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Warming Up

There is sporting action aplenty here ahead of the 2015 SEA Games



Shooting Stars

Team Singapore's Commonwealth Games heroes

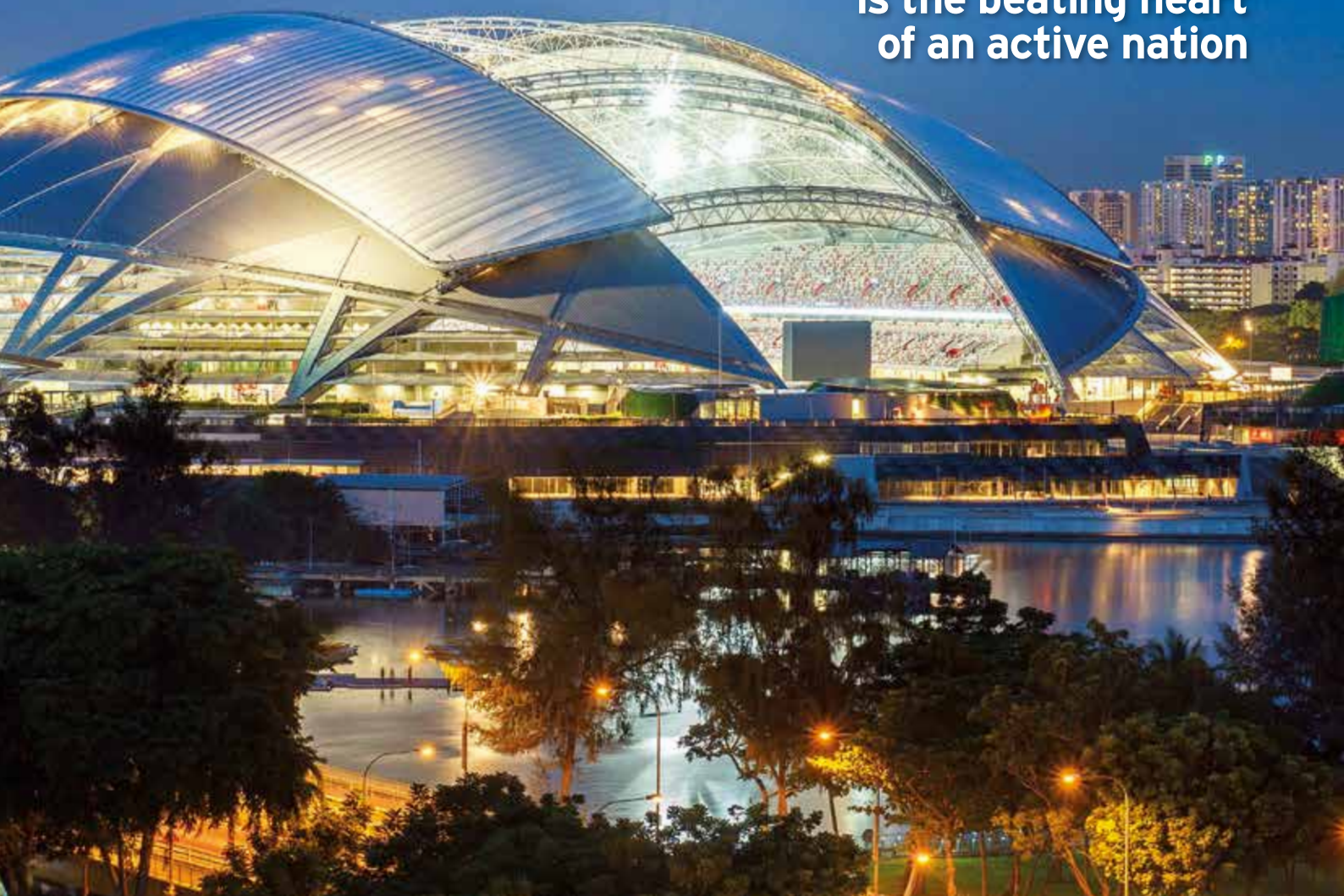


Urban Conversations

Learning from Singapore's development story

Sporting Singapore

Stunning new Sports Hub is the beating heart of an active nation



Ed's Note

Dear readers,

Singapore clinched its first Olympic medal in 1960 when Mr Tan Howe Liang literally lifted our sports status with a Silver medal in weightlifting. Since then, we have clocked up other achievements, from the adrenaline-pumping 2008 Beijing Olympics when Team Singapore came home with a Silver medal to swimmer Joseph Schooling's Bronze medal at the recent Asian Games 2014. Next year, the nation is set to host the 2015 Southeast Asian Games!

For a start, check out the splendid Singapore Sports Hub which will host the SEA Games in **Let the Games Begin!** on page 3. Many Singaporeans fondly remember the former National Stadium, where the Hub now stands, before it was closed in 2007. In its new incarnation, the Stadium has received a fresh breath of life as it continues our legacy and spirit of sporting excellence.

More than the 'hardware', we are even prouder of our 'software' in the sporting arena — our very own athletes. Celebrate the achievements of these outstanding athletes in **Shooting Stars**, as we talk to two Gold medal winners from the 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow. The Games saw Singapore athletes taking home 17 medals — including eight Gold medals — in a fine showing for the Republic. Find out also how we are **Warming Up** (page 8) in regional and international competitions ranging from swimming and sailing to floorball and netball as the country gears up for next year's SEA Games.

Beyond sparring with other countries in the competitive sports arena, Singapore strives to forge lasting friendships with other countries. In

Urban Conversations, read about a two-week study visit by Chinese officials and how the Singapore Cooperation Programme shares with them our unique experiences, challenges and knowledge about urban planning and development.

Sport is one of the few denominators in the world which has the power to bridge divisions, bringing together people of different nationalities, races, religions and socio-economic statuses. We hope that through this issue, we can celebrate with you the spirit of trust and friendship which transcends borders and ethnicities.

Enjoy reading!



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Ministry of Foreign Affairs Singapore

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Programme. Email us at
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SINGAPORE

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Focus
SPORTING SINGAPORE

Let The Games Begin!

The new Singapore Sports Hub puts Singapore on the global sporting map while giving the community a space to bond

WORDS BY GENE KHOR

The National Stadium's retractable roof is the largest dome structure in the world.



T

THE CLOSING OF SINGAPORE'S NATIONAL STADIUM

seven years ago marked the end of an era. The Grand Old Dame had opened in July 1973 and until 2007 was the venue for many of the country's National Day celebrations and innumerable pop concerts. It also witnessed Singapore's best footballers taking on the Malaysian and Bruneian teams during the Malaysia Cup football league matches from the 1970s to the early 1990s. It was at these matches that the "Kallang Roar" — the name given to the cheers from Singapore football fans who packed the stands during home matches — was born.

Now in 2014, the roaring flame of Singaporeans' sporting passion and camaraderie is rekindled at the site of the old Stadium, as the brand new Singapore Sports Hub (SSH) ushers in a new era of sports in Singapore.

BIGGER AND BETTER

The stunning SSH is an integrated sports, leisure, entertainment and lifestyle destination. At the heart of SSH is the new 55,000-seat National Stadium. The futuristic structure has a height of 82.5m and a diameter of 310m — wide enough to fit four A380 jumbo jets!

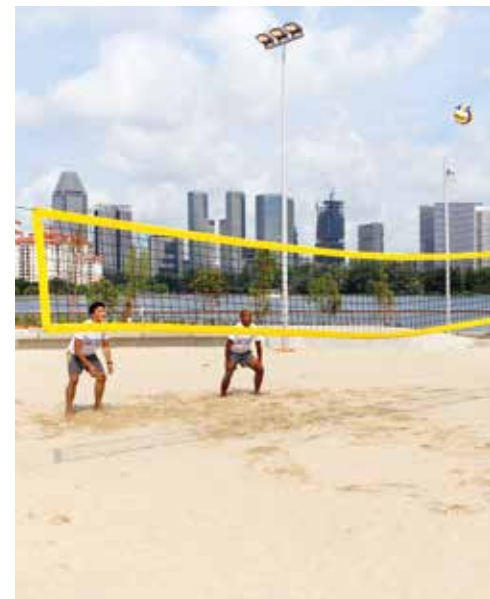


The new stadium has a retractable massive dome roof and seating, which can support the widest range of sports and leisure events.

In addition, the pitch is made of a combination of natural grass reinforced by artificial fibres for added durability — a first in Asia. It was on this pitch that reigning Italian football league champion Juventus took on Singapore's finest players in August 2014 in an international friendly match.

Beyond its beautiful façade, SSH also boasts many sustainable features, earning it a Green Mark Gold^{PLUS} rating from the Building and Construction Authority. Over 2,700 solar panels are installed around the precinct to partially power the structure's cooling

↑ The OCBC Aquatic Centre, which hosted the Asian Swimming Championships, seats up to 3,000 spectators.



➔ The Sports Hub is intended as a community focal point, with beach volleyball and Taekwondo being some of the sports that have dedicated facilities.





◀ So massive is the dome that four A380 jumbo jet planes can fit abreast inside.

MORE TO COME

About 60 events are scheduled to be held at the SSH between late 2014 and December 2015. Fans got to see some of the world's best tennis players like Serena Williams, Maria Sharapova and Petra Kvitova tear up the court at the Singapore Indoor Stadium — also part of the SSH — in October 2014 for the BNP Paribas WTA Finals Singapore, a 10-day international tournament which Singapore will host for five years. This is the first time the high-profile tournament was held in Southeast Asia, with Singapore joining the honour roll of past host cities like Madrid, Munich and New York.

And to add to the excitement, the Brazilian and Japanese national football teams also clashed here in an international friendly.

But the biggest event on the SSH's calendar is the forthcoming 28th SEA Games, to be held over 12 days in June 2015. SSH and 15 other venues in Singapore will see some 7,000 athletes from 11 Southeast Asian countries competing in 402 events in 36 sports. (Turn to page 8 to find out what's happening ahead of the Games.)

system that includes vents that pump cool air from underneath each seat in the spectator stands. Timber benches from the former National Stadium have also been recycled as art installations inside the Sports Hub Library.

A STUNNING DISPLAY

The SSH's other facilities have also seen their fair share of action. Some 200 athletes from seven Southeast Asian countries made a splash at the biennial TYR Southeast Asian Swimming Championships in June 2014 at the 3,000-seat OCBC Aquatic Centre.

The OCBC Arena indoor hall, which also seats 3,000, became the first non-European venue to host the biennial World University Floorball Championship that same

month. A record 16 teams from 10 countries including the Czech Republic, Finland and Japan crossed swords — or in this case, floorball sticks.

But the SSH is more than just a sports venue. It is also a bridge to the community — a communal place where Singaporeans can enjoy leisure activities and hang out with one another. There is the Kallang Wave, a shopping mall of over 41,000 sq m that also houses a waterpark and Singapore's tallest indoor rock-climbing wall. Also, an information and resource centre comprising the Sports Hub library, Singapore Sports Museum and Visitor Centre provides a glimpse into the Stadium's past. At the Water Sports Centre, there are canoes and kayaks for rent.





In Singapore
GOING FOR GOLD

Shooting for the Stars

Team Singapore achieved some historic breakthroughs at this summer's Commonwealth Games in Glasgow. *Experience Singapore* speaks to two Gold medal winners

WORDS BY SYED JAAFAR ALKAFF



THE 20TH ITERATION OF THE QUADRENNIAL COMMONWEALTH GAMES, held in Glasgow, Scotland, was the perfect chance for Singapore's athletes to show off the nation's broad range of talents. As one of the youngest teams the Republic has ever sent to the Games — with 45 of the 70-strong contingent comprising young athletes making their debut on the world stage — Team Singapore displayed tremendous confidence and fighting spirit. They returned home with eight Gold, five Silver and four Bronze medals, in addition to two Games records and seven national records.

Mr Low Teo Ping, one of Singapore's Commonwealth Games Chefs-de-Mission and vice-president of the Singapore National Olympic Council, paid tribute to the fine showing. "Over the past few years, our athletes have been giving us more and more reason to cheer. Even our young athletes are performing better and better on the international stage. Not all will end up winning medals, but they have always displayed true determination and grit, performing to the best of their abilities. These are values every athlete should display every time they don our Singapore colours."

Indeed, for two such athletes, determination and grit paid off in the form of a pair of Gold medals. *Experience Singapore* speaks to two Gold medal holders who have made Singapore proud on the international sports arena.

↑ *Jasmine Ser attributes her fine showing at the Commonwealth Games to the hard work she and her coach have put in.*

JASMINE SER, 24 GOLD, 50M RIFLE 3 POSITIONS

Jasmine took up shooting at age 13 and found it unique among the sports clubs in her secondary school. Her skilled marksmanship did not go unnoticed. In 2013, she was selected for the Singapore Sports Institute's Sport Excellence Scholarship, which enables her to train full-time.

The training has paid off — her outstanding score of 449.1 set a new Commonwealth Games Record in the demanding 50m rifle three positions final. "The hard work my coach and I put in, as well as the strong support from the Singapore Shooting Association who believed in me, are what have made me successful."

Although this is her third Commonwealth Games gold medal — having won two at the 2010 Games in New Delhi, India — she is "overwhelmed at the support she has received from fellow Singaporeans", adding that "This is motivation to strive harder and aim for excellence!"

And strive she will, as she is hoping to secure a place at the 2016 Olympics. "Competing overseas against the world's best shooters, and preparing myself both physically and mentally are my aims ahead of the 2016 Olympics."

Photos of Jasmine and Shun Xie: xxxx



TEO SHUN XIE, 26
GOLD, 10M AIR PISTOL

Shun Xie took up air pistol as a 17-year-old junior college student. The petite athlete tells *Experience Singapore*, "Shooting is a sport based on skill. Therefore, we can be of smaller build but yet be equally skilled."

In 2006, she was invited to join the national shooting team. She has represented Singapore in various competitions since 2009, winning Silver in the 10m air pistol event at the 2013 Southeast Asian Games.

But that was just a taste of things to come. In Glasgow, her top score of 198.6 was a Games record, even though she had to fight her way up from seventh place. "The new format of the final played quite a big part — I didn't do well in qualifying, but everyone starts the final from zero regardless of your qualification score. So I persevered and stuck to my game plan and didn't let the crowd or other expectations distract me."

After her Games win, Shun Xie's next big target is qualifying for the 2016 Olympic Games in Brazil. Feeling confident, she says, "When it happens, I hope I will be able to bring something back for Singapore."

↑ Teo Shun Xie recovered from a disappointing qualifying to win a Gold medal at the Commonwealth Games.

↓ Team Singapore (in blue) took the Gold in the women's doubles table tennis final.



→ Shuttlecock Derek Wong became the first Singaporean to reach a badminton men's singles final at a Commonwealth Games.

← Star swimmer Joseph Schooling set a new national record. ↓ Paddlers Gao Ning (left) and Zhan Jian took Silver and Gold, respectively.



Going for the GOLD

BESIDES ITS SUCCESS in the shooting arena, Team Singapore shone brightest in table tennis, with six Gold, two Silver and two Bronze medals. Paddlers Feng Tianwei and Yu Mengyu took the Gold in the women's doubles event, while Zhan Jian and Gao Ning took the Silver and Gold medals, respectively, when they battled each other in the men's singles final.

Another medal hopeful, 19-year-old swimmer Joseph Schooling, did Singapore proud by clinching the Silver in the 100m butterfly final, beating the national record. Meanwhile, in badminton, 25-year-old shuttlecock Derek Wong became the first Singaporean to reach the men's singles final, in which he fought hard to clinch the Silver. And in another first for the nation, 25-year-old gymnast Hoe Wah Toon won Singapore its first Commonwealth Games medal in the vault event.

"Our athletes have been giving us more and more reason to cheer. Even our young athletes are performing better and better on the international stage."

MR LOW TEO PING, SINGAPORE'S COMMONWEALTH GAMES CHEF-DE-MISSION



WARMING UP

THE 28TH SOUTHEAST ASIAN GAMES COMES TO SINGAPORE IN 2015, BUT WAY BEFORE THIS, THERE IS ALREADY SPORTING ACTION GALORE

WORDS BY GENE KHOR



→ Singapore successfully defended its title in the Mission Foods Asian Netball Championships.

SINGAPORE CELEBRATES its 50th year of independence in 2015, and extra shine has been added to the planned celebrations — after a 22-year gap, the country will once again host the Southeast Asian (SEA) Games, one of the region's biggest sporting events.

The SEA Games will take place from 5 to 16 June 2015, and will see over 7,000 athletes from 11 South-east Asian countries competing in a whopping 402 events across 36 sports. The newly-built Singapore Sports Hub (SSH) will be the main venue for the Games.

But ahead of the Games, various regional competitions are already heating up the sports arena.

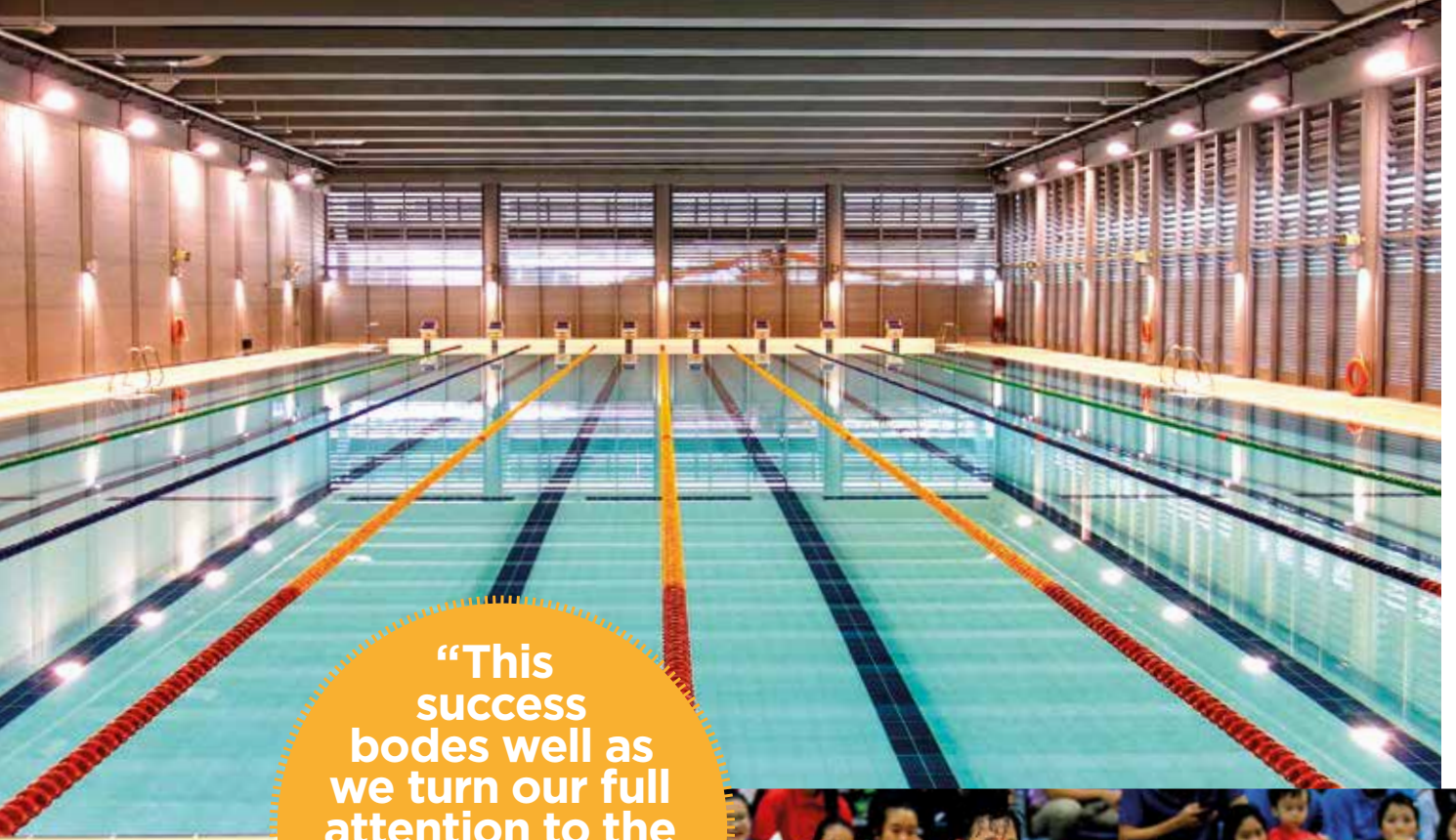


SPLASHING OUT

One of the first was the biennial **TYR Southeast Asian Swimming Championships** held at the OCBC Aquatic Centre at SSH. From 14 to 26 June 2014, some 200 athletes from Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam competed at the 3,000-seat swimming complex in four aquatic disciplines — diving,

swimming, synchronised swimming and water polo.

Singapore demonstrated its swimming prowess with the largest medal haul with 20 Gold, 22 Silver and 14 Bronze. "This success bodes well as we turn our full attention to making preparations for the 28th SEA Games next year," says Singapore Swimming Association president, Mr Lee Kok Choy.



“This success bodes well as we turn our full attention to the 28th SEA Games next year.”

MR LEE KOK CHOY, PRESIDENT OF THE SINGAPORE SWIMMING ASSOCIATION



COURTING GOLD

Floorball, an indoor sport similar to hockey, will make its debut at the 2015 Games. For the first time ever, the biennial **World University Floorball Championship (WUFC)** was held at a non-European venue — the SSH’s OCBC Arena from 18 to 22 June 2014. At the 3,000-seat multi-purpose indoor arena, a record 16 teams from 10 countries including the Czech Republic, Finland and Japan competed.

“For the coming SEA Games, we’re hoping to bring home the gold medal and we’re really excited for the Games,” says Singapore National Floorball Team member Heng Hui Shan. “We’ve trained really hard and we want to do our country proud.”

↑ Top and left: The World University Floorball Championship in Singapore was the first to be held outside of Europe.

Another sport that Singapore is flying high in is netball, where the country most recently defended its title in the **Mission Foods Asian Netball Championships**. The tournament — the most prestigious netball competition in Asia — was played out on the courts of the OCBC Arena from 7 to 14 September 2014. Ten countries, including Japan and India, took part with Singapore and Sri Lanka each earning a place in the 2015 World Cup in Sydney, Australia.

Outside our shores, Singapore’s

young athletes have also been honing their skills at the 2014 Youth Olympic Games in Nanjing, China, where our sailors came through with a pair of gold medals.

Besides being exciting platforms for Singapore to showcase its sporting spirit, the regional competitions that took place here were a real test of our athletes’ mettle.

With these experiences under their belt, they are all well-prepared for a wonderful sports spectacle next year!

URBAN Conversations

Officials from China studied Singapore's experience and policies in urban development during a two-week visit organised by the Singapore Cooperation Programme

WORDS BY GENE KHOR



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HAT CHALLENGES could a small island city-state and the most populous country in the world find in common?

A group of 23 Chinese senior officials explored this question during a recent trip to study Singapore's experience in urbanisation and city management.

The delegation, led by Chief Planner of the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development, Mr Tang Kai, and Director-General of the Ministry of Transport's Department of Integrated Transport, Mr Liu Xiaoming, comprised city mayors and directors-general in charge of urban development from various provinces and cities in China.

The Civil Service College of Singapore organised a multi-faceted programme from 16 to 27 June 2014 which included briefings by government agencies such as the Building and Construction Authority, National Parks Board, and the Housing and Development Board. They also visited the Asian Civilisations Museum, Gardens by the Bay, the Pinnacle@Duxton

public housing estate and the Singapore River. These interactive lessons showcased the development of Singapore's cityscape, as well as ongoing inter-agency efforts in urbanisation to meet the needs of its population.

The delegates also exchanged views with key policymakers and experts. Senior Minister of State, Ministry of Trade and Industry and Ministry of National Development Mr Lee Yi Shyan hosted a dialogue session to discuss social and economic issues of urban populations. Chairman of the Centre for Liveable Cities Dr Liu Thai Ker; Chief Planner and Deputy Chief Executive Officer of the Urban Redevelopment Authority Mr Lim Eng Hwee; and Chief Executive of the Singapore Land Authority Mr Vincent Hoong also spent time with the delegation.

DIFFERENT COUNTRIES, SIMILAR CHALLENGES

Chief Planner Mr Tang felt that the compact programme greatly benefited the participants. Before

As the visit progressed, Chief Planner Mr Tang Kai came to realise that Singapore and China shared similar urban challenges.



→ The dialogue with Senior Minister of State Mr Lee Yi Shyan (right) on urban social and economic issues.



↑ Venturing into the heart of Singapore to study the development of the Marina Bay area.

the study visit, he had wondered what China could learn from Singapore given the differences in land and population size between both countries. As the visit progressed, he came to realise that Singapore and China shared similar urban challenges such as the need to manage high-density cities that are undergoing rapid development. Deputy leader Mr Liu also agreed that Chinese cities could emulate some of the strategies and considerations that underlined our policies in urban planning and development.

The study visit was conducted under the auspices of the Singapore Cooperation Programme (SCP). The SCP was established in 1992

to share Singapore's development experiences with our friends around the world. Its philosophy follows Singapore's developmental experience that investment in people and capacity-building are key to managing the complex challenges of our world today. The SCP programmes and study visits

are tailored to the interests and needs of our foreign counterparts, and cover a broad spectrum of topics such as urban development, economic planning and investment promotion, good governance and public administration, sustainable development and environmental management.



➔ URA led a discussion on conservation development through an experiential boat ride on the Singapore River.



