

JAPAN

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Japan and Singapore Strategic Partners Developing the Region

Singapore's Ambassador to Japan Lui Tuck Yew shares some insights with Synergy Media Specialists on the current state Japan-Singapore relations

Singapore and Japan have teamed up with initiatives such as the Japan Singapore Partnership Program for the 21st Century (JSPP 21) to facilitate ASEAN integration and provide technical cooperation to third countries. How has the Singapore-Japan relationship contributed thus far and are there any special plans in motion as 2020 approaches?

First established in 1994, the JSPP21 is one of Singapore's most successful and long-standing development partnerships with over 6,400 alumni participants. We renewed our partnership in December 2018 to expand our outreach to the Asia-Pacific region and consider new forms of joint cooperation, such as conducting joint seminars in third countries and supplementing each other's training programmes. For example, we recently conducted an Info-Comm Technology course in Ramallah, to support the Cooperation of East Asian Countries for Palestinian Development (CEA-PAD) initiative. We continually review our programmes to meet evolving development needs, as we look towards cooperation till 2020 and beyond.

Singapore is decidedly seen as the hub for South East Asia and is one of Japan's largest trade partners. What are the main economic sectors of cooperation between Singapore and Japan? What areas of cooperation are on the rise?

Singapore and Japan share long-standing economic ties, underpinned by strong trade, investment and tourism linkages. On the trade and investment front, Japan was Singapore's seventh largest trading partner in 2018 and third largest foreign investor as of end-2017. Major Japanese conglomerates like Schneider Electric, Hitachi and Takeda Pharmaceuticals have established their presence in Southeast Asia, using Singapore as a base. Similarly, Singapore is Japan's top Asian investor and fourth largest cumulative source of foreign investment as of end-2017. While Singapore companies in Japan have traditionally focused on sectors such as hospitality, real estate and logistics sectors, they are also seeking out new opportunities in food services, healthcare and precision engineering. For example, Bee Cheng Hiang entered Tokyo in 2016 and is looking to expand their footprint in Japan.

Looking ahead, Singapore and Japanese companies can continue to tap on each other's complementary strengths, and venture into third-party markets to promote quality infrastructure. Singapore's strengths in master planning and systems integration complements Japan's strengths



LUI TUCK YEW, Singapore's Ambassador to Japan

in technology and engineering. For example, Singapore's urban, industrial, and infrastructure consulting firm Surbana Jurong has partnered the Japan Overseas Investment Corporation for Transport and Urban Development (JOIN) and Philippines' Bases Conversion and Development Authority (BCDA) to support the development of New Clark City, a smart and green metropolis in the Philippines.

As both countries transform our economies and enhance productivity, there is also scope for closer innovation collaboration between Singapore and Japanese companies, especially in the digital economy. Indeed, Japanese startups are entering Singapore to tap on our pro-business environment, strong protection of intellectual property and geographical location within Southeast Asia. In the area of smart agriculture, Japanese aquaculture data analytics startup UMITRON, which builds aquaculture data platforms that leverage the use of Internet of Things (IoT), artificial intelligence and satellite remote sensing, established its headquarters in Singapore in 2016. Like-wise, Singapore startups are also growing their presence in Japan. In the area of smart retail, Singapore startup Honestbee, an online grocery concierge service startup, first launched its services in Japan in 2015 and is now looking to bring its cashless brick-and-mortar supermarkets to Japan.

Last year, Tokyo has also joined Singapore's Global Innovation Alliance (GIA) network of Innovation Launchpads. To facilitate mutual access to each other's innovation ecosystems, the Economic Development Board (EDB), Enterprise Singapore (ESG) and Japan External Trade Organisation (JETRO) will develop initiatives, events and information exchanges for startups and businesses from Singapore and Japan.

What type of targets or initiatives have you set out for the Embassy during your time as the Singaporean Ambassador to Japan?

The challenge for any Ambassador in a country with which bilateral relations are already excellent and broad-based is to find and develop new areas of cooperation. In this regard, I hope to first promote further cooperation in quality infrastructure projects in third countries. There are significant infrastructure demands in the region, and I believe that there are there is scope to leverage our respective strengths to encourage private sector infrastructure investment into Southeast Asia. Our newly established Infrastructure Asia office can play a crucial role in this area.

Second, the development of smart cities is another area in which Singapore and Japan can further collaborate. Indeed, Japan was one of the first and strongest supporters of the ASEAN Smart Cities Network (ASCN), one of Singapore's key initiatives during our ASEAN Chairmanship in 2018. We hope to work closely with Japan to make the most of the synergies between the ASCN and Japan's "Society 5.0" concept, in order to harness the benefits of the 4th industrial revolution for the betterment of our people's lives.

Third, both Singapore and Japan are experiencing demographic challenges, which will have long term implications on government policy planning and infrastructure investment. Thus, there is great potential for collaboration, such as through the sharing policy ideas and best practices on ageing, healthcare, immigration and talent flow, as well as the use technology to overcome the challenges of an ageing population.

What message do you have to send to the members of the Japanese, Singaporean and ASEAN business communities that will be reading this report?

One of the key messages is that businesses should take advantage of Singapore and Japan's commitment to free and open trade. Bilaterally, we signed the Japan-Singapore Economic Partnership Agreement in 2002, which was Japan's first Free Trade Agreement (FTA) and Singapore's first FTA with a major trading partner. At the regional level, both Singapore and Japan have ratified the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) and are parties to the on-going Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) negotiations. Singaporean, Japanese and Southeast Asian companies can tap on this network of bilateral and regional trade agreements to strengthen their competitiveness and access opportunities in each other's markets as well as overseas.

Helping Singapore's companies modernize and stay competitive

Industry 4.0 is ushering in a new era of manufacturing. With benefits such as improved efficiency and reduced operational downtime, it is critical that companies here modernize to remain competitive.

The Singapore government has adopted an extensive strategy to advance the adoption of Industry 4.0, causing business leaders to increasingly look for automation solutions that use technologies such as the Internet of Things (IoT) and big data. Simultaneously, businesses, like society as a Whole, are striving to counter

the problem of human impact on the environment.

One company providing such solutions is Japanese manufacturer Azbil Corporation, a leader in industrial and building automation. Founded in 1906, they have a long history of successfully modernizing companies' operations. Under the philosophy of "human-centered automation," Azbil use cutting-edge measurement and control technologies — the backbone of automation — to offer solutions that can solve customers' problems Whilst providing energy-efficiency, safety and comfort.

"In process and factory automation, companies are looking to leverage the IoT and big data, especially in smart industrial safety," explained Takayuki Yokota, Executive Director and Managing Executive Officer of International Business at Azbil. "Our smart valve positioners, for example, feature cutting-edge IoT-based sensors that constantly perform valve diagnostics and identify when maintenance should optimally occur. Our systems then analyze that accumulated sensor data to predict and prevent problems before they occur. Every dis-



TAKAYUKI YOKOTA, Executive Director and Managing Executive Officer of International Business, Azbil Corp.



Azbil Group's showroom in Singapore showcases the Group's technologies.

ruption affects competitiveness and customers' bottom line."

Their local subsidiary, Azbil Singapore Pte. Ltd., has been delivering building-systems solutions since 1998. Across Singapore, Azbil have deployed life-cycle solutions in plants, landmark building complexes, hotels, institutions of higher learning, hospitals, and data centres, resulting in reduced energy usage and CO2 emissions.

Last year, the company established their Strategic Planning & Development Office for Southeast Asia here to strategically develop regional business and strengthen business administration among its subsidiaries, through initiatives such as

implementing best practices and solutions across the region, and thereby creating a showroom to highlight the Azbil Group's technologies, and leading the Group's participation in the Industrial Transformation ASIA-PACIFIC (ITAP) trade show this year for the second consecutive year.

Moving forward, Azbil Will go beyond automation by offering even more life-cycle solutions that solve customers' problems and tackle issues faced by society.

azbil

www.azbil.com

Mitsui Sugar and SIS – The sweet taste of success

Sa-Shi-Su-Se-So is the Japanese mnemonic for the five basic ingredients essential to washoku (Japanese cuisine). The very first syllable corresponds to satou (sugar) - used for more than just flavouring.

For over a century, Mitsui Sugar Co., Ltd. has enriched Japanese lives by providing safe, reliable and natural ingredients centred on sugar, functional carbohydrates, sugarcane and sugar beets.

Last year, Mitsui Sugar made a strategic move to acquire Singapore's leading sugar company SIS'88 Pte. Ltd. in order to expand its business in Southeast Asia, a region in which demand for sugar continues to rise.

"SIS is a well-known, distinct brand in Singapore and the Middle East," says Daisuke Saiga, president and CEO of Mitsui Sugar. "With Mitsui Sugar's know-how, marketing capacity and long-running experience, we plan to leverage SIS's existing brand recognition and become a leading brand in Singapore and Southeast Asia."

SIS has a subsidiary named "Asian Blending" which specializes in food ingredient blends. The blending business is growing rapidly due to diversification of products in the food and beverage industry and their function and role has become important in the sugar



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Together with SIS, we look forward to ensuring we become a reliable supplier of highly quality sweeteners in Southeast Asia, the Middle East and Africa for both traditional and functional sugars.”

DAISUKE SAIGA
President and CEO, Mitsui Sugar

market, particularly in middle to downstream.

In addition to strengthening



TAN HUAT SENG, CEO of SIS'88 Pte. Ltd.

its corporate values, Mitsui Sugar aims to raise the quality of life of customers by introducing healthier sugar alternatives.

"We are very aware of the role sugar plays in health issues such as diabetes," explains Saiga. "In order to address these issues, we have developed functional sugars which are a healthier alternative to traditional sugar."

Mitsui Sugar has been developing health functions of carbohydrates called Palatinose®, which works to moderate the absorption of sugar thus preferred by health-conscious people and athletes.

The company intends to continue investing in scien-

tific research and education, particularly in Singapore, to help develop sugar alternatives while promoting the more healthier and functional uses of sugar.

"Together with SIS, we look forward to ensuring we become a reliable supplier of highly quality sweeteners in Southeast Asia, the Middle East and Africa for both traditional and functional sugars," concludes Saiga.



www.mitsui-sugar.co.jp/english
www.sissugar.com

Green-shipping leader makes waves in a niche market

Intricately connected, the maritime and steel industries drive today's global economy. Tokyo-based shipping company NS United Kaiun Kaisha (NS United) has become a leader in each industry.

As a group company of Nippon Steel, the largest steel producer in Japan and third largest worldwide, NS United has grown in line with the development of the global steel industry since the 1950s.

NS United is engaged in raw material handling from Brazil and Australia and exports steel products to Asia and North America. What gives the company its uniqueness is its comprehensive capability to transport not only cargo for Nippon Steel but also everything from raw materials and industrial products to feed grains and energy resources for general customers.

"Based on our close ties to Nippon Steel we have established credibility within the market," says



MV UTASHIMA, The Hybrid Vessel

Kazuo Tanimizu, president of NS United. "We have leveraged our expertise to expand our international business and serve some of the world's largest resources companies, steel producers, and power companies."

"We categorize ourselves as a niche player within the maritime industry and consolidated our core businesses to focus on stable revenue," says Tanimizu.

"We prioritized quality-shipping to differentiate ourselves from the

competition and we are now at the forefront of the industry's 'green' movement through our environmental compliance."

Operating about 200 vessels, NS United group's fleet includes a hybrid vessel for coastal use.

"Our customers are increasingly concerned with environmental corporate governance and we responded to this by positioning ourselves as leaders in 'green shipping'," says Tanimizu.

"We are the first company in Japan to operate the hybrid vessel and we are looking into managing even larger hybrid vessels in the future."

With strong economic growth across Asia and the broader Eurasian region, Tanimizu intends to capitalize on global business opportunities through Singapore.

"Knowledge is accumulated in Singapore and every global shipping and resource company is there," says Tanimizu.

NS United started its business in Singapore in 1992 and today its subsidiary, NS United Bulk is expanding the business operations backed by its locational advantage.

"It is important for us to remain



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From Singapore, we will strive to become one of the world's 'greenest' shipping companies and continue to provide superior quality services to our customers.”

KAZUO TANIMIZU
President, NS United Kaiun Kaisha

in Singapore, to gain insights and build relations. From Singapore, we will strive to become one of the world's 'greenest' shipping com-

ppanies and continue to provide superior quality services to our customers."

www.nsuship.co.jp

NS United Kaiun Kaisha, Ltd.

Leading asset management company expands through Singapore

| BY MARCO LOBREGAT



AKIRA SUGANO, CEO of Asset Management One Co., Ltd.

Asset Management One Co., Ltd. was established in 2016 through the integration of four asset management companies; DIAM Co., Ltd., Mizuho Asset Management Co., Ltd., Shinko Asset Management Co., Ltd., and the Asset Management Division of Mizuho Trust & Banking Co., Ltd.

“Our first mid-term plan focused on our successful post-merger integration,” says Akira Sugano, president and CEO of Asset Management One Co., Ltd. “Cost-efficiency played an important role within our efforts to become a leading asset management company.”

With over US\$500 billion under management, Asset Management One is one of the largest asset management companies in Japan and Asia.

With over US\$500 billion under management, Asset Management One is one of the largest asset management companies in Japan and Asia.

Through the company's global network of offices in Tokyo, New York, London, Hong Kong and Singapore, Asset Management One is able to offer a wide range of high-standard products and solutions and provide localized services to investors around the world.

“As we embark on our second mid-

term plan, we will harness the expertise which our four member companies have cultivated over the years and allocate our resources effectively to become a goal-based solutions provider,” shares Sugano.

“We plan to go the extra mile in analysing our clients’ portfolios and adapt to their needs in order to provide solutions which will enable our customers to achieve their financial goals.”

Asset Management One is a signatory of the United Nations-supported ‘Principles for Responsible Investment’ and has worked on socially-responsible investments from day one to support clients’ long-term interests.

“Our multiple ESG (environmental, social and governance) related funds total US\$1.4 billion and are proving to be of great interest to our target client base,” shares Sugano.

With a presence in Singapore for over a decade through DIAM’s Singapore office, the company’s investment capabilities have been strengthened in order to meet growing demand across the region.

“We will be preparing for more various types of products to fit into the market needs including Singapore,” concludes Sugano. “Our Singapore office will play a key role in leading our efforts to expand our customer base across Asia. Looking forward, we intend to become the most-trusted asset management company in the industry.”



Trusted Partner in Engineering and Construction Services

A trusted global partner, Jurong Engineering Ltd. (JEL) has delivered construction and engineering solutions to customers for almost 50 years.

The company was incorporated in 1971 as a joint venture between Ishikawajima Harima Heavy Industries Co., Ltd. (now known as IHI Corporation), Jurong Shipyard and The Development Bank of Singapore. In 2005, IHI Corporation became the majority shareholder.

JEL is involved in every aspect of every project executed by the company. It provides a full spectrum of services including engineering, construction, project management and maintenance solutions. By working closely with clients, the company continues to successfully deliver turnkey projects around the world.

“Our strengths as a construction company are founded on our engineering capabilities and superior problem-solving skills,” says Masao Akamatsu, Managing Director and CEO of JEL. “We are always seeking new ways to innovate and improve our capabilities to perform and deliver.”

The company’s diverse, competent and highly-motivated workforce of 23 nationalities from key disciplines consistently provide solutions that exceed customer expectations through 25 overseas companies and offices.

“We are the service provider to solve problems,” says Akamatsu. “We are ready to face challenges as a team and we communicate in a direct manner to coordinate effectively with our clients. Each project we take on is a collaborative effort and we are confident in our abilities to execute projects effectively from start to finish.”

JEL’s ambitious 2018 project in Myanmar is a good example of the company’s commitment to delivering projects in challenging environments. JEL participated in and success-



DESIGNED AND BUILT BY JEL: 112-megawatt gas-fired combined-cycle power plant in Central Thailand

fully completed a 225-megawatt gas-fired combined-cycle power plant in a remote area of the country.

Equipment for the project had to be transported almost

800km to the site. The power plant, which has commenced full commercial operation last year, is one of the most efficient and largest of its kind in the country. This year, JEL

is focused on delivering more turnkey projects across Southeast Asia.

“Our vision is to be the leading engineering and construction service provider in Asia,” says Akamatsu. “We aim to become the partner of choice in the region by earning the trust of our clients and strengthening our long-term working relationships.”

“Southeast Asia is a huge market and we want to capitalize on the region’s economic growth. Southeast Asia will remain our area of focus,” says Akamatsu.

“The volume of business we do in Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia and Vietnam is increasing and we are penetrating countries such as Myanmar. In addition, we are diversifying to markets including the Philippines, Bangladesh, the Middle East and countries in Africa such as Mozambique.”

With an extensive global network, JEL works closely with its customers including Japanese companies in global markets.

“We are able to maximize our resources by strengthening the construction divisions of our subsidiaries,” says Aka-

matsu. “We intend to secure larger power plant projects in the region while focusing on renewable energy solutions, developing non-energy projects and strengthening our maintenance services.”

JEL continues to enhance its operational efficiency and project management capabilities while expanding its global footprint.

“We aspire to improve our existing business through technology and innovation,” says Akamatsu. “In addition to upholding the highest safety standards, we will strive to be lean, flexible and responsive to changes in the market.”

While renewing its corporate brand image this year, the company will retain its core values of diligence, continuous learning, shared ownership, customer satisfaction and respect.

“The keyword for us is ‘change’,” concludes Akamatsu. “In order to remain fresh and competitive in a rapidly changing industry, we are embracing changes and will integrate our resources to ensure the future growth of the company.”

www.jel.com.sg



MASAO AKAMATSU, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, Jurong Engineering Limited, at the 225-megawatt gas-fired combined-cycle power plant in Myanmar. On his right are ZAIHANA ABDUL RAHMAN, Head of EPC Management Unit and YE LIN OO, Site Manager, Jurong Engineering Limited

Leadership Insights

Key opinion leaders from the Japan-Singapore business community share some insights



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Japan and Singapore have built up an excellent and mutually beneficial relationship over many years. Economic ties between the two countries are particularly close, and more than 1,200 Japanese companies now have offices in Singapore, including many that have their Asian regional headquarters there.”

MASAKAZU KUBOTA
Director General, Keidanren (Japan Business Federation)

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In force since 2002, the Japan-Singapore Economic Partnership Agreement (JSEPA) marked a major milestone for both nations as it was Japan’s first free trade agreement and Singapore’s first with a major trading partner. Looking ahead, we are excited about the opportunities the landmark Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) will bring as it entered into force on last Dec 30 for the first six countries that ratified the pact, including Japan and Singapore. This trade pact will undoubtedly boost our trade ties further.”

HO MENG KIT
CEO, Singapore Business Federation



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Our team is dedicated to promoting regional revitalization in Japan by creating employment in those areas. Our goal is to facilitate multi-directional growth which is essential to the development of our society.”

YASUYUKI NAMBU
Group CEO, Pasona Group



As the global strategic partner for our customers, we have successfully built more than 170 power plants and 660 industrial facilities in over 20 countries. We are committed to delivering superior comprehensive engineering solutions to customers in every region, no matter where they are. To find out more about Jurong Engineering Limited, visit:

jel.com.sg

