

Singapore national day

Bilateral ties, win-win cooperation continue to strengthen

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AMBASSADOR OF SINGAPORE



Singapore celebrates the 48th anniversary of our independence today, Aug. 9. Japan was one of the first countries to establish diplomatic relations with Singapore following our independence in 1965, and our ties have broadened and deepened over the following decades.

Our political relations have continued to strengthen through frequent high-level exchanges between our two countries. Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong made an official bilateral visit to Japan in May this year. During his visit, Prime Minister Lee renewed his relations with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and other political and business leaders, and delivered a keynote speech at the 19th International Conference on the Future of Asia organized by Nikkei Inc. and the Japan Center for Economic Research. Prime Minister Abe visited Singapore this July, where he delivered the 33rd Singapore Lecture on Japan's economic policies. My prime minister will be visiting Japan again this De-



Deepening bonds: Left, Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong meets with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on May 22 in Tokyo during his visit to Japan. Right, the Isobe Community Centre, funded by donations raised by Singaporeans, opens on July 13 in Soma, Fukushima Prefecture. SINGAPORE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION / SINGAPORE EMBASSY

ember to attend the Commemorative Summit for the 40th anniversary of the establishment of ASEAN-Japan relations.

Earlier this year, Minister, Prime Minister's Office, Second Minister for the Environment and Water Resources and Second Minister for Foreign Affairs Grace Fu led the Singapore delegation to the ninth Japan-Singapore Symposium in March. During the conference, politicians, government officials, academics, businessmen and media representatives from both countries had in-depth discussions on global and regional developments and on how to further strengthen our bilateral

cooperation. Emeritus Senior Minister Goh Chok Tong had a good exchange of views with key Japanese political leaders and businessmen when he was here, also in March. From Japan, Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida visited Singapore this January as part of his inaugural overseas trips.

At the people-to-people level, Singapore's support for Japan's reconstruction and recovery efforts in the areas affected by the March 11th disasters has continued to bear fruit. In May this year, Senior Parliamentary Secretary for Foreign Affairs and Culture, Community and Youth Sam Tan officiated at the open-



ing of the Shichigahama Toyama Nursery School in Shichigahama Town, Miyagi Prefecture, one of four rebuilding projects in the Tohoku region funded by donations raised by Singaporeans in the immediate aftermath of the disasters. We opened the Isobe Community Centre in Soma City, Fukushima Prefecture, this July. Although these contributions from Singapore are small given the massive scale of the disasters, we hope that they will go some way in meeting the needs of the local communities and serve as lasting symbols of the strong bond between the peoples of Singapore and Japan.

On the economic front, our

linkages have remained strong. Singapore is Japan's third largest cumulative investment destination in Asia. Singapore is also Japan's third largest source of cumulative direct foreign investment between 1996 and 2012. Both countries are conducting the third review of the Japan-Singapore Economic Partnership Agreement (JSEPA). The updated agreement arising from the current review will bring about even greater economic benefits to both countries.

Singapore warmly welcomes the Abe administration's clear policy to step up Japan's economic engagement with ASEAN countries, and we stand ready

to do what we can to help facilitate the process. Driven by a confluence of interests, Japanese investments in the region, already on the rise, will receive a further boost. We look forward to the Commemorative Summit to be held in Tokyo in December, which promises to be a milestone event. With regards to Japan's participation in the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) negotiations, Singapore has always been supportive. As the third largest economy in the world and given its crucial role in the development of the Asia-Pacific, Japan's participation will further strengthen the strategic and economic significance of the agreement, and bring us closer to the establishment of a Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific (FTAAP).

The close cooperation between Singapore and Japan extends to regional and multilateral forums, including the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), East Asia Summit (EAS), ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), among others. Singapore and Japan are also working together to provide technical assistance to other countries, through the Japan-Singapore Partnership Programme for the 21st Century (JSP21).

I have had the opportunity to visit many parts of Japan since taking up my post in April last year. My visits and conversations

with Japanese leaders, officials and businessmen have deepened my conviction that there remains much scope for win-win cooperation between Singapore

and Japan. I am confident that our long-standing relationship and multifaceted cooperation with Japan will continue to grow from strength to strength.

***Congratulations
to the People of
the Republic of Singapore
on the 48th Anniversary
of Their Independence***



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