each other's experiences.

## Walk for Life and Visit to St. Theresa's Old Peoples Home

For the first time, a charity walk titled, "Walk for Life" was organised by the High Commission and it took place at the scenic MacRitchie Reservoir Park. Participants, almost 50 in number walked around the park and visited the Saint Theresa's Old People's Home, to present token gifts to the home.

## Independence Anniversary Gala Nite

The 59th Independence Anniversary Gala Nite featured speeches from the H. E. Akinremi Bolaji Head of Mission of Nigerian and H. E Sam Tan Minister of State, for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Social and Family Development of the Republic of Singapore. Also in attendance were: Mr. Lim Biow Chuan Member of Parliament for Mountbatten Single Member Constituency, Mr Chong Kee Hiong Member of Parliament for Bishan-Toa Payoh Group Constituency and Dr. Gabriel Aduda the Permanent Secretary for Political and Economic Affairs, Office of the Secretary of the Government of the Federation of Nigeria. One of the highlights of the Anniversary celebration was the presentation of Awards of Appreciation to individuals, Institutions and Companies, for their contributions towards National Economic Development of Nigeria: ● The Singapore Cooperation Programme for Technical Assistance (SCPTA) represented by H. E Sam Tan ● Ms Yewande Sadiku, Executive Secretary and CEO of Nigeria Investment Promotion Commission (NIPC) ● The Tolaram Group ● Indorama Eleme Petrochemical Company Limited ● Penguin International Pte Ltd and ● Olam International



(Top): To mark Nigeria@59 anniversary (from l): Minister of State, Sam Tan, Ambassador Akinremi Bolaji, Madam Foluso Bolaji and Dr. Gabriel Aduda.  
(Above & left): Ambassador Bolaji with participants of NSBIF 2019



Group photograph of the participants of the 'Walk for Life' and staff of St. Theresa's Old People's Home

## Brazil v Nigeria: International Friendly Football Match

The Singapore Sport Hub featured a football match between the Nigerian (pictured below) and the Brazilian National Teams on Sunday, 13 October, 2019. The match ended in a one - one draw.







### Welcome the Newest Nigerians in Singapore

On 29 November, 2019 the High Commission organised a get together to send forth Prof. Adekunle Adeyeye of the National University of Singapore and Mrs. Samantha Uwazuruonye Tokunbo of the Tolaram Group. Likewise the Mission received four new Nigerian families to Singapore: ● Engr. & Mrs. Birinengi Harry & family ● Engr. Dennis Inegbedion & family ● Mr. & Mrs. Ibiyemi Oshinaike & family and ● Mr. & Mrs. Koyejo Bankole & family.

The Nigerian Community also welcomes newly born Nigerian babies: ● Master William Semilore Abass, born on 7th October 2019 and ● Miss Sophia Ayomide Macaulay on 21st November 2019.

### Coffee Morning for Spouses of Heads of Missions in Singapore (SHOM)

Spouses of the Heads of Missions in Singapore holds coffee morning meeting once a month. The October edition was hosted by Madam Foluso Bolaji, the wife of H.E. Akinremi Bolaji, Head of Mission of Nigeria High Commission. Nigeria also hosted the Group's Book Club in the month of October 2019 at the prestigious Fullerton Hotel.



## Fabrics, Fashion & National Dress

# Nigerian Fashion and Fabrics Attract Singaporeans

### Nigerian Wax Print: Ankara

ANKARA is a 100% cotton fabric with vibrant patterns that possesses great strength and tight weaving. African wax print fabric is a defining metaphor of African design, fashion and expression; an immediately recognisable icon throughout the world.

Ankara was formerly known as "Dutch wax print" and it garnered significant interest in West African countries such as Ghana, Nigeria and Senegal. As African countries gained independence in the 20th century, they built their own textile mills and started creating designs reflecting traditional African culture. The prints have since then evolved to truly reflect African culture and lifestyle. Here in Singapore, Ankara is thriving well, made possible by two fashion Houses; Olive Ankara and the Mayen Collection.

### OliveAnkara



Ify is of Nigerian heritage born and raised near Venice, Italy. Her OliveAnkara styles itself as 'Where Modern Design Meets African Wax print'. Made from vibrant Ankara fabric the collection is for women and men who are not afraid to stand out. Ify blends quirky prints with Italian design.

Part research, project part filling a need, Ify who is also a PHD in Human Molecular Genetics and a PostDoc in Molecular Carcinogenesis started the brand in 2017 because she could not find anything similar when she arrived

in Singapore. Her Italian sensibility and attention to detailed married with her love of vibrant colour has created a coveted brand in Singapore for women of all colours."

**OliveAnkara** 79 Chay Yan St, #01-02 Opposite Plain Vanilla, Tiong Bahru, Singapore 160079. Email: [hello@oliveankara.com](mailto:hello@oliveankara.com)

### The Mayen Collection



The Mayen Collection invites the contemporary woman to slip into comfort, colour and style - whether business or casual, day or night - and is inspired by a desire to create comfortable, classic, affordable and stylish pieces for life in the tropics. The pieces are created in high quality, breathable fabrics in beautiful prints and block colours, and feature staple classics to create a versatile wardrobe. "I have had a long-standing passion for fashion and throughout my student days, worked for fashion houses Escada and YvesSaintLaurent in London. Today I combine that love for fashion with my work as a corporate lawyer. With my Trinidadian and Nigerian parentage, British upbringing, Asia residence and global travels, the inspiration for The Mayen Collection is eclectic. I look forward to continuing to design pieces that inspire ladies to step into pieces that exude elegance and charm," shares the designer

**The Mayen Collection** Email: [mayen@themayencollection.com](mailto:mayen@themayencollection.com)  
Instagram: [@themayencollection](https://www.instagram.com/themayencollection). Facebook: The Mayen Collection



# Norway-Singapore: Closer Than Ever

*Text and photographs by the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Singapore*

Ties between Norway and Singapore dating back to the 1850s continue to enjoy the fruits of a resilient relationship which has expanded to accommodate the many changing facets of global matters and the pursuits of contemporary times



In 1906, less than a year after Norway's independence, the country established a Consulate-General in Singapore, and 50 years ago - on 7th March 1969 - it set up a full-fledged Embassy. To celebrate this friendship, Norway has through the year hosted a slew of events which have been pivotal to enriching the cooperation between both nations.

In March, there was a timely visit by Members of Parliament, which gave us an opportunity to celebrate the Embassy's birthday. The day after, the visiting parliamentarians as well as SMS Lam Pin Min were Guests-of-Honour for the annual Seafood Dinner. The @50 birthday celebrations officially ended in May when we invited friends and partners to a National Day Celebration at the Asian Civilisation Museum.

## **Visit by Minister of Trade and Industry**

In February, the Minister of Trade and Industry, Mr Torbjørn Røe Isaksen stopped by to look at what makes Singapore the most important hub for Norwegian businesses in Asia, and why more than three quarters of Norwegian direct investments into APAC go to Singapore. He met his counterpart Minister Chan Chung Sing as well as a number of Norwegian companies. He was particularly impressed with the many innovative partnerships between our two



*(Top): An almost full capacity crowd at Norway Night 2019 - THE maritime network event of the year at the spectacular The Clifford Pier. (Photo: Iskandar Ahmad). (Above): The 50th Anniversary celebration cake of the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Singapore (Photo: Ingvild Klokke)*

countries and the dynamic start-up scene in Singapore.

## **Visit by Norwegian Parliamentarians – and the Annual Seafood Dinner**

Members of Parliament of Norway, taking a larger interest in developments in Southeast-Asia, visited Singapore in March. They met a number of counterparts and experts, and gained new insights into political, economic and social developments in this region. They also took part in several events. On 8 March, the Norwegian Business Association in Singapore together with the Embassy, Innovation Norway and the Norwegian Seafood Council,

had the pleasure of inviting friends to the biggest ever Seafood Dinner. 1100 guests enjoyed first class Norwegian seafood, prepared by top Singaporean and Norwegian chefs! We were honoured to have SMS Lam Pin Min and Members of Parliament from Norway as Guests of Honour.

## **Norway Night**

During Singapore Maritime Week in April, the third edition of "Norway Night" took place at the spectacular Clifford Pier. During this magic night of live music and Norwegian seafood, we welcomed 450 guests, including Guest of Honour SMS DR Lam Pin Min, to a lively celebration of our two countries' longstanding maritime





*Distinguished guests at Arctic Frontiers (from l): Prof Ashraf Kassim, Director NUS; Prof Anne Husebekk, President of UiT The Arctic University of Norway; Mr Ole Øvretveit, Director Arctic Frontiers; Ambassador Anita Nergaard; Minister of State Mr Sam Tan; Ms Liv Lønnum, Deputy Minister of Petroleum and Energy and Prof Kim Holmén (Photo: Iskandar Ahmad)*

relations. The Embassy appreciates MPA's assistance, and would like to thank a number of Norwegian maritime companies for the generous support.

#### **National Day Celebrations at Asian Civilisation Museum**

Norway adopted its Constitution on 17 May in 1814 – almost a century before we gained our independence. On the occasion of the National Day, we celebrated our friendship with Singapore and the 50th Anniversary of the Embassy at the Asian Civilisation Museum. We were honoured to have with us SMS Dr Lam Pin Min. The celebration reflected beautifully the many ways and areas in which Singapore and Norway cooperate and engage.

#### **Arctic Frontiers – Knowledge for Ocean Sustainability**

Singapore is an Observer State in the Arctic Council. In order to deepen the cooperation on Arctic issues, and increase the awareness of why the Arctic is relevant also in the tropics, the Embassy with partners organised an Arctic conference on “Knowledge for Ocean Sustainability” at NUS in October. With partners like Arctic Frontiers, NUS, Innovation Norway and Eco-Business, the programme was both substantial and topical. Minister of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Ministry of Social and Family Development, Mr Sam Tan and the Deputy Minister of Petroleum and Energy of Norway, Ms Liv Lønnum, opened the conference. The impressive list of speakers included high-ranking representatives from business, academia and government. In the evening, the documentary “Arctic Awakening”, produced by Eco-Business after a visit to Norway, was screened as part of the exhibition “Changing Course 2019” at the ArtScience Museum.

#### **Smart Mobility**

In October, Singapore hosted the ITS World Congress 2019. A delegation of 75 people visited from the transport sector in Norway, led by Minister of Transport Jon Georg Dale and Deputy Minister Tommy Skjervold. The delegation gained insights into Singapore's integrated city and transport planning; the MRT-system; dynamic road pricing; use of AI and other technologies to meet future challenges within the transport sector; as well as piloting of autonomous buses. Smart mobility will clearly be important for us to achieve our “Smart Nation” objectives.

#### **Finance and Fintech**

In November, Minister of Finance Siv Jensen had agreed to speak at the Singapore FinTech Festival 2019, which attracted close to 60 000 participants. With a focus on sustainability, she could draw on many experiences from Norway. While in Singapore, she met her counterpart, DPM and Minister of Finance Heng Swee Keat, as well as a number of other actors in the finance field. A stop at the APAC office of the world's largest sovereign wealth fund, the Norwegian Government Pension Fund Global, was a natural part of the programme. The Minister, Deputy Minister and the rest of the delegation let Singapore full of ideas on how to support and promote the dynamic Fintech scene in Norway.

### Fabrics, Fashion & National Dress



*Variations of the Norwegian national costume, the 'bunad'. (Photo: Anne-Lise Reinsfelt/Norsk Folkemuseum/visitnorway.com)*

## Colourful Norwegian Folk Dress Now A Modern Tradition

A “bunad” is a traditional folk costume and national dress which you will find all over Norway. Although much more popular with women, many men also wear one at special occasions. Different parts of the country have their own versions, differing in colours, embroideries and jewellery. The bunad is often worn on the National Day, and if you have not seen one here in Singapore on 17 May, the reason is that this dress, with its woollen skirts and thick fabrics, is more suited to the cold climate of the High North! Historically, wool was one of the most important raw materials in the Norwegian textile industry. A fun fact for your next ferry trip to Bintan: The seats on several ferries are produced in Norway and covered with Norwegian woollen textiles!

# Peru-Singapore: Working Towards 40 Years of Mutual Gains and Interests

Text and photographs by the Embassy of Peru in Singapore

Year 2019 was a very dynamic and rewarding one for the Embassy of Peru in Singapore. At official levels, the Ambassador of Peru had meetings with the Minister of Finance, Mr. Heng Swee Keat; Minister of Culture, Ms Grace Fu; Home Minister, Mr. K Shanmugam; Minister of Education, Ong Ye Kung; and, Minister of National Development, Mr. Lawrence Wong to deal with issues of common interest and explore ways and means of reinforcing bilateral cooperation in diverse topics such as trade and finance, cultural exchanges, the fight against transnational crime; training for teachers and new technologies for education; and smart cities and urban planning. In the same way, the Ambassador of Peru had a meeting along the same lines with the Speaker of Parliament. The Embassy highlighted each month with various commercial and cultural events:

**January:** The Embassy of Peru collaborated with the Nami Restaurant of Shangri-La Hotel to introduce to the Singaporean palate Nikkei food - a fusion of Peruvian and Japanese cuisines. The Chef from the renowned Nikkei Peruvian restaurant 'Osaka' in Peru was flown in to Singapore to host the seven-day event. The award-winning Peruvian film *The Milk of Sorrow* was presented jointly by the Embassy and the Spanish Program Centre of the National University of Singapore (NUS).

**February:** Photographic exhibition, on the life and writings of the celebrated 16th Century Peruvian chronicler of the Inca Empire and Spanish conquest - Inca Garcilaso de la Vega. It was co-organized by the Embassy and Yale NUS College. The Embassy replicated the same exhibition at the Substation Gallery in April.

**May:** The World Opportunities Forum was organized to commemorate the 20th anniversary of Sun Media which publishes titles for the diplomatic community. The Ambassador participated as one of the panelists, among other Ambassadors accredited to Singapore. He presented business opportunities in Peru to potential investors.

**June:** The Central Narcotics Bureau of Singapore invited representatives from the Peruvian organisation in charge of formulating policies to combat and prevent drug trafficking (DEVIDA), and, the Peruvian Home Ministry, to participate in a study visit to Singapore to garner first-hand information on policies designed and applied by Singaporean authorities to combat drug trafficking and consumption.

On the business side, several Peruvian agribusiness companies participated in a roadshow with Singaporean companies interested in importing mainly fruits and vegetables from Peru. The Peruvian economy is going through a boom in terms of agricultural goods exports and is becoming the second exporter of avocados and blueberries in the world. Singapore is interested in promoting the establishment of Peruvian companies here to take advantage of its position as a regional logistics hub for the redistribution of agricultural products.

**July:** Six Peruvian companies participated in the Fine Food Fair which took place in Suntec Convention Centre offering Peruvian products that are considered 'super foods' with promising prospects in the Asian market such as quinoa, cocoa, avocado, blueberries and others.



(From l to r): Ambassador Carlos Vasquez calling on DPM Heng Swee Keat and Minister Grace Fu. Exhibition on the life and writings of the celebrated Peruvian chronicler of the Inca Empire and Spanish conquest - Inca Garcilaso de la Vega



Peruvian Ambassador Carlos Vasquez on the mic presenting Peru at Singapore's Fintech Festival

Furthermore, a videoconference between representatives of the Ministry of Environment and Water Resources of Singapore and their counterparts at the Peruvian Ministries of Environment and Housing, Construction and Sanitation, along with representatives of the Peruvian National Water Authority was organized to discuss ways to strengthen bilateral cooperation on issues such as carbon taxes, water tariffs and sustainable management of water resources, including recycled water, desalination plants and public private associations to develop water infrastructure.



Awarding this year's Tumi de Plata award to NAFA graduate

There were also two cultural events that prepared the way for the 198th Anniversary celebration of the Independence of Peru by engaging a Peruvian musical group *Apu InKa*, a prestigious Peruvian band which plays and dances folkloric compositions from the three regions of Peru.

**August:** The Embassies of Chile and Peru hosted a promotional event organized by Chan Brothers a Singaporean tour operator, Quimbaya Tours and the Latin American Chamber of Commerce. This event catered for an exclusive crowd, included a ceviche preparation workshop conducted by the Chef of the Peruvian Embassy and a Chilean wine tasting sponsored by the company "Concha y Toro".

**September:** The Embassy played a part at the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts (NAFA) Convocation Ceremony. Each year, since 2006, the Embassy has traditionally conferred the Embassy of Peru Award - "The Tumi de Plata" to the most outstanding Degree Graduate of NAFA.



This year it was awarded to Mr. David Zechariah Kwek, Bachelor of Music. On the cultural side, the second edition of the 'Flavours of Peru' food festival took place at the Mandarin Orchard Hotel on September 6 -15. It was organized by the Embassy with the collaboration of the Peruvian Trade Office in Jakarta. The Peruvian Chef Jaime Arbulú and national musician Manuel Granados contributed to its success, attracting more than 1,200 people.



*Peruvian musical group Apu InKa helped in the 198th Anniversary celebration of the Independence of Peru with performances of the country's music and dances*

The Embassy and Peruvian multinational companies; Aje Group and Industrias San Miguel participated in a boot camp organized by the Economic Development Board of Singapore and the Latin American Chamber of Commerce to show Latin American companies the benefits of establishing and doing

business in Singapore and how the country is a gateway for doing business in the Asian region.

On October 21, in an event organized by the Latin America Chamber of Commerce the Ambassador of Peru was one of the panellists to discuss with the prestigious author Parag Khanna about his last book 'The Future is Asian' and the impact of the growing political and economic influence of Asia on the Latin American region

**November:** The Ambassador gave a presentation on the promotion of Fintech business in Peru within the framework of the Singapore Fintech Festival 2019 and the Week of Innovation and Technology in Singapore (SWITCH). The four-member countries of the Pacific Alliance group; the Embassies of Chile, Colombia, Mexico and Peru along with their respective trade promotion agencies and the support of the Latin American Chamber of Commerce organised this event. Four Peruvian companies involved in the Fintech sector participated in this important event.

The Embassy of Peru is currently consolidating a programme of diplomatic, economic and cultural events to celebrate 40th Anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Peru and Singapore.

**October:** The office of the Defence Attaché of the Embassy hosted the celebration of the Peruvian Armed Forces and Peruvian Navy Day at the Mandarin Orchard Hotel. The event brought together the country Defence Attachés assigned to Singapore from all over the world, and some members of the Peruvian community and guests. The Director of the Changi Regional HADR Coordination Centre was the Guest of Honour.

The Embassy joined the ITB Fair for Tour Operators with the participation of two prominent Peruvian companies Condor Travel and Jaguar Aventura at The Expo and Convention Centre of Marina Bay Sands on October 16-18.

In the field of Education, the Embassy conferred its second annual Embassy of Peru Award. On October 18, the Embassy of Peru Award -The Varayoc- was awarded to Mr. Xi Wen Han, a student at the Raffles Institution during the Institution's Farewell Assembly 2019. The Varayoc award is a tradition in Peru from the Andean Mountain region. It is conferred on individuals to mark the symbol of leadership, responsibility and honesty.

## Fabric & Fashion of the Nation

# Textiles in Peru Play Pivotal Role in its Cultural Foundation

THE Peruvian textile tradition dates back to the Pre-Hispanic era and it has evolved along a period of more than 5000 years. The special conditions of the Peruvian coast, a dry and arid landscape, allowed the preservation of dyed textiles. Some of them have maintained their vivid colours and sophisticated weft. Many of the surviving remnants of old Peruvian textiles are funerary bundles that covered the dead bodies of high level authorities of Pre-Inca and Inka societies. The main materials used by the ancient Peruvians to produce their textiles were cotton as well as alpaca and llama wool.

The most important Pre-Inka cultures that developed unique skills in textile art were the Paracas in the Peruvian coast and the Wari in the central Andean Mountains. The weavers of Paracas culture showed two thousand years ago, a great creativity in sophisticated and delicate designs and use of abundant and bright colours in large mantles which are admired nowadays. Embroidery was also developed. Paracas officials adopted the practice of wearing multiple garments including headbands, turbans, mantles, ponchos, tunics and skirts.

The Wari are very well known for their textiles which, like those of the Paracas, were very well-preserved in burials thanks to dry weather. The Wari established an empire that encompassed the central Andean Mountains and the central and northern coast of the current Peruvian territory. All over this large area the Wari were able to establish state-sponsored workshops and standardize production and design of textiles which included tapestries, hats, tunics for high ranking officials



Some centuries after the development of the two above-mentioned cultures, the Inca empire emerged and became the most powerful Pre-Hispanic state in South America. Inca cloth played an important role in both the social and economic foundations of the empire. Cloth production was, after agriculture, the second largest industry for the Inca and was associated with social stratification. The finest textiles were reserved for the nobility and royalty, including the emperor himself.

When the Spaniards arrived in Peru in the beginning of the sixteenth century, they found a great array of cloth stored in special stone buildings all over the Inca territory. The early Spanish chroniclers, amazed at finding such fine textiles, mentioned in their reports the unusual elegance and beauty of these cloths, the richness of their colours and the superior quality of their dyes.

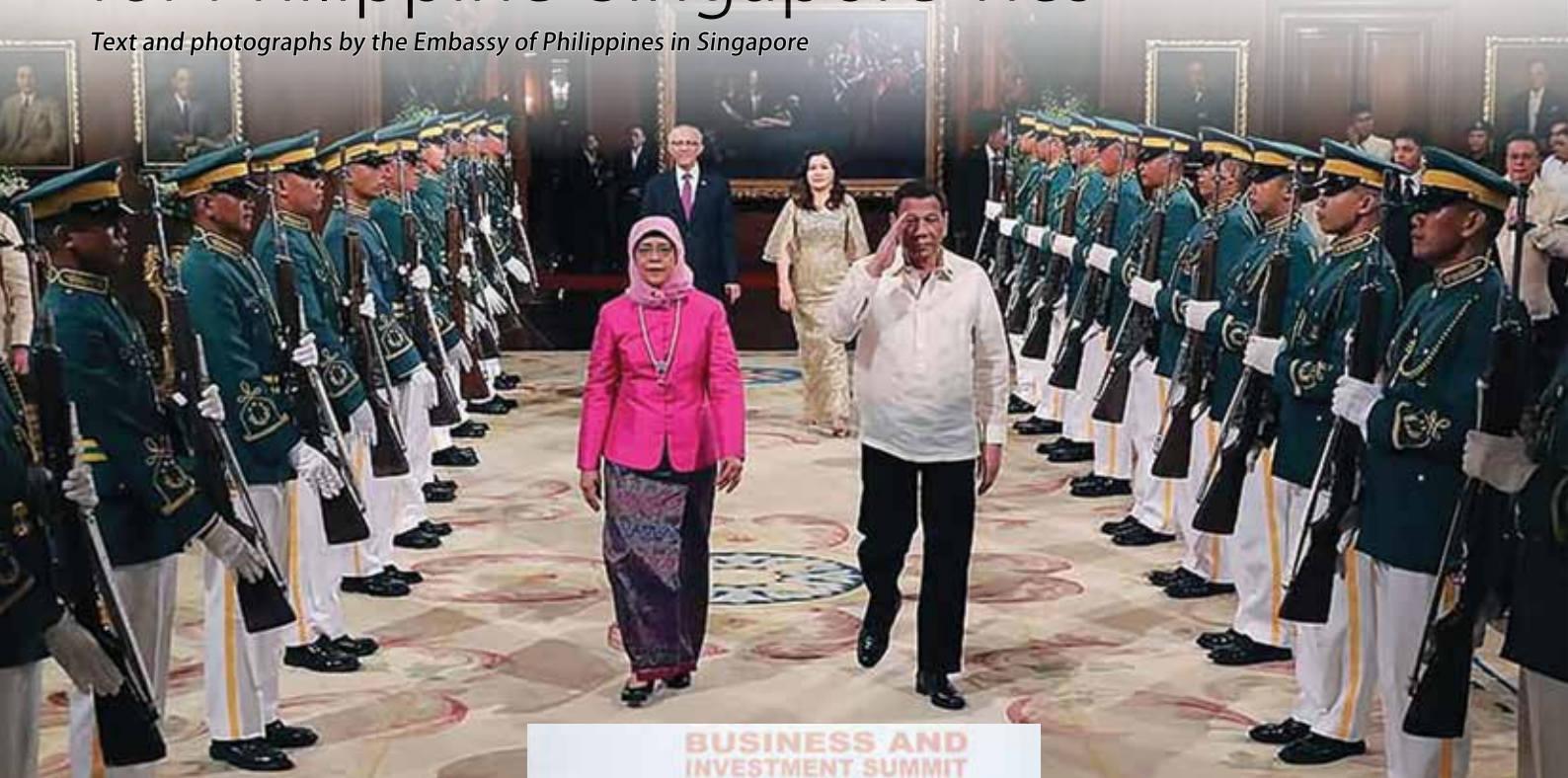
This textile tradition continued during colonial times and is still practiced nowadays. Some samples of this tradition can be appreciated in costumes which are worn during special events or dancing festivals in Peru. These fine cloths are produced with premium Peruvian cotton and the finest threads of alpaca and vicuña wool.

Two examples of this tradition are the dress worn by female dancers of "marinera" in the northern Coast of Peru and "valicha" in the region of Cusco, the former capital of the Inca empire. Marinera dress is made mainly of fine cotton and the Valicha one is made mainly of alpaca wool.



# Memorable Golden Jubilee for Philippine-Singapore Ties

Text and photographs by the Embassy of Philippines in Singapore



The Philippines and Singapore celebrated their Golden Jubilee anniversary of diplomatic ties in 2019. One memorable highlight was Singapore's President Halimah Yacob's 5-day state visit to Philippines in September. The visit zeroed in on many aspects of the ties between the two nations, while at the same time drawing attention to the opportunities of deeper engagement with regard to business, infrastructure development and people-to-people connectivity.

President Halimah met Filipino President Rodrigo Duterte in Manila, and later did a quick side trip to his home city of Davao in Mindanao. Madam Halimah is the third head of state to visit Mindanao since Mr Duterte took power, after Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Indonesian President Joko Widodo in 2017. During her visit to Davao City, Madame Halimah enjoyed her tour of the Philippine Eagle Center where she encountered the Philippine Eagle, a critically endangered bird of prey, which is an important part of the Philippines wildlife heritage. As part of a conservation and breeding programme a pair of Philippines Eagles is on a 10-year loan to Singapore.

## Singapore Events Highlights

In June the Philippine Ambassador to the Republic of Singapore, HE Joseph Del Mar Yap, hosted a diplomatic reception at the John Jacob Ballroom of the St. Regis Singapore to jointly celebrate the **121st Anniversary of the Proclamation of Philippine Independence and the Golden Anniversary of Philippines-Singapore Diplomatic Relations**. Around 300 guests joined the ambassador at the grand reception including Guest of Honour was Mr Lawrence Wong, Singapore's Minister for National Development



(From 2nd from l to r): Secretary Ernesto M Pernia, Ambassador Joseph Del Mar Yap and Central Bank Governor Benjamin Diokno at the inaugural Philippines-Singapore Business & Investment Seminar

There was also a slew of events that kept the conversation on business, trade and entrepreneurship vibrant and exciting all year round. In June there was **Innovfest Unbound 2019** held at Sands Expo and Convention Centre, Singapore, is an annual event of Smart Nation Innovations that resonated with edgy interactions on one of the most important business platforms - Start-ups. The Department of Trade and Industry Undersecretary Rafaelita M. Aldaba and executives of Filipino Start-up enterprises shared their views on the Philippine Start-up Ecosystem during the conference. The Filipino Start-up executives included Ms. Joan Yao, Vice President of Kick Start Ventures, Ms. Katrina Chan, Director of QBO, and Mr. Ron Hose, Founder and CEO of Coins. According to Undersecretary Aldaba the Philippine Start-up ecosystem is relatively young but is full of potential and embedded capabilities.

Philippine IT companies and Start-ups had also started conversations at **ConnecTech Asia 2019** in June at Sands Expo and Convention Centre. The annual trade exhibition on blockchain, artificial intelligence, Internet of Things and smart data analytics, saw the presence of 12 technology companies from the Philippines, which is becoming increasingly active in this field. Leading the delegation was former Department of Communications and Information Technology (DICT) Usec. Monchito Ibrahim and DICT Director Emmy Lou V. Delfin. The delegation was met by Philippine Ambassador to Singapore Joseph Del Mar Yap. DICT is the lead Philippine government agency that assists Filipino IT, infotech business processing management companies, enterprises and start-ups participate in key regional conferences and trade exhibitions.





The Philippine Embassy in Singapore also helped to show insights and raise awareness of the enormous opportunities for intrepid investors available in the Philippines when it held a financial literacy forum on “Getting a Franchise in the Philippines,” with Mr. Armando Bartolome, who

shared his findings with an audience of about 120 overseas Filipinos, on considerations for getting a franchise.

A major initiative that was the first for Singapore was the **Philippines-Singapore Business & Investment Seminar** held in October organised by the Embassy here at the Shangri-la Hotel. Philippines Ambassador to Singapore, HE Joseph Del Mar welcomed an almost full capacity ballroom of business leaders and potential investors who wanted to know more about the current and potential prospects of the country as well as identifying in which sectors and regions are opening up for growth. The Embassy assembled a formidable team that included Cabinet Secretaries and high-level officials. They included HE the Governor of

the Central Bank of the Philippines Benjamin Diokno, HE Ernesto M Pernia, the Secretary for Socio-Economic Planning. Insights were also gleaned from specific areas of infrastructure development, transportation and the digital economy with presentations by HE Arthur P. Tugade, the Secretary of the Department of Transportation. Enterprise Singapore also weighed in with a talk by Mr Darren Lee, its Regional Director, Southeast Asia Division, who expressed confidence and recommended potential investors to look at the Philippines if they are considering expanding overseas. Several entrepreneurs and representatives from SMEs, corporations and as well as Singapore companies currently operating there were also represented on panels that endorsed the view that the Philippines more than qualifies as a preferred destination for doing business.

Following a landmark agreement between the Philippines and Singapore, a pair of critically endangered eagles were loaned to Singapore as part of a 10-year renewable conservation breeding plan. Singapore's Foreign Minister Dr Vivian Balakrishnan was at the launch at the Jurong Bird Park for the Philippine Eagle Exhibition in November. Also at the launch were Ricardo Calderon, Assistant Secretary, Department of Environment and Natural Resources and Ambassador Joseph Del Mar Yap (below).



(Source: MFA)

## Fabric & Fashion of the Nation

### Beauty and Panache of Philippines National Attire

IN September 2019, Singaporeans had the opportunity to study and view up close the traditional textiles of the Philippines in a special showcase the **Hibla ng Lahing Filipino Traveling Exhibition: Pina-Seda (Pineapple Silk Cloths from the Tropics)**. Singapore was the last stop for the exhibition after an international 12-city tour. It showcased the Philippines' traditional textiles, namely the Pina-Seda, while celebrating the country's indigenous artistry and heritage. The event also forms part of the 50th anniversary this year of the establishment of PH-SG diplomatic relations. Aside from the exhibition materials on display at the Lim Hak Tai Gallery, demonstrations, lectures, and workshops were conducted by experts from National Museum of the Philippines (NMP),



Weaving demonstration of the pineapple silk (Photo: NMP)



Classic Barong Tagalog (Photo: philippine-folklifemuseum.org)

embroiderers from Lumban, Laguna, and weavers from Balete, Aklan to make it a more interactive and hands-on educational experience for the public.

In the mid-70s the **Barong Tagalog** was decreed as the “the national attire” by then President Ferdinand Marcos. It was meant to “focus nation-wide attention on the Filipino national dress to wider use and enhance its export potential”. Its fine needlework or hand-painted designs in cool cotton or handwoven piña or jusi have given it a flair that has won international recognition and acceptance.

It has become the formal men's wear of the Philippines. It is considered a dress, a garment, a coat in itself. It is not merely a ‘shirt’. If it were, then it would need a coat or a jacket over it to qualify as formal wear. Throughout its evolution, various factors have influenced the look of the Barong Tagalog, primarily the loose, long lines of the Chinese, airy tropical appearance of Indo-Malay costume, elongated effect of the Hindu dress, and the ornamental restraint of European men's clothing. For the most part, it has retained its essential look since it was first worn: round neck, straight long sleeves, mid thigh hemline and then modified with collar, cuffs and side slits. Today, the Filipinos (as well as non-Filipinos) continue to wear the Barong Tagalog with distinguishing acceptance world-wide. It is worn during weddings and formal occasions.

**Baro't Saya** is the Filipino style of women's clothing. Traditionally, it is composed of a blouse and a long skirt with a *panuelo* (a square cloth folded triangularly and worn like a great ruffle or collar). It evolved many variants, some of which are regional. The upper-class women wore more elaborate baro't saya sewn with beads and colourful designs. Several distinctive dress styles for the ladies were also inherited from the country's past Spanish and American colonial influences. These types of clothing that are ‘simple yet functional’ and have both indigenous Filipino qualities and Spanish influence started to become prominent during the 16th-century in the Philippines. Such clothing, through the innovation of modern-day Filipino fashion designers, can be worn in the Philippines for formal occasions and as office uniforms. These national clothes can be made from materials such as piña, jusi, abaca, and Mindanao silk.



Modern Baro't Saya (Photo: Alecs Ongcal /Rappler)



# Poland-Singapore: On a Fast Track

*Text and photographs by the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Singapore*

Both nations continue to use many platforms to enhance bilateral relations, while strongly promoting lively people-to-people contacts



*Poland ShioK! A special edition of the Polish Festival was brought into the heartlands of Singapore*

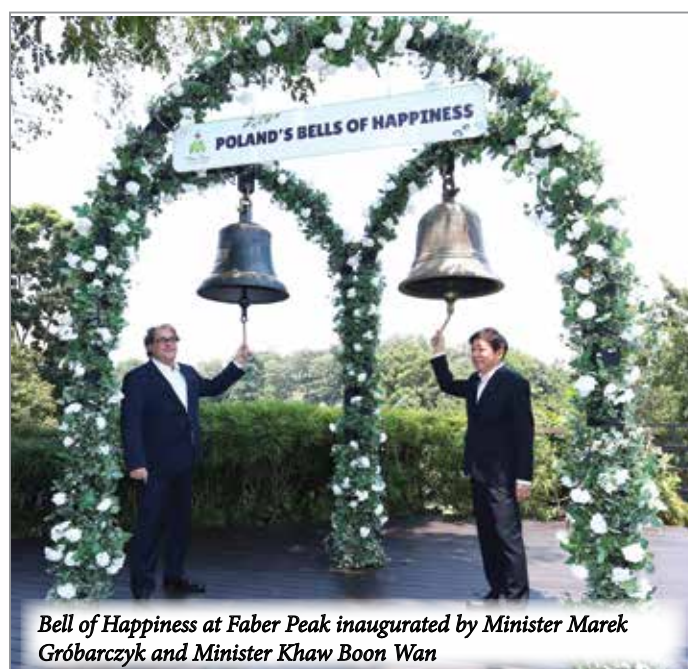
2019 marked the 50th anniversary of establishing diplomatic ties between Poland and Singapore – the significant occasion which was highlighted by the official visit of Mr Jacek Czaputowicz – Poland’s Minister of Foreign Affairs to Singapore in April 2019. Another important step in our ties was the opening of the office of Singapore’s Honorary Consul General in Warsaw, Mr Andrzej Kawecki.

## **Poland ShioK!**

The momentous year witnessed also a special edition of Polish Festival in Singapore. Poland SHIOK once again brought Polish culture, traditions and products closer to Singapore’s hearts and, for the first time, to its heartlands at the Our Tampines Hub. Following the festive opening graced by the presence of Mr Masagos Zulkifli, Minister for Environment and Water Resources, the two week festival attracted more than ten thousands of Singapore residents with more than 20 culinary, cultural, sport and lifestyle events across town.

## **Bells of Happiness**

In October, Poland’s Bells of Happiness at Faber Peak were officially inaugurated by Mr Marek Gróbarczyk, Minister of Maritime Economy and Inland Navigation of Poland and Mr Khaw Boon Wan, Singapore’s Minister for Transport. The existing Bell of Happiness at Mount Faber – linked to Polish famous ship “Dar Pomorza” – was joined by the bell of another magnificent Polish ship “Dar Młodzieży” which visited



*Bell of Happiness at Faber Peak inaugurated by Minister Marek Gróbarczyk and Minister Khaw Boon Wan*



Singapore a year ago on its Independence Sail around the world. The new bell has been offered to Singapore by Poland as a friendship gift.

### Polish Post and SingPost

The joint release of commemorative post stamps by Polish Post and SingPost was another way to confirm strong ties between our countries. The stamp issue "Birds of Singapore and Poland" featuring the oriental pied hornbill and the peregrine falcon - both species that were regionally extinct but thanks to restoration programs were preserved in their natural ecosystem - was officially unveiled in November.

### Investment Agenda

The anniversary year brought also an important economic milestone i.e. the joint investment of PSA International with Polish Development Fund and IFM Global Infrastructure Fund in DTC Gdańsk - the fastest-growing container port in Europe. Its value of 1.1 billion USD makes it the biggest Singaporean investment in Poland and in the Central Europe so far and paves the way for further investment and cooperation opportunities.



*Unveiling at the joint release of commemorative post stamps with the theme 'Birds of Singapore and Poland'*

## Fabric & Fashion of the Nation

### A Regional Mosaic of Fashion and History



*(Above from left): Łowicz national costumes presented at Polish National Day. Folk orchestra in Krakow costumes at Poland Shio! (Right): Krakow and Łowicz Polish costumes at Faber Peak*



IN Poland there is no uniform national dress but the Polish national wardrobe contains a myriad of regional costumes from all parts of the country. It is filled with embroidered dresses in all possible colours, leather boots and hard-soled moccasins from the Tatra Mountains as well as rich ornaments that include red beaded necklaces and fancy peacock feathers from Krakow. Next to stripy woolen and felt attire there is the finest silk, cashmere and colorfully threaded ornamental lace. Worn centuries ago by ordinary people in everyday life, the decorative garments reflect both fashion and the history.

One of the most beautiful and glamorous traditional costumes of Poland, the clothing of the **Łowicz** central regions continues to be taken out of the closet for festivities and national holidays. Its main characteristic is stripes in all colours, shapes and sizes that adorn women's skirts, dresses, heavy woolen garments, aprons, corsets and caftans as well as men's trousers. Over centuries, its original reddish and green colour palette was enriched with orange, vermilion, white and violet, and - with the application of aniline dyes - dominated by greens, violets, emerald colours obtained with aniline dyes. The variety of the fabrics, their diverse colours and undoubted beauty encouraged the spread and imitation of the style. Nowadays, it still inspires young designers and street fashion.

The most known, however, is the **Krakow** costume - a telling example of intertwining between fashion and history. It owes its fame and national

status to a Polish hero Tadeusz Kościuszko who in 18th century hid from Russian spies by dressing 'like a peasant' in the Krakow costume. He took an oath of loyalty to the Polish nation on the Krakow market square wearing a white ankle-length woolen sukmana coat and a red rogatywka peaked cap. The costume elements were later introduced into the uniforms of 19th century national insurgents. The decorative female Krakow costume with white aprons, stunningly embroidered silk corsets and red beaded necklaces became trendy thanks to the Krakow intelligentsia at the break of 19th and 20th century. It remains popular among the youngest girls, especially for religious celebrations.



In Singapore, you may have spotted the Krakow and Łowicz regional costumes at the events organised by the Embassy of Poland this year: the National Day, "Cold War" movie screening or unveiling of Poland's Bell of Happiness at Faber Peak.

# Russia and Singapore: Moving in the Same Direction

*Text and photographs by the Embassy of the Russian Federation in Singapore*

The year of 2019 was rich in events as Russia- Singapore relations continued gaining strength, breadth and depth



*Signing of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU)-Singapore Free Trade Agreement at the EAEU Summit marked an important milestone in the economic cooperation between Russia and Singapore.*

The state visit of Russian President Vladimir Putin to Singapore in November 2018 in conjunction with the ASEAN-led summits reaffirmed the broad-based and long-standing friendship between the two countries and gave a fresh impetus to development of political dialogue and practical cooperation. The two countries' steps at the international arena proved that they both believe in free and open trade, both committed to the multilateral system, and both are adherent to the rule of law internationally.

In September, the Russian Far East city of Vladivostok hosted the 10th session of the High-Level Russia-Singapore Intergovernmental Commission (IGC), co-chaired by Deputy Prime Minister of the Russian Federation Maxim Akimov and Senior Minister, Coordinating Minister for Social Policies of the Republic of Singapore Tharman Shanmugaratnam, which resulted in boosting cooperation across all sectors, including digital development, skills training, start-ups and innovation, and signing six agreements between agencies and companies of the two countries.

Apart from the IGC meeting Senior Minister T. Shanmugaratnam, accompanied by Senior Minister of State for Trade and Industry Koh Poh Koon, participated in the Fifth Eastern Economic Forum in Vladivostok. In January he also spoke at the 10th Gaidar Forum in Moscow and Mr Koh Poh Koon represented Singapore at St. Petersburg International Economic Forum in June.

Russia-Singapore economic cooperation remained high on the agenda. Over the last years bilateral trade has been continuously growing and proved to have excellent potential for increasing. Only in the first half of 2019, Russia-Singapore trade volumes exceeded US\$ 3.6 billion, and already surpassed the annual results of 2016 (US\$ 3.3 billion).

The signing of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU)-Singapore Free Trade Agreement at the EAEU Summit in Yerevan on October 1, 2019, marked an important milestone in the economic cooperation between Russia and Singapore. The document constituted the first step towards the creation of

a comprehensive free trade zone between the EAEU and Singapore, and in addition to trade in goods, it will also regulate trade in services and the terms of investment. Once ratified it will open new opportunities for both Singapore and the EAEU countries to strengthen commercial cooperation, enhance business networks, and lower business costs.

The Russian industrial sector demonstrated its interest in Singapore market by presenting one of the largest national pavilions (430 sq meters representing 20 major companies) at the Industrial Transformation Asia Pacific exhibition in October, where the latest Russian technologies in intellectual control systems, predictive analytics, virtual reality, and neural networks were showcased.

Russia and Singapore spent much effort to safeguard peace and security in the Asia Pacific region. In August, Secretary of the Security Council of the Russian Federation Nikolai Patrushev accompanied by representatives of law-enforcement agencies, military and special services paid a working visit to Singapore. He called on Senior Minister and Coordinating Minister for National Security Teo Chee Hean and visited the Cyber Security Agency of Singapore and the Interpol Global Complex. The MOU on Security Cooperation between the Ministry of Home Affairs of the Republic of Singapore and the Ministry of the Interior of the Russian Federation was signed.

A visit of a multiagency delegation comprising Russian Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs Vitaly Shulika, Chairman of the Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation Alexander Bastrykin and Chief of the Interpol National Centre of the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs Alexander Porkopchuk in July in conjunction with the INTERPOL World-2019 reaffirmed the countries' strong will to work together in countering international terrorism and transnational crime.

In October, SM Teo Chee Hean had fruitful meetings with DPM Maxim Akimov and First Deputy Secretary of the Security Council Yury Averyanov in Moscow. New opportunities for collaboration in the digital and innovation sec-



tor, as well as bilateral cooperation in the areas of counter-terrorism, trade and investment were on the top of the agenda.

Military contacts are also on the rise. Senior Minister of State for Defence Heng Chee How represented Singapore at the VIII Moscow Conference on International Security (April). Deputy Minister of Defence of the Russian Federation Alexander Fomin attended the 18th Asia Security Summit – the IISS Shangri-La Dialogue (June).

Russia values its cooperation with Singapore in the Arctic region, where the two countries share a wide range of spheres of mutual practical interest. In July, Ambassador-at-Large Nikolay Korchunov visited Singapore to participate in Russia-Singapore bilateral consultations on Arctic issues. This year Minister of State (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Social and Family Development) Sam Tan was in Russia twice: in March for the 4th International Arctic Forum and in September for the 8th International Meeting of Representatives of Member States of the Arctic Council, Observer States of the Arctic Council and Foreign Scientific Community.

Education always remains one of the priorities. In August, Kazan welcomed a team of 32 young professionals from Singapore – the city-state's largest contingent so far – at 2019 WorldSkills Competition. Minister for Education



(From left): Senior Minister Tharman Shanmugaratnam and DPM Maxim Akimov at the 5th Eastern Economic Forum

Ong Ye Kung was also there to support the Singapore team.

One also cannot but notice the growing interest of Singaporeans to learning the Russian language and studying in Russian universities.

A strong demand from Singapore partner companies to explore Russia has already been noticed by Russian travel agents: 84 companies from 15 regions of the Russian Federation took part in ITB Asia 2019, demonstrating 50% increase comparing to the last year exhibition. Cultural ties have also strengthened. The first Russian Film Week in Singapore, which took place in June, was

a raving success. In October the local audience warmly welcomed ASEAN-Russia Youth Orchestra as well as Russian folk band “Lubo-Milo” and Singaporean folk group “NADI Singapura”. Young Russian pianist, winner of many prestigious international musical competitions Alexander Malofeev debuted in Singapore in November.

Having celebrated the Golden Jubilee of diplomatic ties last year, Russia and Singapore entered a new phase of their relations looking in the same direction. The ultimate goal is to further promote cooperation and friendship between the two countries, strengthen people-to-people links, mutual respect and understanding.

## Fabric & Fashion of the Nation

### Russia National Dress - A Cultural Anchor



Kokoshnik

THE traditional Russian costume used to be a part of the country's history right up until the beginning of the 18th century, when Peter the Great proclaimed the Russian dress to be 'peasant and non progressive'. The citizens, aristocracy, merchants and other influential society members then switched to European dress, while traditional Russian clothes were half-forgotten and worn only in the countryside and among members of religious institutions. Nowadays, traditional Russian dress can only be seen worn by Church officials and during some ethnic holidays. Many elements are now lost, although there are still several components that became iconic to Russian traditional dress.

#### Rubakha (Oversize Shirt)

The basic element of any traditional Russian wardrobe it could be worn by both men and women. This is the old style variant of the contemporary shirt. Rubakhas were worn as street clothes among the poor and as home clothes among the rich. The overall look was what is now called 'oversize' as it didn't have any specific silhouette. Depending on the financial status, different

materials were used for rubakha manufacturing and tailoring, from cheap linen or cotton to expensive imported silk.

#### Sarafan (Long Dress)

The main part of the female wardrobe was the sarafan. A long dress, which was often worn on top of a rubakha, that formed the 'everyday' and 'special occasion' outfit. The most common colors for sarafans were red, light or deep blue, wine and white. Sarafan dresses were often decorated with intricate embroidery.

#### Kokoshnik

Decorations for the head and hair were also a part of the common wardrobe. In the case of women, the way the hair was arranged could tell a lot about civil status: young women could show off their hair arranged in a single braid decorated with flowers and other elements. Married women were not allowed to show their hair in public, so they covered their head with different decorations. One of the most iconic and intricately decorated examples of this was the kokoshnik.

#### Shuba (Furcoat)

This is probably the only element of Russian traditional costume that has survived over the centuries and is still popular in the country – severe climate conditions are the reason. The shuba, a Russian word for fur coat, was an inevitable part of both male and female wardrobes. Back in the day, the technique of assembling fur coats was different: the fur was left on the inside of the coat, while the outside was decorated with bright colourful textiles. Nowadays, the shuba design has evolved to match modern fashions, but it still serves its primary purpose: keeping Russians warm during long and cold winters.

#### Kaftan (Coat)

The word 'kaftan' came to Russia from the Middle East, but this element of clothing became so integral to Russian wardrobes that it was perceived as being local. Usually made using expensive textiles with lots of embroidery and adornments, kaftans were analogous to today's coats and were worn on top of other clothing.



Rubakha

# Saudi - Singapore Ties: Towards New Horizons

*Text and photographs from Saudi Arabia Gateway to the Middle East*

The year 2019 has turned out to be a momentous landmark for relations between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) and Singapore, which was cemented even further by the warm reception accorded to Singapore's President Halimah binti Yacob, on her first State Visit to the Kingdom last November. It was the first time in the history of the diplomatic relations of the two nations that such an event took place and it received every acclaim that it richly deserved (*for more on this see pages 44 to 47*).

## Contributing to Vision 2030

This year kicked off with the visit of Senior Minister and Coordinating Minister for Social Policies, Tharman Shanmugaratnam to Saudi Arabia in January, building on the warm and longstanding relationship between both countries. While the January meeting was held with HRH Crown Prince Mohammad Bin Salman to discuss bilateral ties, the second trip in July was focused on meeting Saudi ministers and conversations with senior bankers and officials hosted by the Saudi Arabian Monetary Authority. The two visits afforded an opportunity to discuss several areas where Singapore can work together with Saudi Arabia, to contribute towards the realisation of the Kingdom's 2030 Vision.

Underpinning the growing impetus of these ongoing dialogues Senior Minister Tharman shared that: "We already have meaningful cooperation on several fronts, including education, urban planning, the Hajj pilgrimage, and security. Our economies complement each other very well. Singapore is a small nation, but our niche strengths are relevant to Saudi Arabia's ambitious plans to transform its economy. We also have a high degree of respect for each other. These features of our relationship set the basis for deeper ties in the years to come."

In June, HRH Crown Prince Mohammad Bin Salman also met the Prime Minister of Singapore Mr. Lee Hsien Loong on the sidelines of G20 summit in Osaka, Japan. The two sides exchanged talks on a number of issues of common concern, especially bilateral relations in all fields. Singapore was invited to participate in the G20 meetings and the Riyadh Summit in 2020. The Riyadh Summit, scheduled to be held in November 2020, will be the 15th meeting of G20 Heads of State and Government.

A delegation from the Ministry of Housing, headed by HRH Prince Saud bin Talal bin Badr, Advisor to the Minister of Housing and General Supervisor of the Ministry's Agency for Housing Support visited Singapore in September and met with HE Mr. Lawrence Wong Minister of National Development and a number of Singaporean officials in the field of housing and construction to discuss cooperation opportunities between the two countries and benefit from their experiences in this area.

During the Smart Nation Summit held in Singapore in June, Deputy Minister of Communications and Information Technology HE Haytham Al-Ohali announced that the Kingdom is investing about one billion US dollars to support the artificial intelligence sector with a focus on startups research and skills development and the continuation of digital capacity building programs for national cadres, and support for greater investment in innovation and technology entrepreneurship. These measures will open the door for the Singaporean companies to look for opportunities in these projects and create more investment and cooperation between the two countries.

## Hajj and New eVisa Programme

In 2019 the official quota of Singapore Hajj pilgrims was 900 and the Saudi Embassy has always supported requests to increase this number. Apart from Hajj, the Saudi seasons are aimed to open new tourism attractions as tourist visas are now available to nationals from 49 countries including Singapore. It was announced by the Saudi Ambassador in Singapore, HE Saad Saleh

Al-Saleh, at a press conference here in September, that the introduction of an e-Visa programme that will make it easier to visit the Kingdom. Travellers can also apply for their visas at the Saudi Arabian consulate or Embassy.

*The Kingdom now offers tourist visas to nationals of 46 nations*







① President Halimah Yacob had an audience with HM King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques. ② On the sidelines of G20 Osaka - PM Lee met HRH Crown Prince Mohammad Bin Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and invited the Crown Prince to Singapore. ③ & ④ Ambassador Saad Saleh Al-Saleh presents Singapore's invitation to the G20 Meetings in the KSA to PM Lee; ⑤ Singapore Minister Masagos Zulkifli and Senior Minister of State Poh-Koon Koh called on KSA Minister of Energy, Prince Abdulaziz Bin Salman in November 2019 (Photo: MCI). ⑥ FM Dr V. Balakrishnan met his counterpart Prince Faisal Bin Farhan Al Saud at the G20 Foreign Ministers Meeting in Japan in November (Photo: MFA).

### Major Events

In February the Ambassador held a dinner banquet for HE Ahmed Al-Hakbani, the Governor of General Customs Authority, during his visit to Singapore where he also met his counterpart Singapore Customs' Director-General, Mr Ho Chee Pong. They discussed trade digitalisation strategies and ways to enhance cooperation.

In March HE Dr Fahad bin Abdullah Al Mubarak Minister of State, Member of the Council of Ministers, Secretary-General of the G20 Saudi Arabia Secretariat met with HE Heng Swee Keat Minister for Finance of Singapore together with an official delegation as well as the Ambassador. HE Dr. Fahad also met with HE Tharman Shanmugaratnam (the then Deputy Prime Minister & Coordinating Minister for Economic and Social Policies of Singapore) and presently Senior Minister.

In April the Ambassador attended the opening of 'Arabs in Singapore' exhibition under the patronage of Singapore President HE Mdm. Halimah Yacob. The exhibition traced the vital role of Arabs in early Singapore history especially in the areas of trade, education, social unity, philanthropy, community development, music and culture.

Before the start of Ramadhan, as per past tradition and practice the Ambassador and HE Dr. Mohamad Maliki bin Osman, the Senior Minister of State at the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, launched at the Embassy headquarters the distribution of dates offered by the Kingdom to Singapore.

The World Opportunities Forum (WOF) held in May 2019 proved to be another highlight as the Executive Director of Strategic Partnerships from Saudi Arabia General Investment Authority (SAGIA) Mr Abdullah B. Al-Harbi attending the WOF shared: "I have come especially from Riyadh to tell you that we are more than ever open to the world," while speaking of the many opportunities open to investors and businessmen in Saudi Arabia, in line with the Kingdom's economic agenda of Vision 2030, launched in 2016. He pointed out that "We cannot achieve this Vision without the participation of, and full and complete partnership with the private sector. ... so this vision is a joint vision between the government and the private sector."

On 5th June 2019 the Ambassador joined other Singaporean Muslims at the Sultan Mosque in the presence of President Halimah Yacob, Minister Masagos Zulkifli and officials in Singapore for the Eid al-Fitr prayers. The Ambassador also showed the Kingdom's support for the Singapore Inter-Racial, Inter-Religious Harmony Nite Dinner 2019 in July, where he joined the President of Singapore, Mdm Halima Yacob, supporting the dinner ceremony celebrating the harmony between ethnicities and religions.

On 8th August 2019, the Kingdom became one of the signatories of the Singapore Convention on Mediation. The delegation for the signing ceremony was headed by HE Bader Al-Haddab, Saudi Arabia Deputy Minister of Technical Affairs in the Ministry of Commerce and Investment.

In September HRH Prince Saud bin Talal bin Badr, Advisor to the Minister of Housing and General Supervisor of the Ministry's Agency for Housing Support, was Head of the Kingdom's Delegation to the World Environmental Building Week (IBEW) where together with the Ambassador they received Singapore's National Development Minister, HE Mr Lawrence Wong at the Kingdom's Pavilion. Minister Wong inaugurated the opening of the IBEW.

## Fabric and Fashion of the Nation

### KSA Traditional Dress

SAUDIS prefer traditional clothes to Western styles of dress, and generally wear modern adaptations of age-old designs. The loose, flowing traditional garments are practical for the Kingdom's hot, wind-swept climate, and in keeping with the Islamic ideal of modesty.

**Men** wear an ankle-length shirt of wool or cotton known as a *thawb*. On their heads, they wear a large square of cotton (*ghutra*) that is folded diagonally over a skullcap (*kufiyyah*), and held in place with a cord circlet (*igal*). The flowing, full-length outer cloak (*bisht*), generally made of wool or camel hair, completes the outfit. In the old days, the *bisht* was also used as a blanket while traveling.



**Women** customarily wear a black outer cloak (*abaya*) over their dress, which may well be modern in style. On their heads, Saudi women traditionally wear a *shayla* – a black, gauzy scarf that is wrapped around the head and secured with circlets, hats or jewelry. Traditional dress is often richly decorated with coins, sequins or brightly colored fabric appliques.

Some Saudi women wear veils made of sheer material. The practice of wearing a veil is an ancient one that dates back at least two millennia, before the advent of Islam. In a harsh desert environment, a thin veil provides protection from constant exposure to the sun, which can damage the skin and eyes. Today, a veil is also a sign of modesty and virtue.

# Singapore President's Historic First State Visit to Saudi Arabia



**T**he Republic of Singapore's President Halimah binti Jacoby made her first State Visit to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia from Tuesday to Friday (Nov 5-8), at the invitation of King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud. The Singaporean President was the first ever leader from the island-nation in the history of diplomatic relations between both countries, to make a State Visit to the Kingdom.

During the course of her visit meetings were also scheduled separately with Crown Prince Mohammad Bin Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defence as also with several other senior Saudi leaders.

Madam Halimah's tight schedule also included tours of historical, cultural and religious sites in the cities of Riyadh, Jeddah, Makkah and Madinah. Also on the cards was an interaction with a business delegation (organised by the Singapore Business Federation and Enterprise Singapore) who was visiting Saudi Arabia in conjunction with the state visit. The President also got an opportunity to attend a reception where she met members of the Singaporean Diaspora in the Kingdom as well as students from Singapore there who were enrolled for higher studies.

The President was joined by her husband Mr Mohamed Abdullah Alhabshe, along with high-level members of the government including Mr Masagos Zulkifli, Singapore's Minister for the Environment and Water Resources and Minister-in-charge of Muslim Affairs; Senior Minister of State for Trade and Industry Koh Poh Koon and Members of Parliament Foo Mee Har and Joan Pereira. The entourage accompanying Madame Halimah also included officials from the President's Office, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Trade and Industry, and Ministry for the Environment and Water Resources.

***"The visit of Her Excellency, who is set to meet the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman Bin Abdul Aziz and HRH Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman Bin Abdul Aziz and other Saudi High Officials, will pave the way for Singapore to contribute to the Kingdom's Vision 2030 to achieve its development goals and create investment opportunities and mutual projects in the two countries"***

***- Saudi Arabia Ambassador to Singapore  
HE Saad Saleh Al-Saleh***

## Kingdom's Ambassador: Visit will Underpin Steadfast Track of Bilateral Relations

Saudi Arabia's Ambassador to the Republic of Singapore, H.E. Saad Saleh Al-Saleh, on the eve of her visit in an interview observed that: "The relations between the KSA and the Republic are witnessing growth and development in all fields. The continuous visits between the leaderships and officials of the two countries reflect their keenness to achieve progress in bilateral relations."

Speaking of the great significance of President Halimah's impending tour he pointed out that: "The visit also reflects the level of aspirations to enhance the excellent cooperation between the two countries in order to open new paths in various fields."

"The visit of Her Excellency, who is set to meet the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman Bin Abdul Aziz and HRH Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman Bin Abdul Aziz and other Saudi High Officials, will pave the way for Singapore to contribute to the Kingdom's Vision 2030 to achieve its development goals and create investment opportunities and mutual projects in the two countries. The Kingdom is witnessing a remarkable economic transformation as it diversifies its economy away from oil" according to the Ambassador.



6th November 2019

## President Halimah Honoured with Top Saudi Civilian Award



support for Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 economic agenda and G20 Presidency in 2020. The President extended her thanks to King Salman for the honour of inviting Singapore to participate in the G20 meetings to be held in Saudi Arabia in 2020.

During her meeting with King Salman, President Halimah also used the opportunity to bring up the matter of the quota for Singaporeans allowed to perform the annual Haj pilgrimage. The Ministry of Haj and Umrah of Saudi Arabia, had last year increased the number of Singaporeans, making the pilgrimage, from 800 places in 2017 to 900 places.

The talks between the two leaders were also attended by the delegation accompanying the President as well as senior Saudi officials including Riyadh Gov. Prince Faisal bin Bandar, Minister of State Prince Mansour bin Miteb bin Abdul Aziz, Interior Minister Prince Abdul Aziz bin Saud bin Naif, Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan, Minister of State Dr. Musa'ed Al-Aiban,

Minister of Commerce and Investment Dr. Majid bin Abdullah Al-Qasabi, Minister of Finance Mohammed Al-Jadaan, and Saudi Ambassador to Singapore Saad Al-Saleh.

The monarch later hosted a celebratory luncheon at the Riyadh palace for the President Yacob and Mr Mohamed Abdullah Alhabshe.

The Singaporean President called on The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, his majesty King Salman bin Abdulaziz at the Al Yamamah Palace in Riyadh. President Halimah, who has been accorded the greatest courtesies by the Saudi government during her recent State Visit was conferred the country's highest civilian honour when HH King Salman presented her with the King Abdul Aziz medal at a glittering ceremony at the palace in Riyadh. She is the first Singaporean to receive the award.

Madam Halimah said that receiving the King Abdulaziz Medal - the highest civilian honour in Saudi Arabia - was unexpected and she felt "deeply honoured". She stressed that the award is not just about her, but reflects "how much esteem and respect the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has for Singapore, for what we stand for, our values, our efforts at progress and our ability to provide for the welfare of our people".

During the course of the meeting both leaders dwelt upon the cooperation between the two countries and affirmed their desire to build on the strength of their longstanding bilateral relations with expanding cooperation between the two nations in various fields and matters of mutual interest. The talks also focused upon Singapore's

## Singapore-Saudi Arabia Ink MOU on Water and Environment

An MOU was signed with the Ministry of the Environment and Water Resources and the Saudi Ministry of Environment, Water and Agriculture on Environmental Protection and Water Resource Management in Riyadh. This MOU builds on both the Kingdom's and Singapore's drive to tackle water scarcity and increase environmental resilience. The MOU heralds the move to strengthen the collaboration between the two nations in areas including water quality management, solid waste treatment and air pollution control. The MOU was signed by Minister for the Environment and Water Resources Masagos Zulkifli and his Saudi counterpart, Minister of Environment, Water and Agriculture Abdulrahman Al-Fadhli, in Riyadh on 6th November 2019.

5th November 2019

## Touch Down in Madinah



The Singaporean President who arrived in Madinah on November 5, 2019, was welcomed by the Governor of Madinah Region, Prince Faisal bin Salman bin Abdulaziz and other officials at the Prince Mohammed Bin Abdulaziz International Airport. The President, along with her husband and Masagos Zulkifli, Minister for the Environment and Water Resources and Minister-in-Charge of Muslim Affairs, and his wife, Madam Jumelah Ja'afar, were taken on a guided tour of the Hejaz Railway Museum in Madinah. The museum tour was part of her week-long state visit to the Middle East which took in other historical, cultural and religious sites in Medinah, including Masjid Nabawi, Uhud Mountain, Qiblatayn Mosque and Quba Mosque. President Halimah took the opportunity to share her observations about how such the exhibits were useful reminders of Islamic history to people.

The President was scheduled to later travel to Riyadh, Jeddah and Makkah, before returning to Singapore on 8th November 2019.



7th November 2019



*MOUs signed by Minister Masagos Zulkifli and his Saudi counterpart, Abdulrahman Al-Fadli, in Riyadh on 6th November 2019.*

## President Halimah in Discussions with Singapore Business Federation Delegates in Jeddah

On 7th November 2019 President Yacoub arrived in Jeddah where she received a warm welcome at the King Abdulaziz International Airport from His Royal Highness Prince Badr Bin Sultan Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Deputy Governor of Makkah Governorate.

Later in the day President Halimah met with members of the Singapore Business Federation delegation, at the Park Hyatt Jeddah Hotel. The delegation was in Riyadh and Jeddah for the Overseas Market Workshop from 3 to 8 November 2019 which was organized jointly with Enterprise Singapore (ESG), and held in conjunction with Mdm Halimah Yacob's

State Visit to the country. The delegation comprised officials from IT and infrastructure sectors looking to explore opportunities brought about by the Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 initiative which was launched in 2016. Saudi Arabia represents the biggest market in the Middle Eastern region. Its GDP reached an all-time high of US\$782.48 billion in 2018.

The business delegation of 30 business owners and C-suite personnel was led by Mr Shamsheer Zaman, Singapore's non-resident Ambassador to Jordan and also Chairman of SBF's Middle East Business Group. Meetings had been scheduled with members of the Riyadh and Jeddah Chamber of Commerce, who have expertise in a range of smart technologies, including smart urban infrastructure design and engineering, energy-efficiency, data services and software development. Saudi Arabia was Singapore's 19th largest trading partner in 2017, with bilateral trade amounting to S\$13.8 billion. And among the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, Saudi Arabia is Singapore's second-largest trading partner.



*President Halimah met with members of the Singapore Business Federation delegation in Jeddah.*

*Congratulations to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and  
Singapore on the Visit of President Halimah Yacob*

**From EXCO and All Members**



*اتحاد شركات السياحة للمسلمين في سنغافورة*

**PERSATUAN AGensi PELANCONGAN ISLAM SINGAPURA  
ASSOCIATION OF MUSLIM TRAVEL AGENTS (SINGAPORE)**





President Halimah with HRH Prince Badr Bin Sultan Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Deputy Governor of Makkah Governorate.

## President Halimah Extended Rare Privilege to Perform Umrah at Ka'aaba in Makkah

It was indeed a rare honour accorded to President of the Republic of Singapore Halimah binti Yacob when she visited the Grand Mosque at Makkah on 7th November 2019. According to a report by the Saudi Arabian Press Agency several officials welcomed her on her arrival in the holy city. Photos shared on Facebook relayed images of the President and her husband Mohamed Abdullah Alhabshee performing Umrah at the holy site. President Halimah shared how she and her entourage were granted special access to two most sacred sites of Islam—the Holy Ka'aaba at Makkah and the Raudhah at Masjid Nabawi.

## Presidential Kingdom Tour Ends with Positive Vibes and Cooperative Mood

Speaking to media during the wind-up of her hectic State Visit to Saudi Arabia President Halimah shared that the Kingdom, along with Kuwait, which she also visited on her week-long official tour of the Middle East, already has economic cooperation with Singapore in areas such as oil and gas, financial services as well as information and communications technology (ICT).

There has also been collaboration at the governmental level to create developmental opportunities, she added, citing the Memorandum of Understanding on environmental protection and water resources management that was signed with Saudi Arabia on Wednesday as one example. "Apart from that, between Saudi Arabia and us, there's also a lot of interest in so many different areas, particularly now that Saudi Arabia has launched the Vision 2030," said President Halimah.

She also shared that: "... King Salman (of Saudi Arabia) raised the idea of having a joint commission. He said we should have a joint commission in order to further our collaboration with each other, and I think that's a useful idea which we can further explore." President Halimah observed that the atmosphere she felt during the meetings were "extremely positive", and the leaders of both countries looked at Singapore as a role model as the Republic has been "very successful" in its development efforts despite its small size.

It may be noted that Singapore is the only country outside the Gulf states which has signed a Free Trade Agreement with the Gulf Cooperation Council, a regional bloc formed by six Arab states – Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar, and the UAE.

# SAUDI

# TOURISM

# EXPRESS.com

dengan kolaborasi bersama

**HOTLINE**  
**6299 2345**



CEO Mr Ayoob Angullia with Minister Masagos and fellow SBF delegates



Exclusive

Receive a  
**LIMITED EDITION  
HAVERSACK**  
Limited to the  
first 70 customers

Free & Easy

# SAUDI ARABIA

**SAUDI TOURISM EXPRESS offers**

- ✓ Tourist Visa Application
- ✓ Hotel Reservations
- ✓ Flight Bookings
- ✓ Airport Transfer
- ✓ Insurance *Saudi Tourism Medicare*
- ✓ Tour & Attraction Tickets

WHATSAPP ENQUIRIES **9346 5260**

Managed by Shahidah Travel & Tours (TA0771)  
390 Victoria Street, #01-25/26, Golden Landmark



# South Africa Ramps Up Bilateral Relations

Text and photographs by the South African High Commission in Singapore

The South African High Commission (SAHC) in Singapore has been particularly busy this year with a flurry of visitors arriving here to confabulate with their respective counterparts in various fields that are of mutual interest be it in investment, business or trade, technology, education, culture and much else. South Africa (SA) holds out the promise of many opportunities as a trade, investment and consumer hub. Africa has been identified as the 'next global frontier for investment' and the African Continental Free Trade Area is expected to boost intra-African trade and create a large market of over one billion people and a combined GDP of US\$2.2-trillion that will unlock industrial development.

## Calendar Highlights

A highpoint on 23rd May 2019 was the fulsome celebration of Africa Day joyfully attended by a huge gathering at Singapore's popular Fullerton Hotel. The visit by the ARMSCOR (acquisition agency for SA's Ministry of Defence) in June 2019 was an important landmark as meetings were set up with several Singapore companies, among them: CrimsonLogic Pte Ltd, ST Engineering and Miltrade Technologies. The meeting with the Singapore Cooperation Enterprise (SCE) was particularly significant as it involved discussions regarding cooperation in projects in Africa.

The SAHC actively participated in April's Singapore Discovery Centre International Friendship Day showcasing the country's culture, arts and produce. In July the SAHC, in collaboration with Future Ready, host the 2019 International Nelson Mandela Day with students from ASEAN. Together with the Global Youth Leader's Summit the SAHC celebrated 101 years of SA's former President's birthday followed by 67 minutes of kindness at the Bethesda Church's Care Services centre.

At the end of July the University of Pretoria's Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS) study group arrived and during their visit interactions were set up at the National University of Singapore, Nanyang Technological University and Institute of Technical Education.

The SAHC was also at the 55th NATAS Holidays (National Association of



Participants at the 2019 South Africa -Singapore Trade Seminar in November

Travel Agents Singapore) travel fair from 2nd to 4th August 2019 at the Singapore Expo. Exciting new travel packages were introduced to Singapore travellers. This was followed up in October when visitors were treated to a superb showcase of the country's many attractions at the SA Tourism event hosted at the Carlton Hotel.

November saw the visit of Premier of KwaZulu-Natal, Sihle Zikalala who met with Senior Minister of State (Transport) Dr Lam Pin Min and the Premier was briefed by PSA on Singapore's port management achievements and toured the port facilities; there were other briefings one by PUB (Public Utilities Board), Changi Airport Group. The Premier was hosted to tea by Senior Minister of State (Defence and Foreign Affairs) Dr Maliki Osman. Discussions also took place with Foreign Minister Dr Vivian Balakrishnan and Senior Minister Tharman Shanmugaratnam.

On 26th and 27th November 2019 SAHC hosted the South Africa Trade Mission Seminar which saw 18 SA companies visiting Singapore to introduce themselves and their products and services that ranged from food & beverages, wines, dried fruits and nuts, spices, health foods and supplements, jewellery and furniture. The first day had presentations by the SA visiting companies and invited speakers and on the second day One-on-One Business meetings. In December, the SAHC hosted the visit of Transnet, the large South African rail, port and pipeline company largely owned by the South African government.

## Fabric & Fashion of the Nation

### Tribal Life & Traditions

THE rich diversity of South Africa's cultural leanings, adorned by its many ethnic groups and religions, is beautifully showcased by the great variations in traditional dress forms. In African cultures, for example, age and social standing are reflected in the clothes a person wears. **Xhosa** culture has a complex dress code informed by a person's social standing, and features beautiful beadwork and printed fabrics. Traditionally, women's clothing and accessories show the different stages of life. In the **Zulu** culture women wear different attire at different stages of their lives. A single young woman wears her hair short and only a short grass-reed skirt embellished with beads, while a woman who is engaged will cover her breasts and grow her hair. The married Zulu woman covers her entire body to indicate that she is spoken for. The Zulu male habitually adorns himself with animal skins and feathers. As the leopard is much venerated as the king of all predators among the Zulu tribesmen only royalty is allowed to wear leopard skin. Headbands are only worn by married men.

The **Ndebele** community is widely renowned for its intricate beadwork and brightly coloured homes painted in striking geometric designs. The lead element of Ndebele women's wear is the apron. The Ndebele male wears animal skin aprons and beaded breast-plates or iporiyana which hangs from the neck. In the **Venda** tribe the girls traditionally wear a shedo, a small apron which covers



(Clockwise from above left): Examples of Xhosa, Zulu, Ndebele and Venda tribal wear



the groin area. Venda boys and men traditionally wear a loin-cloth called a tsindi. The tsindi is a triangular piece of animal skin covering the front, passed between the legs and tied at the back. The **Tsonga-Shangaan** tribe, an offshoot of the Zulu tribe, mainly inhabits southern Mozambique and the northern provinces of South Africa. Traditionally, Tsonga men wear animal skins, while the women wear beads and colourful gathered skirts called xibelani, which shake when they dance. **Indian** and **Cape Malay** South Africans usually wear Western clothing in everyday life but reserve traditional clothes such as saris for special occasions.



# Sri Lanka-Singapore Vibrant Partnership

Text and photographs by the Sri Lankan High Commission Singapore

The conversation continues to focus on greater understanding and cooperation on matters both regional and global, to nourish an age old partnership

President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, Maithripala Sirisena delivered the Keynote Address at the Third Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific jointly organised by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Ministry for the Environment and Water Resources of Singapore.

During his visit from 23-25 January 2019, President Sirisena was hosted for a luncheon by his Singapore counterpart, President Madam Halimah Yacob at the Istana. The two leaders reaffirmed the friendship and exchanged views on areas of mutual interest.

President Sirisena also met with Prime Minister of Singapore, Lee Hsien Loong and discussed several matters of mutual interest and cooperation with a view to further enhancing the growing bilateral relations between the two countries.

## Preparations for 50th Anniversary Celebrations

The newly appointed High Commissioner Sashikala Premawardhane paid an introductory courtesy call on Hon Dr Vivian Balakrishnan, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Singapore on 13 September 2019. Discussions were held on augmenting political and economic relations between the two countries particularly in view of the milestone in bilateral relations i.e. the 50th anniversary of Diplomatic Relations coming up in 2020.

## Sri Lankan FinTech Companies Participate in the Singapore Fintech Festival (SFF) 2019

Funded by the Economic Diplomacy Programme of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 12 Sri Lankan FinTech companies participated in the Singapore Fintech Festival (SFF) 2019, following a successful project proposal submitted by the Sri Lanka High Commission in Singapore. This is the first occasion on which Sri Lanka participated at the Festival.

DFN Technology, VizuaMatix, Fortunaglobal, Potenza, Linearsix and Chakray of Sri Lanka exhibited their innovative



(Above): President Maithripala Sirisena met President Halimah Yacob during his visit in January and delivered the Keynote Address at the UN-organised forum of ministers and environment authorities in Singapore. (Right): High Commissioner Sashikala Premawardhane paid an introductory call on Singapore's Foreign Minister Dr Vivian Balakrishnan

financial solutions at this year's Sri Lanka booth under the theme "Island of Ingenuity – Knowledge Solutions". Several other companies such as Varacity AI, ILoan Lanka, Somro BPO, Web Lanka, Ceylon Linux, and BoardPac participated in the conference as delegates.



## Fabric & Fashion of the Nation

### Traditional Dresses Showcase Rich Cultural Diversity

HAVING a diverse population with Sinhalese, Sri Lankan Tamil, Indian Tamil, Sri Lankan Muslim, Sri Lankan Malay and Burghers, Sri Lanka's traditional dresses vary between the ethnicities.

While the Sinhala and Tamil men wear the Sarong with a long or short sleeved shirt as their traditional dress, the women wear the Saree or variations - such as the traditional Kandyan saree known as "Osariya". However, the Sinhalese men have a special traditional dress called "Mul Anduma" which is worn only at ceremonial occasions.

The Sri Lankan Muslim and Burgher traditional dresses are quite similar to that of the Muslim and Burgher communities found across India and South East Asia.

Originated in Indonesia and introduced to Sri Lanka by Dutch at the turn of the 19th century, the batik industry in Sri Lanka has

matured into a unique form of textile art exclusive to the country.

Batik textile manufacturing in Sri Lanka has now become deep rooted into the local culture and many talented local Batik artists have developed uniquely Sri Lankan Batik Designs, which are much sought after by the locals as well as tourists. Apart from producing garments of art, the local designers have used batik in producing vibrantly coloured lamp shades, linen, tapestry and upholstery.

Many shops and stalls selling the variations of Sri Lanka's colourful batik tradition can be found near many tourist attractions, and in designer shops in Colombo.



# Swissness in Singapore

Text and photographs by the Embassy of Switzerland in Singapore

Swiss presence runs deep in Singapore with strong cooperation in the field of education, science and technology



*Singapore Delegation with Heng Swee Keat, Deputy Prime Minister of Singapore and H.E. Fabrice Filliez, Ambassador of Switzerland to Singapore visiting the Abbey of Saint Gall, a UNESCO World Heritage Site in St. Gallen, Switzerland*

Ever since Swiss merchants started trade in the mid-19th century, ties between the two states have continuously strengthened. The Swiss Embassy in Singapore covers all matters of international and bilateral relations, ranging from politics, public and consular affairs, economy, finance and security to science and technology, education, and culture.

## Highlights of 2019

The year 2019 has seen various political and diplomatic highlights. In January, the **St. Gallen Symposium Singapore Forum** brought together local stakeholders to discuss how capital can better serve the needs of society. For the main event in May, the 49th St. Gallen Symposium, Singapore's Deputy Prime Minister Heng Swee Keat visited Switzerland as a guest of honour. As for engagements in international cooperation, Switzerland is an active member of the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF), supporting i.a. its annual human rights seminar. In June, Ambassador Fabrice Filliez was elected by ASEF's Board of Governors as a member of ASEF's Executive Committee responsible for determining ASEF's strategic objectives and enhancing its performance. 2019 also marked the 70th anniversary of the 1949 Geneva Conventions. To provide greater awareness of humanitarian law and examine challenges to protecting civilians in armed conflicts, the embassy jointly organised a seminar with the Singapore Red Cross Society in September. Lastly, we cordially thank the Singapore Civil Defence Force (SCDF) for presenting the Humanitarian Aid Branch of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation this year's Strategic Partner Award at the SCDF Parade in November.

## Areas of Cooperation

Switzerland and Singapore are committed to strong cooperation in the field of education, science and technology. On numerous occasions, Ambassador Filliez has presented the **Swiss Vocational and Professional Education and Training** system to local institutions. Regarding higher education, exciting developments include the launch of the world's top hotel school Ecole Hôtelière de Lausanne's (EHL) first overseas campus in the Lion City. With other highly ranked institutes such as the Singapore-ETH Centre, the Sankt Gallen Institute of Management in Asia (SGI-HSG) and the International Institute for Management Development (IMD) already in place, the EHL builds on a strong presence of Swiss academic excellence and further strengthens Swiss-Singapore relations in education and innovation. Another great platform for innovation exchange was the annual **Fintech Festival** in November. Inaugurated by Ms Daniela Stoffel, State Secretary for International Finance of Switzerland, the Swiss Pavilion showcased 24 fintech companies this year. In addition, State



*Ambassador Filliez receiving the Strategic Partner Award 2019 from Singapore Minister for Manpower & Second Minister for Home Affairs Josephine Teo at the Singapore Civil Defence Parade. (Source: Singapore Civil Defence Force)*



***Exciting developments include the launch of the world's top hotel school Ecole Hôtelière de Lausanne's (EHL) first overseas campus in the Lion City. With other highly ranked institutes such as the Singapore-ETH Centre, the Sankt Gallen Institute of Management in Asia and the International Institute for Management Development already in place, the EHL builds on a strong presence of Swiss academic excellence and further strengthens Swiss-Singapore relations in education and innovation***

Secretary Stoffel participated in a high-level panel on policy choices for the digital economy in a plenary session.

### Cultural Stage

On the cultural stage, we organised for the first time a week-long Swiss-themed festival in April. The **Swiss Week** featured a diverse range of activities, bringing Swiss craft and culture closer to the local communities. Amongst others, visitors could admire design work by students from the University of Art and Design Lausanne (ECAL) and learn about Mario Botta's architectural career. We also shared the Swiss community's enthusiasm for hiking through a Swiss-Singapore-themed trail at Bukit Timah nature reserve. Later in the year, we jointly organised with Sport SG the annual **Switzerland-Singapore Football** festival. Finally, with screenings of the Swiss-related documentaries 'The Chinese Lives of Uli Sigg', 'Encordés', 'Eldorado', and 'Genesis 2.0' and concerts by Sophie de Quay & the Waveguards and Rahel Senn, we have infused Singapore with welcomed doses of Swissness. We look forward to many more fruitful collaborations in the coming years.



*Switzerland-Singapore Football Festival 2019 award ceremony: (From l to r): Mr Kon Yin Tong, Chairman Sport Singapore, Ambassador Fabrice Filliez, Ms Sim Ann, SMS Senior Minister of State, Mr Tan Cheng Han, Deputy Chairman Sport Singapore, Mr Aleksandar Đurić, Principal ActiveSG Football Academy. (Source: Joel Brunner, Embassy of Switzerland)*

## Fabric & Fashion of the Nation

### Switzerland's Rich History of Textile Innovation



*Swiss innovative textile embroidery is well-sought after in today's fashion design world. Source: [www.myswitzerland.com](http://www.myswitzerland.com)*

It may astonish modern readers that the first commodities transported from Switzerland to Singapore in the late 1830s were not watches, but textiles. Known for its bright colours and quality prints, fabric from eastern Switzerland was particularly well-liked in Southeast Asia. From Singapore, the goods would be further brought to other places in the region. In the mid-19th century, Singapore even became Switzerland's most important destination for textile exports.

Swiss textile was not just popular in Asia. With the invention of embroidery machines, Switzerland was among the world's largest export regions for embroidery in the beginning of the 20th century. Today, Swiss companies are still global leaders in the supply of textiles embroidery. Using modern machinery to create innovative materials of high quality, textiles from eastern Switzerland such as St. Gallen is sought after among leading fashion designers. The creations are worn by many celebrities, including the former first lady of the United States Michelle Obama, who wore St. Gallen embroidery at the inauguration ceremony of her husband in 2009. Fashion shows in metropolitan cities routinely present haute couture made of Swiss fabrics.

Nowadays, the Swiss textiles industry continues building on its inclination to innovate by focusing on textile technologies and high-tech engineering. Textile firms, some of them more than 100-year old family businesses, have created research development departments and collaborate with universities. High-tech textile initiatives involve projects led by the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne (EPFL) and in Zurich (ETHZ). Applications include, for example, the integration of nanosensors into fabric to measure physiological signs, such as heart rate and blood pressure. As the production of classic fabrics has moved elsewhere, Switzerland has specialised in the development of smart textiles. Building on a history of rich textile innovation, Swiss companies constantly reinvent themselves in a new world of textile where smart technologies meet everyday fabric.

# A Free and Open Indo-Pacific: Advancing a Shared Vision in 2019

Text and photographs by U.S. Embassy Singapore

**F**or more than half a century, the United States and Singapore have forged an expansive and enduring relationship based on mutual economic interests, robust security and defense cooperation, and strong people-to-people ties. The cooperation between the United States and Singapore goes beyond the borders of our two countries as we collaborate to address global threats and challenges and as we promote a free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific.

In a move to demonstrate U.S. continued commitment to the regional security architecture, President Donald Trump and Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong signed the Protocol of Amendment to the 1990 Memorandum of Understanding (“1990 MOU”) Regarding United States Use of Facilities in Singapore (“2019 AMOU”) in New York in September. The 2019 AMOU renews the 1990 MOU by extending it for another 15 years, facilitating United States forces’ access to Singapore’s air and naval bases. Underpinning the U.S. security presence in the region for almost 30 years, the renewal of this document underscores the support for United States’ presence in the Indo-Pacific region, which remains vital for regional peace, stability and prosperity.

Prime Minister Lee, speaking during the MOU signing ceremony, said, “It reflects our very good cooperation in defense matters between the United States and Singapore,

and also the broader cooperation we have in so many other fields — in security, in economics, in counterterrorism, and in culture and education, as well.”

## Indo-Pacific Commitment

Less than a month after the signing ceremony, the USS Ronald Reagan aircraft carrier pulled into Singapore, its first port visit on its current patrol and the first by an aircraft carrier to Singapore in 18 months. The 6,000 sailors of the Ronald Reagan Strike Group, as members of the Forward Deployed Naval Forces of the U.S. Navy, underscore the United States’ commitment to Singapore and the Indo-Pacific region, with ASEAN at its heart.

Just as our security partnership strengthens stability in the region, the strong presence of U.S. businesses in Singapore supports our shared prosperity. There are 4,500 American businesses in Singapore which

***PM Lee: “It (2019 AMOU) reflects our very good cooperation in defense matters between the United States and Singapore, and also the broader cooperation we have in so many other fields — in security, in economics, in counterterrorism, and in culture and education, as well.”***



(Above): Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong and President Donald J. Trump at a bilateral meeting and MOU signing ceremony in New York on 23rd September 2019

(Background): USS Ronald Reagan arrives in Singapore on a routine port visit on 17th October 2019







Secretary of Commerce Wilbur L. Ross calls on Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong at the Istana on 8th October 2019 (Photo: Ministry of Communication and Information)

invest over a quarter trillion in Singapore dollars, more than any other nation, in the local economy. Besides the financial investment, American businesses produce high quality goods and services, contribute to Singapore's community through corporate social responsibility initiatives, nurture the workforce, and promote values such as diversity, inclusion, anti-corruption, and rule of law.

The U.S. Embassy continues to strengthen our people-to-people ties through exchanges such as the US-SG Summer Exchange



Welcoming Rafik Mansour, Chargé d'Affaires on 31st July 2019

Scholarship Programme, the Fulbright Program, the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP), and the Young South East Asian Leadership Initiative (YSEALI). In 2019, students, teachers, scholars, and professionals continued to travel between our two countries on these exchange programs to further our mutual understanding and deepen our collaborations. Thousands of Singaporeans are pursuing higher education at American universities and the numbers are on an upward trend. In addition, the U.S. Embassy works closely with cultural, educational, and community organizations across Singapore to partner on programs that showcase American culture and that promote our shared values.

## Fabric & Fashion of the Nation

### Many Styles But Denim, Flannel, Sneakers, Cowboy Hat & Boots Are Very Popular

LIKE Singapore, the United States of America is a melting pot of different cultures, races, religions, and fashions. There is no one national costume, but geography, seasons, and trends shape clothing preference. While there are regional differences between East, West, North, and South, all are quintessentially American.

Over the years, various styles have come and gone, but there are a few fabrics that have withstood the test of time in the U.S. One is denim. Most Americans own a pair of jeans, a popular clothing choice since Levi Strauss patented the modern style of jeans in San Francisco in 1873. Denim can also be made into jackets, shorts, and more and come in various colours, cuts, and lengths. They can even be bleached or ripped for more of a grunge look.



The United States is also famous for its sneakers. Many countries around the world sell major American brands which are worn by people of all ages. Some people decorate their sneakers or customize them to their liking, choosing from a rainbow of colors and styles. Sneakers are beloved by most for their comfort and quality. Another timeless fabric is flannel. In the cold

months flannel sheets are cozy, as are flannel pajamas, but most popular is often the classic and unisex button-down flannel shirt. This is a piece of clothing that many dads from around the country have never stopped wearing, and teenagers now have started wearing again, reviving a similar look from the 1990s. Flannel has even made an appearance at "Red Flannel Runs" around the country.



Numerous corners of the United States embrace the cowboy look with leather boots and big hats. John Stetson created the original hat of the pioneering American West in 1865. This Western hat is still in production today, and the cowboy hat and boots are a quintessential American look.



Often you can tell what someone's favorite sports team or alma mater is just by observing what they are wearing. Americans regularly wear clothing with a logo or name on it. This can serve as a talking point when you meet friendly Americans.



# Uzbekistan-Singapore: Cooperation and Collaborations

*Text and photographs by the Embassy of Uzbekistan in Singapore*

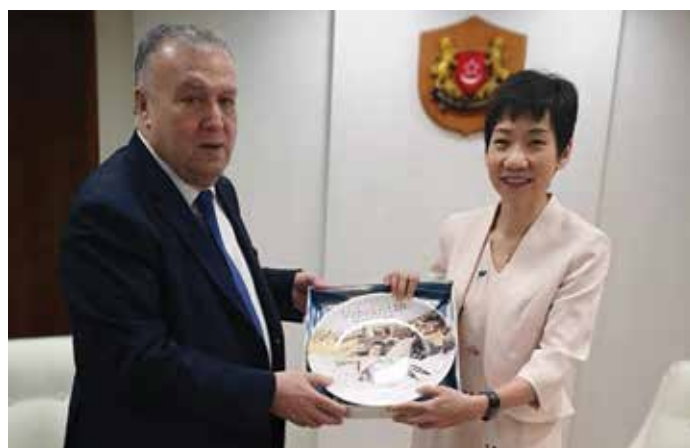
Both nations, based on their commitment to productive interactions over the years, are on a sure footing when it comes to projecting even stronger ties in times to come



(Above left): Senior Minister of State Dr Maliki Osman met with Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdulaziz Kamilov during his visit to Uzbekistan in April 2019. (Above right): Uzbekistan's Minister of Preschool Education, Agrepina Shin (centre) met with Mr Desmond Lee Singapore's Minister for Social and Family Development & Second Minister for National Development in November 2019

**M**any high level bilateral visits and delegations marked the diplomatic calendar of the Republic of Uzbekistan's Embassy in Singapore. Several major highlights included the visit of Uzbekistan Minister of Culture, Bakhtiyor Sayfullayev and his delegation to Singapore in March. He called on his Singapore counterpart, the Minister for Culture, Community and Youth, Grace Fu (pictured right), where they exchanged views on ways to strengthen cultural relations between the two countries.

In the following month, Singapore's Senior Minister of State (SMS), Ministry of Defence and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dr Mohamad Maliki bin Osman, made his introductory visit to the Republic of Uzbekistan from 2th to 5th April 2019. In Tashkent, SMS Maliki called on Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance Jamshid Kuchkarov and acknowledged the growing cooperation between Singapore and Uzbekistan in sectors such as tourism, business and education. He also met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr Abdulaziz Kamilov.



Then for the first time in the country's modern history the International Legal Forum 'Tashkent Law Spring' was held from 25th to 27th April 2019. It brought together the heads of national and foreign state bodies, as well as representatives of international organizations, the world's leading legal and consulting firms, experts and specialists in the field of law. This included Singapore's Senior Minister of State for Law and Health, Edwin Tong Chun Fai who was one of the speakers at the event.

On 8th August 2019 on the sidelines of the Singapore Convention Signing Ceremony and Conference, Singapore's Minister for Home Affairs and Minister for Law Mr K Shanmugam SC and Senior Minister of State for Law Mr Edwin Tong, SC held bilateral meetings with Uzbekistan's Deputy Minister of Justice Akbar Tashkulov, where they reaffirmed their warm relations and close and longstanding bilateral legal relations between Singapore and Uzbekistan.

On the cultural front, the Embassy helped organise a major exhibition titled 'Cultural Evening of Uzbekistan' on 5th August 2019 on the resort island of Sentosa. Leading figures in Uzbek fashion, food and art displayed the best that



Singapore's Senior Minister of State for Law and Health, Edwin Tong Chun Fai with Uzbekistan Minister of Justice, Ruslanbek Davletov at the Tashkent Law Spring





(Above & left): Cultural Evening of Uzbekistan - a major showcase of food, fashion and art held on the resort island of Sentosa; appointment of Mr Philip Tan Uzbekistan's MICE Tourism Ambassador in Singapore



Uzbekistan hosted the signing ceremony of the Cooperation Agreement between the country's State Committee for Tourism Development and Singapore-based S.E.A. Business Centre Pte Ltd

country has to offer. During the event Ambassador Shakirov also awarded Mr Philip Tan a certificate as the Uzbek MICE Tourism Ambassador in Singapore.

In October the Embassy, together with the Ministry of Culture of Uzbekistan, held the opening ceremony of the "Corner of Uzbek Culture in Singapore" at the island's leading arts college of contemporary arts - LASALLE College of the Arts. The showcase of Uzbek culture contains a comprehensive collection of resource materials. The Cultural Corner is intended to strengthen practical cooperation between the two countries, as well as expand their cultural and emotional common interests as well as promoting the tourism potential of Uzbekistan.

A delegation led by the Minister of Preschool Education, Agrepina Shin visited

Singapore from 5th to 9th November 2019 to establish partnerships with ministries and academic departments of Singapore in the field of preschool education and get acquainted with its development system in the public and private sectors. They met Singapore's Second Minister of Education (Minister in the Prime Minister's Office) Ms Indrani Raja to discuss approaches and principles in the field of early development of children and visited various pre-education facilities in Singapore.

In the area of the promotion of Uzbek tourism, the Ambassador of the Uzbekistan Embassy in Singapore Kakhramon Shakirov, with invited members of the Singapore travel trade launched witnessed the signing and launch of a Cooperation Agreement between Uzbekistan's State Committee for Tourism Development and Singapore-based S.E.A. Business Center Pte Ltd to establish the Uzbekistan-Singapore Tourism Centre in Singapore on 29th February 2019.

## Fabric & Fashion of the Nation

### Uzbek Fashion: A Marriage of the Old and the New

A country's traditional costume in Central Asia still remains an important component of cultural, ethnic and religious identity, even as younger people follow western fashions.

Uzbek clothes are often made of cotton\* and women's clothes in particular feature a blending of colorful stripes and patterns and are made with shiny silk and cotton "Ikat" (cloth handwoven into simple patterns). Uzbek men wear buttonless robes reaching the knee, with oblique collars and the right side of the front on top of the other. The robe is tied with a triangular embroidered girdle. Women wear broad and pleated dresses without girdles.

It's interesting to note that when one talks of Uzbekistan's textile industry, cotton continues to be a fabric of choice; the current capacity of annual cotton production in the country is 1.4 million tons, of which about 60% is used to meet the demand of domestic textile companies. Presently, more than 150 textile and garment manufacturing facilities are active in Uzbekistan, of these 50 are operating with 100% foreign capital. Textile and garment enterprises account for 4.6% of the country's GDP.



The basis of national men's suit is a chapam, the quilted robe, tied with a kerchief. Traditional men's cap is "Doppi". "Kuyrak" is the men's straight cut undershirt. "Ishton" is men's wide trousers, narrowed at ankles. Traditional footwear is high-boots, made of thin leather. Shirts are worn everywhere, but men from the Fergana Valley and Tashkent region wear a "Yakhtak" — a wrap shirt. Both these styles were created from homespun cotton cloth and feature a moderate aesthetics in a form of a decorated miniature braiding- "Jiyak", stitched along the collar.

Traditional Uzbek female clothes consisted of traditional robe, functional dress made of satin, and "lozim" - wide, light trousers narrowing in lower part. The long, loose tunic had wide sleeves reaching to the wrists. Loose-cut pants were often made of the same fabric as the tunic, or out of complementary fabric. The bottom of the pants was gathered and decorated with embroidered braid. Women's coats were similar to men's "Chapon". For centuries cotton has been used extensively for clothing in Uzbekistan. Home-woven striped and white cotton have always been the most common fabrics for everyday wear. Today the country's leading brands are Anor, Ideal, Moel Bosh, Pimkie, Respect and many more.

## Fabric &amp; Fashion of the Nation

# Venezuela Fashion: International Trend Setters

*Text and photographs by the Embassy of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in Singapore*

## Fabric

Located on top of South America, Venezuela offers a privileged geostrategic location for any company wishing to establish a fabrics hub in the American continent. Types of clothing and derived fashions in Venezuela are very extensive because though its climate is mainly tropical, its topography is highly varied — thus allowing for multiple options for garments that can be worn throughout the year, being quite reliant on the specific climate of each location.

Nevertheless, most popular fabrics in the country tend to be lightweight and fresh-looking, highlighting the use of cotton, linen, silk, wools and composites, worn in conjunction with leather, metals and accessories.

## National Dress

The National Dress of the Venezuelan man is called “Liqui-Liqui”, and features a trouser and a jacket. This combination can be made from fabrics such as linen, cotton, gabardine, or wool. Colours are mostly light (white, cream, beige) but black is also used for evening wear. Trousers are full-length and straight-cut. The jacket has long sleeves and a rounded stand-up collar (often compared to Nehru and Mao style collars, but firmer). The collar is fastened by a chain link, similar to a cufflink called “junta”. This collar is the distinctive feature of Venezuelan traditional jacket, which has 5-6 buttons and 0-4 pockets. There is also a “Liqui Liqui” version for women; it consists in a jacket with long sleeves, which can be teamed with either pants or long/short skirt.

The shoes, named alpargatas, are gender open. The hat is a detail added to the man's suit.

Venezuelan women use very feminine garments. They traditionally wear long flowing skirts, blouses with one or both off-the-shoulder sleeves (or a similar one-piece dress), a lot of flowers and simple jewellery pieces (beaded necklaces and bracelets, earrings, flower hair clips) that reflects Amerindian, African and Spanish influence.

Women usually use a dress with a ruffle on top, which is, mostly, all white in the background and boasts highly colourful added details, giving way to contrast and brilliance.

Venezuela makes its typical costume contrast very well between men and women and closely represents the mixed culture that the country has and showcases with great pride.



*National dress: Male Liqui Liqui and female Liqui Liqui dress*

## Fashions

The fashion industry in Venezuela is legendary. Venezuela (a crucible of cultures which stands out as a window to Latin America and the Caribbean) has been for many decades an ideal media hub for portraying fashion trends, not just for Venezuelans alone, but for foreigners also. As with other arts and disciplines, Venezuelan fashion conveys deep Amerindian, African and European blueprints.

Names such as Carolina Herrera, Ángel Sánchez,

Mayela Camacho, Giovanni Scutaro and Style Mafia are just some of the most famous designers and brands keenly sought after by the likes of Meryl Streep, Lady Gaga, Taylor Swift, Sandra Bullock, Queen Letizia, Michelle Obama, etc. Numerous Venezuelan designers, models, hosts and actors have grown professionally in Venezuela, a country known as one of the most competitive for its robust beauty-contests industry, TV media consumption and top runways — all of which ultimately leaves the impress of a highly positive influence.

***The fashion industry in Venezuela is legendary... Names such as Carolina Herrera, Ángel Sánchez, Mayela Camacho, Giovanni Scutaro and Style Mafia are just some of the most famous designers and brands keenly sought after by the likes of Meryl Streep, Lady Gaga, Taylor Swift, Sandra Bullock, Queen Letizia, Michelle Obama, etc.***







Published by





## THE COMPANY WE KEEP

***A Note of  
Thanks...  
to the many  
advertisers  
who have  
supported  
Sun Media  
publications***

21st Century Employment Pte Ltd ■ Aask Advisory ■ Unity Communications Malaysia Sdn Bhd) UEM Land Berhad ■ Aderco ■ AEON Medical and Aesthetic Centre ■ Aetos Holdings Pte Ltd ■ Agencia de Promocao de Exportacoes do Brasil ■ Air India ■ Alkanaah International Tours and Travel Pte Ltd ■ AMTAS ■ Angeline Suparto Law Corporation ■ Apex Brasil ■ Aramco Asia Singapore Pte Ltd ■ Art of Living ■ Art of Living Foundation Ltd (Singapore) ■ Asiana ■ Association of Muslim Travel Agents (Singapore) ■ AT&S Group ■ Australian International School Singapore ■ Ayalaland ■ Bago Laboratories Pte Ltd ■ Bangladesh HC ■ BB Securities ■ BCDA ■ BDO Unibank Inc ■ Bintan Lagoon Resort ■ Bishwo Holdings ■ Bodywork Concepts Pte Ltd ■ BOMC ■ Bracell Ltd Bracell-Sateri (Specialty Cellulose Marketing Pte Ltd) ■ Braskem ■ BRF Singapore Foods Pte Ltd ■ British Council (Singapore) ■ Brunphill ■ CBMM Asia Pte Ltd ■ Changi Airports International ■ Chubb Insurance ■ Comida Fiesta Pte Ltd ■ Creative Flavours Fragrances ■ Dr. Lynn Lim ■ Dr. Marco Faria Correa ■ Duane Morris ■ Eco Tropics Development Sdn Bhd ■ Eco World Project Management Sdn Bhd ■ EcoFRENZ ■ Edmond Tie & Company ■ Educare International Consultancy Pte Ltd ■ Edward J. Benjamin Optometrist ■ Ethiopian Airlines ■ Eurofarma Ampliando Horizontes ■ Fairmacs Multiline Singapore Pte Ltd ■ FAMA ■ Farrer Park Hospital ■ Federal Agricultural Marketing Authority ■ FEMA ■ Forbes Marshall ■ Forship Asia ■ Fortress Intelligence Pte Ltd ■ Fouzy Travel and Tours Pte Ltd ■ Frasers Suites River Valley, Singapore ■ Future Enterprise ■ Future Enterprises Pte Ltd ■ Gallant Ventures Ltd ■ Gazprom Marketing and Trading Singapore ■ GCF ■ Global Indian International School Pte Ltd ■ Golden Image Services Pte Ltd ■ Great World Serviced Apartments ■ Green Rubber One Sdn Bhd ■ HARPS Holding Pte Ltd ■ Hindu Endowments Board ■ Hwa Chong International School ■ Hydrochem (S) Pte Ltd ■ Hyflux ■ ICN Cultural Production 2015 ■ India Tourism ■ India Tourism Board, Singapore ■ Indorama ■ Invest KL Malaysia ■ ISIN International Pte Ltd ■ ISS International School ■ ITE Education Services Pte Ltd ■ Jababeka ■ JBS International College ■ Jewellery Design and Management International School ■ Keppel FELS Ltd ■ Keppel Land ■ Lawry's The Prime Rib Singapore Pte Ltd ■ Leverate Media Asia Pte Ltd ■ LIC ■ London School of Business & Finance ■ London School of Public Relations ■ Long Beach Seafood Restaurant ■ Management Development Institute of Singapore ■ Mandarin Tour Pte Ltd ■ Mandiri Bank ■ Marshall Cavendish ■ May Bank ■ MC Corporate Services ■ MDIS ■ MDIS Campus ■ Mendis Aesthetics & Surgery ■ Mendis Aesthetics Pte Ltd ■ Merlin Entertainments Singapore Pte Ltd ■ Metasport ■ MGCS ■ Mitsubishi Gas Chemical Singapore Pte Ltd ■ Moratel International Pte Ltd ■ Mount Alvernia Hospital ■ Mount Elizabeth Medical Centre ■ MTN Consultants ■ Mustafa Centre ■ National University Hospital (S) Pte Ltd ■ Noor Mohamad SVS & Travel Pte Ltd ■ NPS ■ NPSI ■ Olam International Ltd ■ Overseas Family School ■ Parkway Hospitals ■ Petrosearch Pte Ltd ■ Philippines Airlines ■ Pinehill Investments Pte Ltd ■ Precious Treasure Pte Ltd (The Fullerton Hotel Singapore) ■ Prestige Management Services ■ Propnex ■ PSA India Pte Ltd ■ PSA international ■ PT Indofood Cbt Sukses Makmur Tbk ■ Raffles American School ■ Raffles Relocation & Mobility Pte Ltd ■ Ritz G5 Ritz Property ■ Riyadh Bank ■ Rosatom ■ Rotary Engineering Limited ■ Ruby Rashid Travel & Tours Pte Ltd ■ Rwanda High Commission ■ S A Shahab & Co Pte Ltd ■ SABIC Asia Pacific Pte Ltd ■ Sapiens Global Pte Ltd ■ Sarab Kapoor ■ Sari Ratu Restaurant ■ Saudi Arabian Airlines ■ Saudi Global Ports (PSA) ■ SBI Singapore ■ Sculptured Bodies (The Personal Training Gym) ■ Sea Trucks Netherlands Coop UA ■ Seara Singapore Pte Ltd ■ SECC ■ Secretariat Beautiful Terengganu ■ Sembcorp Marine Ltd ■ Sembcorp Parks Management ■ Shahidah Travel & Tours ■ Shinagawa Eye Centre ■ SICCI ■ Singapore DSS Pte Ltd ■ Singapore Health Services Pte Ltd ■ Singapore Indian Fine Arts Society ■ Singapore Technologies Aerospace Ltd ■ Singhealth Services ■ Sixtnc ■ Smile Focus ■ Sonia Portuguese Language Services Pte Ltd ■ Spacetime Technology ■ SSA Consulting Group ■ Stamford American International School ■ Starhealth Pte Ltd ■ Sun Caged Consulting ■ Surbana Jurong Pte Ltd ■ Surgery Centre Pte Ltd ■ Swiber Holdings Ltd ■ Tambuah Mas Indonesian Restaurant ■ Tankstore ■ The Sole Clinic Pte Ltd ■ Times Group ■ TM Fouzy Travel & Tours Pte Ltd ■ Tolaram Corporation Pte Ltd ■ Tourism Malaysia ■ Transocean Singapore Pte Ltd ■ Tri-Ways Tours & Travel ■ Unity communications Malaysia Sdn Bhd ■ Universal Travel Corporation Pte Ltd ■ Urah Transdermal Pte Ltd ■ UWC SEA ■ V Cargo Cloud ■ Vale International ■ VFS (Singapore) Pte Ltd ■ VFS Global ■ Vista Residences Inc. ■ Wheelock Properties ■ YTL Powerseraya Pte Ltd ■ Zee TV ■ Zenith Optimedia ■ Zicom Equipment Pte Ltd

**Sun Media Pte Ltd** is a publisher for a host of publications that reach consumers, businesses, industries and embassies in Singapore including community and lifestyle magazines such as **IndoConnect** and **Shikhar**. If you have a product, service or message to reach a unique highly profiled reading audience - in print & online - call us to find out how we can help you in **your** advertising and promotional programmes. Email: [accounts@sunmediaonline.com](mailto:accounts@sunmediaonline.com) or call tel: (65) 6735 2972