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CANADA

Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of Singapore - Canada relations

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Trans-Pacific Partners: Strengthening Canada – Singapore Ties

This year marks Canada and Singapore's fiftieth anniversary of diplomatic ties dating back to the founding of Singapore in 1965. Business relations between the two countries have been growing steadily since ties were established and both countries are actively exploring new opportunities to strengthen their economic partnership.

Flagship Canadian companies from Ontario and Quebec are leading the charge to strengthen ties between Canada and Singapore: insurance company, Manulife has been providing Singaporeans with life insurance coverage and wealth management services since 1980. Bombardier opened another office in Singapore to meet the increasing demand for commercial aircraft in the Southeast Asian region. Most recently, Canada's largest software company, OpenText, has begun providing enterprise information management software to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

While east-coast based Canadian companies have been actively engaging with Singapore, British Columbia (BC) is positioning itself as the 'Gateway to the Americas' for Asian businesses.

"Southeast Asia is a key priority market for BC," says Christy Clark, Premier of British Columbia. "We are looking to

Southeast Asia for new ways to work together for mutual trade and investment."

Since taking office in 2011, Premier Clark has been on several trade missions to countries across the Asian region including Singapore, Malaysia and the Philippines. These trade missions have already begun to bear fruit and the number of BC businesses active in Singapore and Southeast Asia is on the rise.

During her visit to Singapore, Premier Clark generated over 140 highly-paid skilled jobs for BC with the reopening of Paper Excellence Group's Chetwynd pulp mill. On the same mission, Woodfiber LNG also signed a letter of intent to advance the company's liquefied natural gas (LNG) production in BC.

"We cannot afford to overlook ASEAN," says Teresa Wat, Minister of International Trade and Minister Responsible for Asia Pacific Strategy and Multiculturalism and The Honourable Christy Clark, Premier of British Columbia, Canada.

Headquartered in Richmond, BC, Dr. Power is a world-leader in next generation lithium-ion technology batteries. The company chose Singapore as its maiden export market and is continuing to experience growth in Singapore and across the Asian region.

With the support of the Canadian business community, the Canada-Singapore Business Association (CSBA) was established in 1995. CSBA promotes bilateral commerce between the two countries by working closely with the local and federal governments of Canada and the Singaporean High Commission.

"We are here, ready to help



The Honourable Teresa Wat, British Columbia Minister of International Trade and Minister Responsible for Asia Pacific Strategy and Multiculturalism and The Honourable Christy Clark, Premier of British Columbia, Canada

capital firm is assisting entrepreneurs from Asia as they establish businesses in Canada.

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in any way we can to promote better business relations between Canada and Singapore," says Brian Cole, Chairman of CSBA.

Educational institutions are also involved in bringing Singapore and Canada together. Sprott Shaw College is expanding its Asian footprint by inviting students from the region to consider a college experience in Canada.

"We truly are blessed to have one of the largest Southeast Asian communities in the country. It's a huge part of what gives British Columbia and Canada its unique identity. I can't think of a more appropriate – or more Canadian – way to celebrate our national holiday," says Premier Clark.

www2.gov.bc.ca

Entrepreneurs and Start-Ups Blossom in Canada

CEO and president of Top Renergy Inc. (TRE) Chris Xie goes to bat for startups as they expand their businesses in North America.

VANCOUVER – We often hear small businesses are the engines of job creation. In Canada, almost one out of two Canadians in the private sector works for a small business. In support of building a culture of entrepreneurship, Chris Xie established TRE in 2010, a venture capital firm based in Canada.

TRE is committed to empowering and inspiring entrepreneurs. Alongside with Canada Immigration and Citizenship, TRE supports a new type of immigrant entrepreneur who has the potential to build innovative companies that can compete on a global scale and create jobs.

"We are proud of being a designated venture capital



Chris Xie, CEO and President, Top Renergy

entity for the newly launched Start-Up Visa Program introduced by the government of Canada," said Xie.

With Southeast Asia's rapid economic growth, an increasing number of Asian compa-

nies and entrepreneurs are in a much stronger position to seek investment and business opportunities in North America. Xie is committed to supporting these entrepreneurs if the criteria are met as they apply to the Start-Up Visa Program.

Xie's vision is to create positive economic impacts to the stakeholders, investors and local Canadian business communities.

"TRE is extremely interested in supporting innovative companies, startups and aspiring entrepreneurs to establish and expand their businesses in Canada," said Xie.

TRE focuses on supporting new technologies and technical innovations, internet and IT related businesses with applications in a variety of industries.

TRE also plans to launch a private venture capital fund and establish a Canada-China startup business incubator. Plans are in place between



TRE and a global fund company. This partnership will enable TRE to support startups through venture capital funding and create additional cooperation initiatives.

"We look forward to collaborating with partner companies in Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Mainland China. I see endless opportunities throughout the Pacific Rim. We are determined to promote the 'Spirit of Entrepreneurship' and startups in North America by bridging North America to Asia," concluded Xie.

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www.toprenergy.com

Offering Students a Great Educational Experience

With breath-taking mountains, beaches and forests and vibrant cities, the province's motto: 'Beautiful British Columbia' accurately reflects the sentiment across British Columbia. The combination of world-class educa-

tion on teaching specific skills and offer flexible programs to suit each student's career choice."

Established in 1903, Sprott Shaw College offers rolling program start dates every month to ensure there

Community support. The Health Care Assistant program is one of the fastest growing programs and in 2008, Sprott Shaw College became the largest Practical Nursing Trainer in Canada.

Cooperative programs are

their chosen field," says Dang. "Our advisors help students determine what industries are a good fit for their aptitude and interests."

Having successfully established partnerships in Asia and recruited students from China,



Patrick Dang, President, Sprott Shaw College

tional establishments set in beautiful surroundings has ensured British Columbia has become a popular choice for students from Asia.

"With our proximity to Asia, temperate climate and stunning surroundings, we are able to offer students a great educational experience," explains Patrick Dang, President of Sprott Shaw College. "We fo-

cus on teaching specific skills and offer flexible programs to suit each student's career choice."

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South Korea, Japan and Vietnam, Dang is reaching out to Singapore, Malaysia and the rest of Southeast Asia.

"As we expand our international footprint, we see opportunities within the Singaporean market," he explains. "We want to establish partnerships with leading Universities, Colleges and agency networks in Singapore. With the right partners, we can further contribute to the development of our students and their future contribution to the global society".

www.sprottshaw.com

Dr. Power ensures the world remains 'switched-on'

In today's digital society, electronic devices have become an essential part of our personal and professional lives. With 'battery-life' an increasingly important issue, the global battery industry has developed into a billion dollar business and new technologies are crucial in ensuring the world remains 'switched-on'.

In Richmond, British Columbia, Dr. Power has become a leading research and distributing company for high-quality mobile-power solutions. The company's product range includes next-generation lithium-ion batteries for notebooks, digital cameras, camcorders, smartphones and other portable electronic devices.

Today, Dr. Power's 4,000 plus products cover approximately ninety percent of all devices available on the global market. The company exports to over fifty countries including Singapore, a market close to the heart of Joshua Huen, the founder and President of Dr. Power.

"Singapore's status as a developed nation in the region and its utilization of



Dr. Power's 4,000 plus products cover approximately ninety percent of all devices available on the global market

E-commerce prompted us to start shipping directly to Singapore from our facility in Hong Kong," he explains. "Singapore was our first export market and we have managed to gain a significant market share there after only a few years".

The company sells its mobile-power solutions in Singapore through reseller's websites such as www.battdepot.com/sg/ and delivers to both personal and institutional customers.

"Consumers usually buy batteries from device manufacturers or purchase lower-quality alternatives," says Huen. "One of our competitive advantages is that we are the only branded battery in this particular niche segment of the industry. As an established Canadian brand with research and development facilities in Asia, customers can expect the highest quality products from us. Our products are manufactured in ISO:9001 certified facilities and our factory testing capabilities meet Conformité Européenne/European Conformity (CE) and Underwriters Laboratories (UL) standards. In addition, we have registered trademarks throughout our strategic markets, including Singapore."

Dr. Power's premium products include the 'Advanced Pro Series' laptop battery packs powered by the latest battery cell

technology from Samsung SDI Li-ion. Dr. Power has also partnered with Leyden Energy Inc., a Silicon Valley research and development company and Boston-Power® for the 'Green Series' - batteries powered by next-generation lithium-ion battery technology. The company is driven to expand into environmentally-friendly energy product categories.

"Our mission is to continue to develop safe, cost-effective and environmentally friendly products", says Huen. "We are also developing and marketing our high-quality LED lighting solutions under the brand name 'Dr. Bulbs' and our Power Assisted e-Bikes which are branded as 'Dr. EBIKE'."

With offices in the U.S., United Kingdom, France, Australia and Hong Kong, the company is strengthening its position as a leading brand in mobile-power solutions for portable electronic devices in strategic international markets.

"As a regional I.T. hub, Singapore remains an important market for us moving forward", says Huen. "As E-commerce continues to develop in Southeast Asia, we fully intend to expand our footprint across the region."

www.drpowerglobal.com



You know there is more life in your device

Why replace your computer or smart phone if all it needs is a new battery?

Dr. Battery is the world's leading manufacturer and distributor of lithium batteries, offering superior quality batteries at easily affordable prices. Perfect example is our Advance Pro Series laptop battery packs featuring Samsung SDI Li-ion battery cells.

Dr. Battery stocks replacement batteries for thousands of **computers, smart phones, cameras** and other **electronic devices**. Find the ones you need from our authorized reseller.

Dr. Battery Authorized Reseller
www.battdepot.com



A Division of **DR. POWER**



“Canada is recognised as one of the most innovative and competitive economies in the world . . . in this respect, I suspect we are not unlike Singapore. Canada generates over 4 per cent of global knowledge despite accounting for only 0.5 per cent of the world’s population.”

High Commissioner Heather Grant



Credit: Ottawa

A STAUNCH ALLY FROM THE START

SG50 also marks the 50th jubilee of Canadian-Singapore diplomatic ties which have grown closer over the years. **BY VINCENT WEE**

THE depth of bilateral ties between Singapore and Canada can be seen in the fact that they mark their 50th anniversary this year, since the latter was one of the first few countries to acknowledge Singapore as a nation back in 1965.

On Aug 10, 1965, Canada’s Prime Minister Lester Bowles Pearson wrote to then Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew officially recognising Singapore’s independence, and diplomatic relations were established later that year.

Canada’s High Commissioner to Singapore Heather Grant says: “Canada is proud to have been one of the first countries to have established diplomatic ties with Singapore in 1965. Over the past 50 years, the bilateral relationship has grown considerably, in line with changes and developments in both countries.”

For example, in the early years of Singapore’s development, under the Colombo Plan Scholarship programme, a number of Singaporeans studied in Canada, points out Ms Grant. These scholars then returned to take on leadership roles in both the public and private sectors, making valuable contributions to Singapore’s economic development.

“Today, thousands of Singaporean students have studied in Canada, taking advantage of Canada’s affordable world-class education, and similarly, many Canadian students are studying here,” she adds.

She notes that trade is another important element of the bilateral relationship, with more than S\$5 billion in merchandise and services exchanged between the two countries every year.

“People-to-people links are also strong. Since Lee Kuan Yew’s visit to Vancouver in 1968, dozens of visits have taken place by Canadian and Singaporean leaders and ministers to both countries,” she says.

Meanwhile, tourism between the two countries has grown over the years, with some 83,000 Canadians visiting Singapore each year.

Canadians are also working with Singaporeans to contribute to Singapore in unique

ways. For example, since 2011, Canadian and local volunteers have organised Terry Fox runs at East Coast Parkway in honour of the young Canadian amputee who lost his leg, and ultimately his life, to cancer. These runs have raised close to S\$800,000 for cancer research in Singapore, the High Commissioner points out.

“Canada and Singapore share many common interests and it is in these areas that we find the greatest opportunities to collaborate. Not surprisingly, commercial ties between our two countries continue to strengthen given that more than 100 Canadian companies are present in Singapore,” says Ms Grant.

Canada has one of the world’s best performing economies and strong industrial sectors including aerospace, telecommunications and agriculture which offer a variety of opportunities for both nations’ business communities to work together, she adds.

“We also work hard to introduce Canadian technology and innovation to Singapore and the broader Asean region. A good example of this is our participation in major regional trade events such as the recent Communic-Asia, which saw over 70 Canadian companies participate and over 130 business-to-business (B2B) meetings facilitated by the High Commission. It is from such beginnings that bilateral investments and commercial collaboration flourish,” says Ms Grant.

She adds that Canada is also a key gateway to North America for Singapore, which invests more in Canada than any other South-east Asian nation, while Singapore is Canada’s second-largest destination in South-east Asia for foreign direct investment (FDI).

“With Singapore as a regional hub not only to Asean but the Asia-Pacific region, Canadian companies’ trade and investment activities here are robust. Our companies are active across a number of sectors like financial services, energy, agriculture, aerospace, telecommunications and more. For example, in Singapore, you can find Canadian salmon and beef on supermarket shelves, pilots across the region are trained on Canadian flight simulators, and our financial institutions are offering their products and services locally,” says Ms Grant.



Many Canadian firms have established a presence in Singapore to take advantage of the linkages into South-east Asia and beyond. For example, readers will no doubt be familiar with internationally recognised Canadian brands found here such as BlackBerry, Bata, Bombardier, BMO, CAE, Celestica, Fairmont, Manulife, Scotiabank and others, she says.

Several of these companies have significant investments here including Vector Aerospace which, in May, held the grand opening of its new Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul facility at Seletar.

Similarly, Canada is an attractive business and investment destination. “We have attracted many multinational companies from around the world to set up their operations in Canada in order to serve the North American market. These companies view Canada as a solid venue for innovation and investment with our competitive tax policies, one of the best R&D tax treatments in the G-7 and a well-integrated transportation system with direct access to the Nafta market,” said Ms Grant.

“Canada is recognised as one of the most innovative and competitive economies in the world. In fact, and in this respect, I suspect we are not unlike Singapore. Canada generates over 4 per cent of global knowledge despite ac-

counting for only 0.5 per cent of the world’s population. There are already a number of cases of innovation collaboration between our respective countries including, for example, between academics and A*Star and a number of Canadian and Singaporean universities,” she adds.

Ms Grant says that “Canada is also blessed with an abundance of many of the natural resources, including LNG, that Singapore values so highly and we hope that more stable and long-standing commercial relationships will develop on these fronts in the coming years”.

There is also wide-ranging cooperation between Singapore and Canada in other areas such as security and defence, governance and the rule of law, pluralism and Arctic matters.

For example in the security and defence realm, the two countries cooperate on maritime security, non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and counter-terrorism, to name but a few areas, by sharing best practices and working together in various exercises. The Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) also sends pilots to train in Canada where they can take advantage of its wide open spaces.

Ms Grant also points out that “when Singapore became an accredited observer to the Arctic Council under Canada’s chairmanship of the organisation, we worked with the government of Singapore to help raise awareness of the importance of the Arctic here. In fact, one of my favourite exhibits in Singapore was one that we organised last year with the Sungei Buloh Wetlands Reserve and NParks on migratory birds that fly annually from the Arctic and stop over in Singapore”.

She notes that Singapore was admitted as an accredited observer to the leading body for international cooperation in the Arctic region which also promotes sustainable development in the Arctic, during Canada’s chairmanship of the organisation from 2013 to 2015.

“We also brought a Canadian Inuit children’s author and storyteller, Michael Kusugak, to Singapore to showcase Inuit culture and traditions. Over the past few years, a new and particular area of collaboration has been Canadian support for local groups striving to counter violence against women and to promote gender equality,” she adds.

Cooperation between the two countries extends to various multilateral forums such as the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (Apec) forum and the World Trade Organization (WTO).

“Both Canada and Singapore are trading nations, interested in promoting free trade and removing barriers to trade, and we have each concluded free trade agreements with numerous countries to create opportunities and open doors for the private sector and enlarge the economic reach of each country,” Ms Grant says.

Both countries are participants in the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) negotiations towards one of the most ambitious free trade initiatives in history. In addition to economic forums, Canada and Singapore are also members of the Commonwealth and the Asean Regional Forum, and Canada is a Dialogue Partner of Asean.

“Our shared interests in promoting the rule of law, democracy, effective governance, security, peace and prosperity mean that we willingly work together to improve the lives of our citizens and the global community,” Ms Grant adds.

Finally in terms of people-to-people ties there are also many commonalities, she notes. For example, as a result of both countries’ multi-racial, multi-religious and multi-lingual populations, some common threads related to pluralism and multiculturalism include the promotion of tolerance and understanding across the different cultures – for example, by the Office of Religious Freedom in Canada and by Singapore’s Inter-religious Organisation. Both countries also promote equal opportunities for education irrespective of gender or social background and equal opportunities for women in all aspects of the economy.

“The High Commission is excited about an exhibit we are currently working on with the National Library Board in honour of the 50th anniversary. We will be featuring 50 Canadian authors who trace their roots to all corners of the globe, emphasising the value of pluralism and diversity. I encourage you to visit the exhibit in one of five libraries across Singapore that will host the exhibit starting this October,” Ms Grant concludes.



Since 2011, Canadian and Singapore volunteers have organised Terry Fox runs at East Coast Parkway, raising close to S\$800,000 for cancer research here; and thousands of Singaporeans have studied in Canada, taking advantage of its affordable world-class education. Singapore was admitted as an accredited observer to the Arctic Council during Canada’s chairmanship of the organisation from 2013 to 2015. PHOTOS: HIGH COMMISSION OF CANADA