



experience
singapore

A newsletter of the
Singapore Cooperation Programme
October - December 2010

**THE WORLD
COMES TO
SINGAPORE**

ARRAY OF
OPTIONS WOW
EVENT ORGANISERS

**DIAMOND IN
THE ROUGH**

OMAN'S JEWEL OF
MUSCAT CREATES
ENDURING TIES

**THE
MEULABOH
MIRACLE**

AN EMBODIMENT
OF THE SPIRIT OF
COOPERATION



Dear readers,

Experience Singapore is back! We took a break while revamping this flagship quarterly publication of the Singapore Cooperation Programme. In reviewing *Experience Singapore*, we wanted to make sure we gave what you, the readers, wanted.

Some time ago, we asked you to tell us what you liked about *Experience Singapore*, as well as what you thought we could do better. You responded in a big way. We received faxes, emails, and in some cases handwritten letters, from a good cross-section of our readership in 169 countries.

We were heartened by your supportive comments, and touched that many of you shared your copies of *Experience Singapore* with your colleagues, friends, family and students.

You also provided us with constructive views on how we could make *Experience Singapore* more relevant to your needs. For a start, many of you were eager to know more about

Singapore Cooperation Programme (SCP) activities.

In this issue, Sri Lankan participants in the SCP's Leaders in Education programme share their **Reflections**. You can also find out more about our recent SCP courses as well as our latest partnering tie-ups with Egypt and Korea, as well as with the Asian Development Bank, to provide technical and developmental assistance. In addition, **Joining Hands** features another dimension of Singapore's assistance efforts in tsunami-hit Meulaboh, Indonesia.

Many readers were also understandably keen to be updated about what's been happening in Singapore. These are exciting times for Singapore, and we hope that *Experience Singapore* can keep you up to date with the latest developments here. Our cover story for this issue, **The World Comes to Singapore**, tells you what has been keeping Singapore buzzing for the past few months. In this issue, we

also unveil the latest additions to Singapore's skyline – the two Integrated Resorts, and how they have been **Changing The Game**.

Apart from the new content line-up, we have made *Experience Singapore* more reader-friendly and appealing. In particular, not only are we using bigger visuals, we have also injected more vibrancy and colour to the pages.

We hope that you like what we have done with the new *Experience Singapore*. But we would still love to hear your views to guide us for future issues. Contact us via email at mfa@mfa.gov.sg, or fax at 6471 0537. You can also mail us at *Experience Singapore*, Public Affairs Directorate, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tanglin, Singapore 248163.

Sudesh Maniar

**Director
Public Affairs Directorate
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KEEP IN TOUCH!

Share with us your memories, photos and views of your experience in Singapore under the Singapore Cooperation Programme. Email us at mfa@mfa.gov.sg.

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Cover photo: Singapore Youth Olympic Games Organising Committee

A HOT SPOT FOR IMMIGRATION

Singapore has remained a top destination for migrants for the second year in row according to a global survey by Gallup.

According to the study, Singapore could see its population triple if everyone who wanted to move here was allowed to, increasing the population of 4.8 million by 219 per cent. Second on the list was New Zealand, followed by Saudi Arabia.

Gallup interviewed some 350,000 adults in 148 countries between 2007 and this year to calculate each country's Potential Net Migration Index (PNMI). PNMI is calculated by subtracting the estimated number of adults who wish to leave a country permanently from the estimated number who wish to immigrate to the country.



STRIKING GOLD

Brains as well as brawn made another showing in an Olympics of another kind – at the International Geography Olympiad (iGeo) in Taipei. Singapore's Darren Wan and Martin Lim and Clement Kweh and Koh Lock Keong from Raffles Institution (Junior College) took home the gold and silver medals at the international geography Olympiad.

TALKING POINT



Photo: SPH

International Olympic Committee President Dr Jacques Rogge (left) shakes hands with Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong after conferring the Gold Olympic Order on Mr Lee on Aug 13, 2010.

“It has been a challenge and great satisfaction for us to organise this first Games. I think it has struck a chord with our people.”

Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong on being conferred the Gold Olympic Order – the highest honour for individuals – by the International Olympic Committee (IOC). Singapore hosted the first Youth Olympic Games in August.

NEWS IN NUMBERS

5.08m

Singapore's population as of June 2010 – a 1.8 per cent growth from 2009

305km

The extent of the route taken by the Youth Olympic Flame in Singapore where 2,400 Singaporeans carried on the flame in the country's first-ever torch relay

7

The number of medals won by Singapore athletes at the inaugural Youth Olympic Games – two silver and five bronze



Photo: Singapore Youth Olympic Games Organising Committee

THE WORLD COMES TO SINGAPORE

It's a MICE place to be ... Singapore that is. Growing from strength to strength as a destination of choice for Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Events (MICE), the lion city is buzzing with activity. Here's a look at the growth of this burgeoning sector – and why the world is coming to Singapore

WORDS BY **SHERALYN TAY**

As the night sky lit up with lights and fanfare to celebrate the hundreds of young athletes at the first ever Youth Olympic Games (YOG) held in Singapore, the world looked on, captivated by the spirit and energy of the Opening Ceremony of the Games.

The 2010 YOG was just one of the many high profile international events

that graced Singapore shores in recent years. In 2009 – in the midst of one of the worst recessions faced since independence – Singapore played host to thousands of delegates for wide-ranging events such as BEX Asia, Spikes Asia, the International Green Building Conference and Clean Energy Asia Expo. On the whole, despite a 10 to 15 per cent decline in business event

attendance, Singapore still clinched the title of 'Top International Meetings City' for the third consecutive year in 2010, ahead of some 1,700 cities polled by the Union of International Associations (UIA). This marks an "impressive five-year growth trend", noted Jacques de Mevius, Secretary-General of the UIA.

Indeed, 2010 has seen the industry bounce back with renewed vigour. Some high-level meetings this year have included the third Singapore International Water Week, World Cities Summit and World Mayors Conference. Rounding off the year were events such as the FI Night Race and Human Capital Summit in September.

The MICE industry in Singapore has proven to be quite resilient, recession notwithstanding. According to Ms Jacqueline Ng, Director for Business Tourism Development at the Singapore Tourism Board (STB), "Investors' confidence in Singapore's sound business fundamentals coupled with



The closing ceremony of the Youth Olympic Games was a fitting send-off for the young athletes who gave their all.



Photo: Marina Bay Sands

World-class venues from the Marina Bay Sands (above) and Suntec Convention Centre (below) offer value to conference organisers.



Photo: Corbis

key tourism developments have already yielded benefits in the business travel and MICE industry in 2010. For the first seven months of 2010, Singapore has seen six straight consecutive months of record growth in visitor arrivals." STB forecasts total tourist arrivals for 2010 to be between 11.5 million and 12.5 million, up from 9.7 million in 2009.

FACTORS FOR GROWTH

The success in Singapore's MICE industry has been attributed to a holistic range of factors.

For one, it helps that Singapore leads the world in areas such as economic competitiveness.

Most recently, the Republic outranked the United States and came in first as the world's most competitive economy in the 2010 World Competitiveness Yearbook by the IMD business school. Singapore also continued to top the *World Economic Forum's Global Enabling Trade Report* – coming

in third in the most recent ranking. The report rated the prosperity, economic competitiveness and stability of a country. Research group Mercer also places Singapore among the top 30 liveable countries in the world.

But more than international rankings, a concerted effort to build supporting infrastructure and services has been key in elevating Singapore's MICE dreams. Ms Melissa Ow, STB's Assistant Chief Executive, Industry Development II Group told *TravelDailyNews* that the sustained growth in the number of international meetings reflects "Singapore's ability to continually transform itself, anticipate and meet the evolving needs of business event organisers and delegates". MICE venues and infrastructure are always innovating and keeping pace with the increasing demands and expectations.

Recently, Singapore Expo, a convention and exhibition venue in the eastern part of Singapore was recognised as a Business Superbrand, an

MEETS & GREETS

Singapore's MICE calendar is chock-a-block with high-level conferences and meets. Here's a taste of what's done and to come.

June 2010: Live! Singapore

A global performing arts exchange

July 2010: World Cities Summit

A platform for sharing innovative solutions for urban challenges

July 2010: Africa Singapore Business Forum

A conference and networking platform for the sharing of business opportunities in Africa

July 2010: International Conference on Muslims in Multicultural Societies

A gathering of scholars, academics and religious leaders discussing multiculturalism and Islam

July 2010: Singapore International Water Week

A gathering of experts, policymakers, innovators and industry leaders to deal with water issues

July 2010: FutureChina Global Forum

Insight into China's dynamic economy and market

September 2010 F1 Night Race

The only Formula One night race makes tracks along Singapore's Marina Bay

September 2010: Human Capital Summit

The largest regional HR conference on nurturing and retaining talent

October 2010: Singapore International Energy Week

A meeting of energy professionals and industry leaders

2012: International Council for Commercial Arbitration Conference

A conference for promoting international arbitration and other forms of dispute resolution, hosted by its leading body



Photo: PUB

World Leaders gathered at Singapore International Water Week to discuss pressing issues on sustainability and water.

internationally recognised award which pays tribute to the best and most valued business-to-business brands around the world.

The opening of the two Integrated Resorts (IRs) has also added 177,000sq metres of convention space to the booming MICE market. Resorts World Sentosa (RWS) is looking at some 400 events lined up going into 2011, while Marina Bay Sands has confirmed more than 180 events that will attract over 270,000 delegates in the coming months.

Despite the two new big players, other MICE venues continue to see roaring demand. According to a report by *Channel NewsAsia*, the broadening of the market has seen Suntec Convention Centre booking a total of 102 events in June, and the Singapore Expo attracting 15 new events on top of their regular shows this year to date.

ADDING VALUE TO ONE'S STAY

Well-appointed venues, ease of transportation and efficiency aside, industry players and the government have also worked together to offer a little extra to make any delegate's stay – however brief – more enjoyable.

“As a destination, Singapore’s concentration of attractions, venues, and activities means that event organisers have an array of options.”

Ms Jacqueline Ng, Singapore Tourism Board

“As a destination, Singapore’s concentration of attractions, venues, and activities means that event organisers have an array of options available to them in an easily accessible way, which is a strength that sets Singapore apart from other destinations. What is unique to Singapore is our user-centricity – which means that experiences are built around the visitor, with the visitor’s needs and preferences in mind,” said STB’s Ms Ng. For example, business delegates and participants can download a free City Advantage

smartphone application by STB. This allows users to search – and find special rates – for dining, hotels, spas and other entertainment offerings during their stay in Singapore.

Beyond the confines of the conference, a myriad of offerings “ensures meaningful, exclusive and memorable experiences for clients”, said Ms Ng. These differentiate Singapore as an incentive destination. “The opening of other tourism developments and experiences will further augment our position as a must-visit destination,” she added.

Business and leisure visitors can look forward to the Mandai cluster, including the River Safari, the International Cruise Terminal, and Gardens by the Bay. “The River Safari is the first nature attraction in Asia, showcasing the world’s greatest rivers and housing the world’s largest collection of freshwater wildlife. It also comes with on-site meeting facilities for MICE events,” elaborated Ms Ng. “These key tourism developments will diversify the range of business events venues available in Singapore and offer a rich spectrum of compelling and unique experiences for all business and leisure visitors.”



MAKING FRIENDS




DIAMOND IN THE ROUGH

The Jewel of Muscat – an incredible feat of nautical engineering is also the embodiment of the enduring ties between Oman and Singapore

WORDS BY SHERALYN TAY

All around him, the wooden ship creaked, sighed and tilted as it progressed steadily through the water. For Jeff Khoo, 27, a Singapore Foreign Service Officer who was part of the crew for the first month of the voyage, the swaying and creaking was “strangely soothing”. “We were cocooned inside the hull, separated from the ocean by mere inches of wood,” he said, recalling the feeling of incredible excitement of being part of a historic adventure that took him from Oman to the first port of call in Cochin, India.



Singapore Foreign Service Officer Jeff Khoo

MAKING FRIENDS

His own participation in the trip was serendipitous. As part of the Jewel of Muscat project in Singapore, Mr Khoo had first-hand knowledge of the ship, its history and its planned journey. So when the opportunity came about for a Singapore representative to sail with the Jewel – a modern-day replica of an Arabian dhow – he jumped at the chance. “We had no fixed schedule for the journey so although we looked for someone in the Singapore sailing circle to be part of the crew, it was difficult to find a suitable candidate,” he explained. Prepped with a five-day sailing course, Mr Khoo joined the crew in Oman for the first leg of the 4,800km journey from Oman to the Indian port of Cochin. From there, the Jewel continued to retrace the old Maritime Silk Route to Galle in Sri Lanka, Penang and Malacca in Malaysia before threading the Strait of Malacca to Singapore.

ADVENTURE ON THE HIGH SEAS

At the helm was Captain Saleh Al Jabri, a lean and wiry sailor who came to be respected for his ability to motivate his crew and overcome the challenges that arose – the most terrifying of which was a terrible storm in April. As



Captain Saleh Al Jabri (left) and a crew member.

the storm raged, there was no choice but to “go forward”, Captain Saleh recalled. “I was holding my heart.” And when one of the 17m-tall masts cracked and their sail was ripped from the vicious storm that clocked wind speeds of 52 knots, “my heart broke also,” he said.

Still days away from its next port of call in Galle, Sri Lanka – and only about halfway through its voyage – the vessel struggled to make progress over the next five days. To stabilise the mast, the crew tied beams around the cracked section as a temporary measure. In Sri Lanka, it took the crew about two weeks to source for suitable trees to replace the mast.

LIVING ON OPEN WATER

This was by far the biggest challenge and danger faced during the five-month voyage, but there were other challenges too. The crew, which comprised up to 18 men as participants, and who joined and left at various stops, also had to deal with changeable weather conditions and choppy seas. “We set sail when it was winter in Oman, so it was cool and very comfortable, at least initially,” Mr Khoo recalled.

As the journey progressed south-east, the weather got hotter, and the journey, more arduous. “We were literally baking on board. The wooden deck heated up and below deck, it



A crew member attaches more 'baggy-winkle' to the stays.

THAT'S A FACT!

Length:	18m
Weight:	55 tonnes
Mast height:	13.5m
Sail area:	160sqm
Sewn with:	100km of rope
Man hours:	50,000
Navigation:	Using a kamal*, the sun and stars
Speed:	11 knots
Made with:	70,000 stitches of hand-woven rope
Waterproofing:	Goat fat and crushed seashells



Want to relive the journey? Visit www.jewelofmuscat.tv

*A kamal is an ancient tool that helps ascertain the latitude using a small wooden card that is threaded through a string marked by equally-spaced knots. The position is read by comparing the card and knotted string in relation to the horizon and Polaris star.



The 4,800km route retraced the old Maritime Silk Route from Oman across Indian Ocean, calling at ports in India (Cochin), Sri Lanka (Galle), and Malaysia (Penang and Malacca), to the Straits of Malacca, before reaching Singapore.

was like an oven," Mr Khoo said. As sea-water inevitably seeped into the boat – a common problem for boats of that time – it mixed with the waterproofing material of goat and fish fat to form a noxious "soup".

Despite the discomfort, the significance of the journey and excitement of being part of it did not fade. "No one outside the 9th century has ever experienced something like it," Mr Khoo said, "It was the chance of a lifetime."

Working on board the ship with the crew during his month-long journey was also a memorable experience and Mr Khoo formed firm friendships with all the men. "It was hard work on board the ship – we all had our shifts and undertook duties such as hoisting the sail, changing the course of the ship and pumping out the water in the hull. It was like an onboard gym!"

A HOMECOMING TO REMEMBER

As the majestic vessel, burnished a smooth deep brown from its long

voyage, sailed into the Singapore harbour, the emotions of the long journey came to a head. Senior Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Mr Zainul Abidin Rasheed, who had sent off the dhow in Muscat in February 2010, recalled the arrival of the vessel: "The emotions ran deep – we felt for the crew and all they had been through. They lost their mast and sail and had a tough journey. We stood on the dock watching the Jewel sail in. It was so graceful, and belied the hardship that it went through. It was a truly touching 'homecoming'."

Back on land, Captain Saleh has nonetheless left part of himself with

the Jewel of Muscat and Singapore, and gained invaluable memories of the epic journey. "It was an incredible experience," said Captain Saleh, "We learnt a lot and gained renewed respect for our forefathers. To think their ancient skill in maritime engineering and technique could hold up even today." More significantly, the project – that brought together an international community of experts, participants and supporters – has created an enduring legacy of friendship, he said. "The ship has shown us that when it comes to people, there are no borders ... And we all thank this Jewel of Muscat for the lasting gift she has given us – the incredible family she has brought together," he said.





Red Cross volunteer Mr Wong (extreme right in blue vest in top photo) captures the spirit that shines through in the people of Meulaboh as they overcome the tragedy of the 2004 tsunami.

Photos: Wong Leong Jeam

THE MEULABOH MIRACLE

The devastation of the 2004 Boxing Day Tsunami left an indelible impact on the people of Meulaboh, Aceh. Since then, Meulaboh has made a brave recovery, thanks to the the resilience of its own people and help from the overseas community, including Singapore

WORDS BY LIN YANQIN

Work was already under way to rebuild Meulaboh, Aceh, when Singapore Red Cross (SRC) volunteer Mr Wong Leong Jeam arrived in 2005. But from the sight that greeted him, normalcy for “ground zero” – the site of the deadly 2004 Boxing Day tsunami – still appeared to be a distant dream.

“Everything was destroyed,” recalled Mr Wong, 59, a retired civil servant from the Ministry of Defence. In charge of coordinating the relief and reconstruction for SRC, Mr Wong arrived to see long lines everywhere in the formerly sleepy Indonesian town as its people queued for basic necessities such as food, medicine and medical attention. Makeshift homes amidst ruins peppered the devastated landscape. A little more than five years

on, a much-improved sight greets visitors, thanks in no small part, to the wide-ranging contributions from the Singapore government, organisations and volunteers like Mr Wong.

A BUDDING RECOVERY

Today, there is some semblance of an economy, aided in part by a new pier – one milestone among many that have helped return normalcy to the people of Meulaboh. During the handing over of the completed 175-metre long reinforced concrete pier in 2006, Singapore’s Minister for Foreign Affairs George Yeo said, “In a symbolic way, the pier reconnects Meulaboh to the Indonesian economy and the global economy.”


But more than symbolic, it has improved lives in a very real way, noted Makarios Karosekali, a construction

supervisor with Habitat for Humanity. He told *The Straits Times*, “The roads were damaged and getting the goods in via the sea was cheaper.” It has also helped fishermen deliver fish on their own and aided the delivery of reconstruction supplies.

More recently, in July this year, Meulaboh saw the opening and handover of the S\$12m Cut Nyak Dhien Meulaboh General Hospital built by the Singapore Government, Temasek Holdings and SRC. Meulaboh resident, Hasni M, a midwife, is grateful for the 150-bed hospital. She told *The Straits Times*, “More beds means people don’t have to wait for treatment any more.”

The new hospital will not only provide essential medical services but acts as another symbol of the healing that has taken place and in





“We were desperately in need of help. Your government was the first to come. And for that we will always be grateful.”

Teuku Dadek, Indonesian government official

the words of Mr Yeo, “express the spirit of cooperation between Aceh and Singapore”.

HELPING HANDS

In all, the Singapore Government, individual Singaporeans, companies, religious and educational institutions raised some S\$89m under the Tidal Waves Fund to finance the numerous reconstruction efforts in Aceh. Singapore’s

relief efforts after the tsunami hit also included essential supplies transported by the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF), a reverse osmosis unit, a 77-member SAF medical team, a 23-member Singapore Civil Defence Force disaster assistance and relief team, and S\$1m in seed funding to the SRC from the Government. Singapore’s volunteer organisation Mercy Relief also gathered S\$3m worth of emergency supplies for Aceh and Sri Lanka, and sent some 100 volunteers overseas to aid relief efforts. A reconstruction package of S\$27m was put together for Indonesia, Sri Lanka and the Maldives, with S\$21m set aside for hard-hit Meulaboh to build the pier, refurbish the hospital and train pier officials.

Indonesian government official Teuku Dadek, who headed the local Meulaboh government at the time of the tsunami told *The Straits Times* during the handover of the hospital: “We were desperately in need of help. Your

government was the first to come. And for that we will always be grateful.”

A LEGACY OF FRIENDSHIP

For Mr Wong, his 10-month stint in Meulaboh saw him reaching out on a more personal level. Daily chats over coffee with out-of-work fishermen led to Mr Wong giving small business loans. He had no way of knowing whether the fisherman would make good on the loan, but that was beside the point. “You have to let them try,” he said. He lent one man about 7m rupiah (about S\$300) to help them start a business salting and selling fish. “Within a week, he made 200,000 rupiah,” said Mr Wong.

His actions and belief reflect the commitment and spirit of reconstruction efforts in Meulaboh – that friendship, commitment and a little help can enable and empower people to rise above disaster and leave a lasting legacy.



ASSISTANCE IN NUMBERS

The first wave of relief efforts saw Singapore deploy:

A reverse osmosis unit to produce **8** tonnes of water daily

6 Chinooks and **2** Super Pumas for airlift and rescue operations

2 Helicopter Landing Ships that operated as staging area

77-member SAF medical team

18-member healthcare team

11-member Air Traffic Control Team

55-member Civil Military Relations Team

5-member SAF Combat Engineer Team

2-member SAF Liaison Team

9-member SAF communications team

23-member SCDF Disaster Assistance and Relief Team (DART)

S\$1m to Singapore Red Cross Society (SRCS) as seed funding

During reconstruction, Singapore contributed:

S\$16.5m for reconstruction projects for all tsunami hit countries, especially in the worst hit area of Aceh

US\$500,000 (S\$650,000) to the World Bank’s Aceh Fund in August 2005



SCENE CHANGER

Changing the game and the face of Singapore, the two new Integrated Resorts have boosted Singapore's competitiveness in more ways than one

WORDS BY JASMINE YIN

Fed up with the daily grind, a young office worker goes in search of his identity. The lessons of life that await him are jaw-dropping – his *Voyage de la Vie* or journey of life brings him face to face with trapeze-swinging contortionists, flaming crossbow arrows and other spectacular sights – all part of Resort World Sentosa's (RWS's) resident theatre show.

Touted as the first mega-scale circus theatre show made in Singapore, *Voyage de la Vie* has frequent sell-out shows, especially on weekends, since its 17 June 2010 debut at Resorts World Sentosa (RWS).



The iconic silhouette of the Marina Bay Sands crowns the Marina Bay area.

Marina Bay Sands (MBS) is playing a different hand with the Broadway hit *The Lion King*. Tickets went on sale in October for the acclaimed musical, which will make its Southeast Asian premiere in Singapore in March 2011.

Not only do these shows "raise the bar" of Singapore's arts and entertainment scene, said Mr Paul Tan, Director of Communications at the Singapore Tourism Board (STB), "They boost Singapore's attractiveness as a destination, by broadening and diversifying our leisure and entertainment options to enhance our overall tourism appeal". The STB certainly has plenty to smile since RWS began its phased opening

for business on 20 January, 2010, with MBS following suit on 27 April.

A BOON FOR TOURISM

Visitor arrivals to Singapore kept hitting new peaks this year, with July 2010 welcoming 1.095 million visitors – the first-ever month to cross the 1-million mark. Visitor days in July 2010 were estimated at 4.3 million days – a 21 per cent year-on-year growth from July 2009. STB attributed this to factors such as the Integrated Resorts (IRs), the Great Singapore Sale and improved travel sentiment.

Since the go-ahead for these two mega-projects – aimed at making

COUNTING DOWN

- 13,000,000** ... visitors projected to visit RWS when it is fully operational by end 2010
- 1,400,000** ... litres of water in the MBS SkyPark infinity pool which overlooks Marina Bay
- 3,175** ... kg of flowers RWS uses every month
- 2,561** ... hotel rooms at MBS
- 1,800** ... hotel rooms across 6 hotels at RWS (pictured right)
- 340** ... metres. That's how long the MBS SkyPark is (longer than the Eiffel Tower laid on its side)

SETTING RECORDS

- South East Asia's largest ballroom at MBS
- South East Asia's first and only Universal Studios theme park at RWS
- World's largest public cantilever with an observation deck at MBS
- World's largest oceanarium at RWS





RWS' *Voyage de la Vie* takes showmanship to a new level.

Photos: Marina Bay Sands; Resorts World Sentosa

“[The IRs] boost Singapore’s attractiveness as a destination, by broadening and diversifying our leisure and entertainment options to enhance our overall tourism appeal.”

Paul Tan, Singapore Tourism Board

the Republic “a centre for tourism, business and conventions” – global interest in Singapore has intensified. The competitive bidding process and blow-by-blow development progress made headlines, as did the opening of the IRs – first RWS and Universal Studios, followed by MBS and its signature SkyPark. Singapore’s gourmet

reputation also gets a tasty leg-up with world-famous chefs like Daniel Boulud, Joël Robuchon, Tetsuya Wakuda and Susur Lee setting up shop at the two IRs. According to STB, the IRs have already contributed over S\$12b of investments to Singapore’s tourism sector during their phased openings.

RAISING THE BAR

Latest July 2010 official data showed that the Singapore economy grew 18.8 per cent on-year in the second quarter. High visitor arrivals fuelled a boom in the hotel and restaurant sectors by 10.4 per cent and 12.9 per cent respectively on-year.

The IRs have already hired 80 per cent of the 20,000 total direct jobs projected when fully opened, boosting employment, while many local businesses have been awarded large contracts from transport to laundry services.

Numbers aside, an MBS spokesperson said that the IR has become an architectural landmark and will continue to support the arts and culture scene with shows and events. Describing its business model as “unprecedented in this part of the world”, a RWS spokesperson said the IR sets a tourism model for

other countries or regions to adopt.

MBS reportedly generated gross earnings of US\$94m (S\$119.4m) within the first two months. “These are pretty strong results for a property that was only open 65 days in the quarter,” *Wall Street Journal* quoted J.P. Morgan analyst Joseph Greff as saying in a research note. RWS also enjoyed a good quarter, raking in S\$860.8m in revenue and S\$503.5m in pre-tax earnings.

Going forward, Mr Tan said: “We believe that with the opening of the IRs, coupled with a strong year-round calendar of business and leisure events ... as well as new developments such as the Gardens by the Bay and the International Cruise Terminal coming on-stream, Singapore will be able to draw more discerning visitors and stimulate more tourism spend.”

Wolfgang Puck brings his renowned steak restaurant Cut to Singapore.





From left:
Mr R G Anura Chandradasa,
Mr J D M Tilakasiri,
and Mr K Ranjith Premathilake

Photo: Ealbert Ho

PRINCIPAL LESSONS

Teaching and learning go hand-in-hand – and for three Sri Lankan principals, there was no better way to experience this than during a leadership training programme for educators held from 26 July to 6 August 2010

WORDS BY SHERALYN TAY

It is the start of the school day in Tangalle Primary School, Sri Lanka, and students happily stream into their school – distinct for its cream and maroon façade and four-storey building, so new that the smell of paint still lingers. Over at Vijitha Central College, students and teachers are enjoying new classrooms and a new office block. And Rewatha National College now boasts 80 classrooms and 20 computer terminals.

All this is a stark improvement from just a few years back, when the schools housed hundreds of displaced

Sri Lankan families devastated by the 2004 tsunami. The schools – already old – were left in disrepair.

As part of its post-tsunami reconstruction efforts, the Singapore Government, through its Singapore Cooperation Programme (SCP) and in collaboration with the Singapore Red Cross, refurbished the three schools and added more classrooms and improved facilities. In all, the project cost some S\$5.6m.

At the Inauguration Ceremony in October 2009, Minister for Foreign Affairs George Yeo noted: “A school is

much more than just the buildings and physical facilities. What matter much more are the spirit of the school and its traditions as embodied in the principals, the teachers and the students.”

In this spirit, the SCP conducted two customised teacher-training courses on pedagogy skills for teachers from the three schools in 2007 while the reconstruction was ongoing.

After the completion of the physical works, a third course was recently conducted in August 2010, and a fourth will be held in 2011. In all, over 70 Sri Lanka teachers will have benefitted from the



Tangalle Primary School

A school is much more than just the buildings and physical facilities. What matter much more are the spirit of the school and its traditions as embodied in the principals, the teachers and the students.

Mr George Yeo, Minister for Foreign Affairs

training. In addition, the principals from the three schools were invited to attend a 10-day Leaders in Education Programme in July 2010, designed by the National Institute of Education. It prepares educators for the challenges and demands on education and focuses on developing leadership and innovation.

It was an eye-opening experience to say the least. Mr J D M Tilakasiri, Principal of Vijitha Central College, said:



Mr George Yeo, MInister for Foreign Affairs mingles with school children in Sri Lanka.

“We learnt about globalisation, leadership management, innovation, and how we can improve our own school curriculum and management systems.” These skills would be useful to impart to his own teachers, he said.

Mr K Ranjith Premathilake, Principal of Rewatha National College, said, “This programme has exposed me to a lot of new ideas. One is how to be an innovation leader – and as a new principal, I am inspired.” For example, innovative leadership can help schools do more with less, he said. “We do not need many resources to effect change, but can make the most of few resources to make big changes in our schools.”

Tangalle Primary School Principal, Mr R G Anura Chandradasa was also inspired by the field trips to three schools, North Vista Primary School, Northlight School and Woodlands Secondary School, all of which

showcased different ways to learn “by doing and not just books”.

“Back in our country, students learn every subject in the classroom. But in Singapore, you have many activity rooms, like various music, art and dance studios and computer labs,” he said. This is an idea he will try to put into action back home.

Mr Premathilake was taken by the idea of using the school landscape to inspire learning. “It’s very inspiring also to see how we can make changes in our school environment to help excite and interest students. By changing the school environment we can change mindsets,” he said.

“We are very grateful to Singapore for this learning opportunity,” Mr Premathilake added. “I plan to use what I have learnt here to set targets for my own school. I will make Singapore’s targets my own targets!”



I plan to use what I have learnt here to set targets for my own school.

Mr K Ranjith Premathilake, Principal, Rewatha National College

HANDSHAKES

**SINGAPORE AND CITIES DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE FOR ASIA (CDIA)
LAUNCH TRAINING SCHEME**

Developing Asian countries seeking to build human resource capacity in the area of urban infrastructure services can now look to the Singapore-CDIA Third Country Training Programme. The Singapore Ministry of Foreign Affairs and CDIA signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on 25 May 2010 to provide joint technical assistance programmes to developing member countries of the Asian Development Bank (ADB).



Singapore Ambassador A Selverajah and Mr Michael Linfield of CDIA (3rd and 4th from left) signing the MOU in Manila, witnessed by (from left) Mr Yao Xianbin, ADB Director-General, Ms Ursula Schaefer-Preuss, ADB Vice-President and Mr Emiel Wegelin, CDIA Programme Coordinator.

**SINGAPORE AND THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA ENHANCE
DEVELOPMENTAL ASSISTANCE TIES**

Singapore and the Republic of Korea enhanced its Singapore-Korea Comprehensive Joint Development Cooperation Partnership to provide developmental assistance to developing countries with an MOU signed on 5 June 2010. The expanded collaboration between the Singapore Cooperation Programme (SCP) and KOICA (Korea International Cooperation Agency) include launching a joint flagship senior executive programme in public policy, extending the geographical reach of joint programmes to cover Middle East and Africa, offering training in new areas such as green growth and public governance, as well as increasing the number of training places in the SCP.



Mr Peter Ho, Permanent Secretary, Foreign Affairs, Singapore and Mr Park Dae-Won, President KOICA signing the MOU. Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong (right) and Republic of Korea President HE Lee Myung-bak (left) witnessed the signing on 5 June 2010.

SINGAPORE-EGYPT PARTNER TO PROVIDE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO AFRICA

In a bid to support economic and social development in Africa, Singapore and Egypt signed a Letter of Intent on 20 August 2010 to provide technical assistance to African countries. Under this SCP cooperation with the Egyptian Fund for Technical Cooperation with Africa (EFTCA), Singapore and Egypt will jointly provide assistance to build capacity in the areas of governance, economic development, education and healthcare.



Mr Koh Tin Fook, Director, Technical Cooperation of MFA, Singapore and Ambassador Fatma Galal, Secretary-General of EFTCA signing the Letter of Intent.

For more information on the Singapore Cooperation Programme, please visit www.scp.gov.sg

SCP ROUNDUP

28 JUN TO 2 JUL 2010

A Civil Aviation Chief Executives Programme (CACEP) for 12 senior civil aviation executives was conducted by the Singapore Aviation Academy and the Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore with the aim of sharing Singapore's experience and insights in civil aviation development. The programme, sponsored by the SCP, addressed Airport Marketing and Commercial Management, Air Safety, Security and Emergency Planning and the latest developments in air transport.

28 JUN TO 8 JUL 2010

Delegates from Cambodia, Indonesia, Mongolia, Philippines and Vietnam, each comprising one mayor or deputy mayor and four team members attended the inaugural Leadership in Local Government: Decision, Action, Results (DARE) programme organised under the auspices of the Singapore-World Bank Institute-Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy Joint Training programme, and co-sponsored by the SCP and the World Bank Institute (WBI). During the DARE programme, experts shared their knowledge on results-oriented leadership, urban governance and development project management with the participants.

2 TO 6 AUG 2010

Competition law and Intellectual Property (IP) were the topics of two concurrent five-day courses for 38 participants from Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Vietnam (CLMV). Organised under the Japan-Singapore Partnership Programme for the 21st Century (JSPP21) and jointly sponsored by the SCP and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), participants attended either the 'Competition Law and Impact on Foreign Direct Investment Course' or the 'Intellectual Property for CLMV Course'.

31 AUG TO 8 SEP 2010

Singapore and World Health Organisation (WHO) welcomed 58 participants from 23 countries at the second Asia-Pacific Dengue Workshop. Topics included improving regional dengue laboratory and vector surveillance regimes, the clinical management of dengue cases and primary treatment methods. The workshop was jointly organised by the SCP, WHO and the National Environment Agency of Singapore under the auspices of the Singapore-WHO Joint Training Programme. It was supported by Nanyang Polytechnic, Tan Tock Seng Hospital, Regional Emerging Diseases Intervention (REDI) Centre and Secretariat of the Pacific Community.