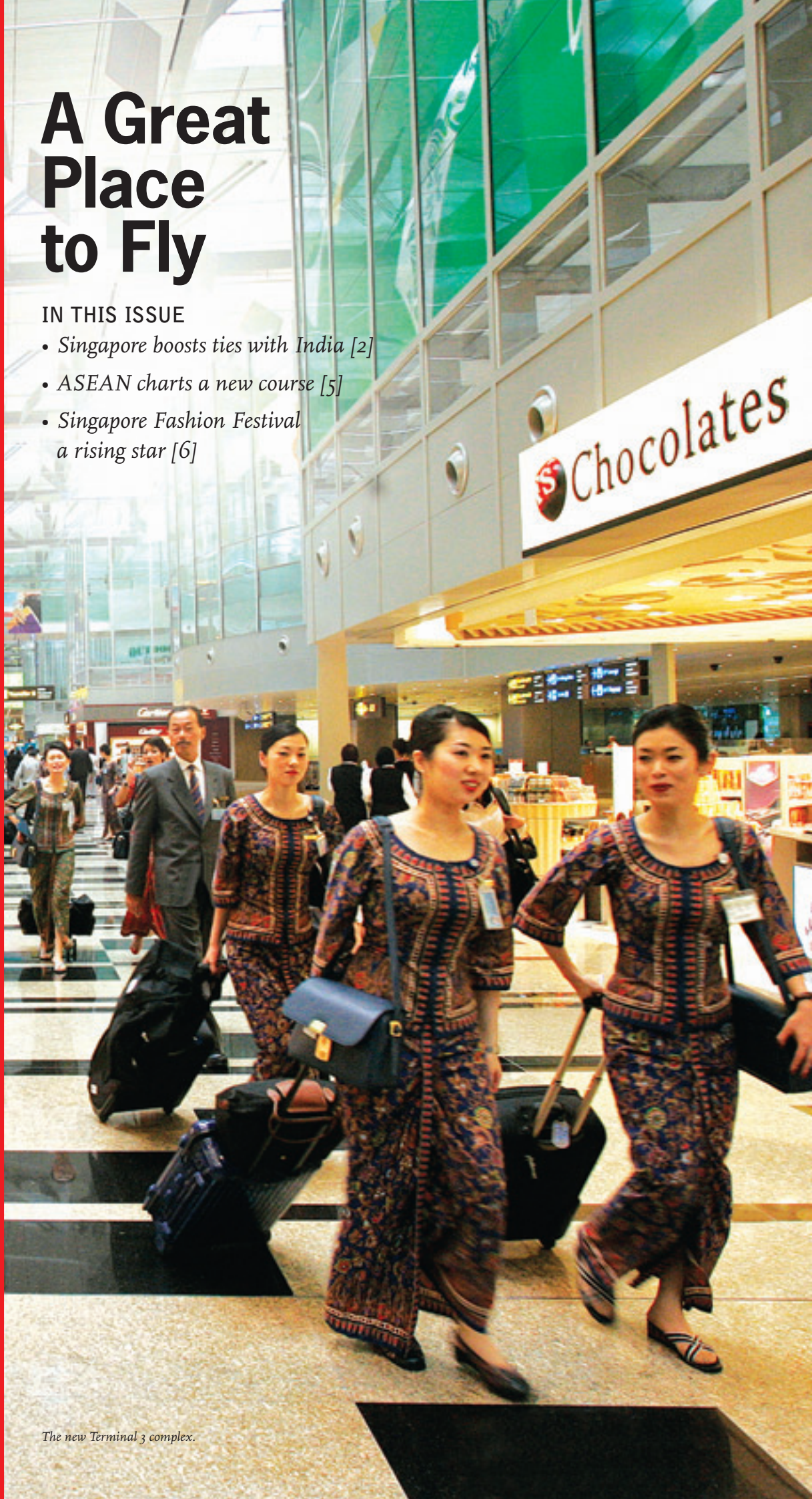


experiencesingapore

A Great Place to Fly

IN THIS ISSUE

- *Singapore boosts ties with India* [2]
- *ASEAN charts a new course* [5]
- *Singapore Fashion Festival a rising star* [6]



The new Terminal 3 complex.

New Era of Singapore-Thai Ties

"Singapore and Thailand are old friends. Outside Singapore's old Parliament House stands a bronze elephant monument, which was presented to us by King Chulalongkorn during his historic visit in 1871, the first by a Thai monarch. This was the beginning of a friendship which has endured and grown stronger with the passage of time."

– PM Lee Hsien Loong, at a dinner honouring PM Samak Sundaravej



Thailand's Prime Minister Samak Sundaravej tours the Tiong Bahru Market during his official visit to Singapore. Accompanying him are Mr Lee Yuen Hee, (third from left), CEO of NEA and Mr Lim Swee Say, (right, next to Mr Samak), Secretary-General of NTUC.

BILATERAL ties between Singapore and Thailand have entered a new era, following a meeting in March between the two countries' leaders.

Thai Prime Minister Samak Sundaravej, who is also Minister of Defence, met Singapore PM Lee Hsien Loong in Singapore as part of his introductory tour of the region after taking office in February.

Both leaders agreed to renew the Thailand-Singapore Civil Service Exchange Programme (CSEP). The CSEP brings together senior civil servants annually to discuss bilateral issues to enhance cooperation.

The meeting also saw the revival of the Singapore-Thailand Enhanced Economic Relationship (Steer) meeting, last held in Bangkok in 2005.

Incepted in 2003, Steer is a Singapore-led initiative aimed at fostering greater bilateral economic cooperation across various sectors

such as agriculture, life sciences, automotive and financial services.

Singapore is one of Thailand's top trading partners, with bilateral trade of more than \$30 billion last year. Singapore is also one of the top five investors in the country.

Mr Samak remarked that the visit has provided yet another good opportunity to reaffirm existing close ties bilaterally, and to explore ways to deepen cooperation in current and future areas of mutual interest.

Mr Lee said: "Asean's credibility is at stake, and we must take decisive action to show the world that we are committed to forge ahead as a group."

During his visit, Mr Samak also paid a courtesy call on President S R Nathan, and

met with Minister Mentor Lee Kuan Yew and Defence Minister Teo Chee Hean.

But it wasn't all work no play for the Thai PM, who used to host his own TV cooking show back in Thailand.

During a three-hour window in between his official engagements, Mr Samak took time out to tour Singapore's Tiong Bahru market, well-known as a haven for good hawker fare. He also revealed to reporters that his favourite dish is fried rice.

Channel NewsAsia quoted Mr Samak, who was formerly governor of Bangkok from 2000-2003, as saying: "My favourite is fried rice. We call it "fried rice, governor style". But now I am not the governor anymore, I call it "fried rice, ex-governor style."

Singapore Boosts Ties with India

SOME people have the wrong idea that the Nano car from Tata Motors – India's latest car for its masses – is almost toy-sized. Singapore's Senior Minister Goh Chok Tong, on a recent visit to India, got into a Nano and test-drove it. All of two metres, Mr Goh even found some headroom to spare.

Senior Minister Goh was checking out the car – which is 3.1m long, 1.5m wide and 1.6m tall – while on a six-day visit to India in March this year. The Tata group of companies, of which Tata Motors falls under, has had a strong presence in Singapore. Its chairman Ratan Tata is an advisor to several Singapore companies and organisations and the Tata Group has left its imprint in the information technology, steel and hotel industries, among others, in Singapore.

Mr Goh's valued friendship with India can be traced back 14 years, when the then-Prime Minister sparked off a 'mild India fever' in Singapore. He rallied Singaporeans to take an active interest in India just as the latter was on the cusp of economic reforms. Mr Goh also urged Indian businesses to gain a foothold in Singapore.



Senior Minister Goh Chok Tong trying out the Indian made Tata Nano Car together with members of his delegation.

Today, India is the world's fastest-growing free market economy and the fourth largest economy in purchasing power parity. Singapore is India's most important trading partner among ASEAN countries and also India's gateway to Southeast Asia and China. India became Singapore's 12th largest trading partner in 2007.

The Bangalore Industrial Park in Karnataka is a shining example of two countries coming together for the mutual benefit of its people.

As part of his ongoing visits to India to foster a closer economic partnership between Singapore and India, Senior Minister Goh, met Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, Minister of External Affairs Pranab Mukherjee, Minister of Commerce and Industry Kamal Nath and Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission Montek Singh Ahluwalia.

Among the topics he raised during his meetings with the Indian leaders were a speedy conclusion to the Asean-India free trade agreement (FTA), freeing up India's aviation in line with the open-skies policy that Asean is working towards, and a possible location for a multi-product special economic zone in India.

Dr Manmohan Singh and Mr Goh, who are economists by training, also discussed the current challenges of food scarcity, inflation and the ripple effects of the sub-prime crisis.

Mr Goh's trip included a stopover at India's National Museum, which had loaned the Asian Civilisations Museum in Singapore several priceless artefacts, including the sacred relics of Buddha, for its Nalanda exhibition last year.

Helping Bhutan

THE Himalayan Kingdom of Bhutan may be relatively unknown to some. Nestled between India and China, it has been described as the abode of the gods and home to the immortals. Not just because of the untouched tranquillity of the natural surroundings, but also for the mystical allure it has held for time immemorial, for pilgrims seeking wisdom, inspiration and happiness.

And perhaps it was the irresistible draw of this mysterious land which drew Ms Ong Li Ping to take a year off work and pack her bags for Bhutan. The former applications analyst volunteered in an expedition to assist the Bhutan Royal Civil Service Commission in migrating its massive human resource information management system to a web-based one.

Speaking of her experience in an interview with local newspaper Today, she marvelled at Bhutan's beautiful natural landscape and the warmth of its people. "Bhutanese are guest-loving people, and despite the language barrier, warm welcomes meet me wherever I go. I often find myself humbled and always grateful for the opportunity to experience the generosity of the Bhutanese people," she said.

Many other kindred spirits like Ms Ong have joined hands with the Singapore International Foundation's (SIF) Singapore Volunteer Overseas programme to volunteer in Bhutan. For instance, four volunteers from the Academy of Human Development and Fei Yue Family Service Centre have been conducting a workshop on the basic knowledge and skills of counselling for Bhutanese school teachers over the last three years.

In line with Bhutan's aim to develop a



Ms Tam Peck Hoon dons the traditional Bhutanese kira, at a ceremony for an SIF IT-in-Education project partnering the National Institute of Education in Singapore and Royal University of Bhutan in Paro.

professional pool of school counsellors, these volunteers have developed three counselling modules titled "Advanced Counselling Theories & Skills", "Special Issues in Counselling" and "Clinical Practice". These modules make up part of the Diploma in Counselling that will be awarded by the College of Education, Royal University of Bhutan.

The SIF has also contributed 24 reference books on counselling to the new resource libraries of Bhutan's Ministry of Education and Colleges of Education. Ms Tam Peck Hoon, Manager for International Volunteerism at SIF, said, "This workshop has been effective in enhancing the skills and knowledge of the schoolteachers to effectively assist students with teenage issues such as stress management, school-related issues, interpersonal relationships and substance abuse. We are very grateful to our Singapore volunteers for sharing their expertise with the Bhutanese school teachers."

The trainee teachers were glad for the opportunity to enhance their knowledge and skills in counselling students and gave positive feedback on the workshop, as their country embraces a new era.

The advent of TV and the Internet almost a decade ago, coupled with the introduction of

democracy this year after a century of absolute monarchy, has led the Bhutanese on the path to rapid modernisation. These trainee teachers, who have led a life marked by morning prayers and the turning of prayer drums at the school temple, now count watching TV channels like BBC, ESPN and National Geographic among their favourite pastimes.

This is a people who are gingerly welcoming modernity while staying true to their traditions. Looking around Bhutan's unspoiled natural beauty and rich culture and heritage, one could not help feeling inspired by their strong sense of national identity.

It is little wonder that Business Week in 2006 rated Bhutan the happiest country in Asia and the eighth happiest country in the world.

SCP COURSES FROM JUN TO AUG 2008

Course	Environmental Public Health Management
When	16 – 25 Jul 2008
Agency	Singapore Environment Institute, National Environment Agency
Course	Civil Aviation Chief Executives Programme
When	22 – 28 Jun 2008
Agency	Singapore Aviation Academy, Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore
Course	Urban Traffic and Congestion Management
When	22 Jul – 1 Aug 2008
Agency	LTA Academy, Land Transport Authority
Course	Senior Management Workshop in Sustainable Water Resources Management
When	13 – 20 Aug 2008
Agency	Public Utilities Board, Ministry of the Environment and Water Resources

These Training Awards are part of the Singapore Cooperation Programme (SCP) of technical assistance to developing countries. For more information on application procedures and terms of awards, contact the Technical Cooperation Directorate, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, at tel: (65) 98199353 or fax: (65) 64793357. You can also visit our website at <http://www.scp.gov.sg>.

Correction for Helping Hands: In the previous Experience Singapore issue 33, under Helping Hands, 'Boarding School for Aceh Orphans', it was reported that SIF helped to raise more than \$5 million for the building of the Fajar Hidayah Integrated Boarding School. This is incorrect. The \$5 million was in fact funded by the Tidal Waves Asia Fund. We apologise for the error.



Ms Ong Li-Ping at the office of the Royal Civil Service Commission of Bhutan, where she works with her Bhutanese IT counterparts in the developing a web-based HR system for the civil service.

Of Good Food and Clean Water



Cristina with her coursemates from the course on 24/7 Water Supply and Distribution Management.

FOOD-TRIPPING – or going in search of good food – was the highlight for Ms Cristina V. Alcazar, as well as many of her course mates, during their management course in water supply and distribution conducted recently by Singapore's Public Utilities Board.

To allow course participants, who came from countries like Africa, Bahrain and Turkey, to soak in the sights and sounds during their brief stay here, the organisers made it a point to take them to different parts of the island for meals.

"It felt like we got to see the furthest ends of Singapore," said Cristina, who hails from the Philippines.

These mealtime escapades led them to explore the nooks and crannies of Singapore, such as Toa Payoh housing estate and the "heartland malls" or suburban shopping centres located in many precincts. "We also get to shop a little whenever we go for lunch," she added.

Cristina is no stranger to Singapore, having visited four times previously. She felt that the organisers' efforts to enhance the participants' learning experience beyond the classroom, had given her a whole new perspective of Singapore.

"I've come to appreciate this country more now that I've also experienced the non-touristy aspects during this trip," she said.

Like any true foodie, Cristina's latest quest was to track down and sample pepper crab – a local delicacy – at "No Signboard", the well-known Singaporean chain of seafood restaurants which she had heard about back in the Philippines.

Next to her leisurely pursuits, Cristina was just as excited when she recounted her visit to the NEWater Plant, Singapore's water reclamation facility. "It was very interesting," she said, recalling the display of water treatment processes for converting used water into high-grade drinking water.

The principal engineer from the Philippines' Local Water Utilities Administration went on to describe the water situation in her country.



Cristina V. Alcazar from the Philippines enjoying her tour in Sentosa.

While Singapore is faced with the problem of water scarcity, the Philippines, on the other hand, is battling issues of freshwater management and conservation.

"Take Laguna de Bay for instance, the largest inland freshwater lake in the Philippines. The pollution of the lake by industries in the vicinity is quite an area of concern."

"This NEWater technology can be very useful to my country, since we are also surrounded by

seawater. Although a potential obstacle that I see is the issue of funding it," she continued. "However, now that they are advancing into membrane technology, I think the price of the membrane filters will get cheaper and then we can have access to this technology."

With the course drawing to a close, Cristina shared that she would be extending her stay by four days, with her 20-year-old daughter flying in from Philippines to join her for a vacation. Her face lit up as she described the strong bond the mother-and-daughter pair shared, and how she makes it a point to join in the activities her daughter enjoys, whenever she can.

"My daughter wants to check out St James Power Station", she said, referring to the 70,000 square-foot complex that has been converted into 10 nightclubs, all under one roof.

Besides the girls' night out, Cristina also plans to head down to Jurong Bird Park, her favourite attraction in Singapore and a place she never fails to visit whenever she visits.

"The park is so serene. It's just so relaxing to walk amidst the greenery, accompanied by the birds and butterflies," she reminisced. "I'm really looking forward to it, but I'm saving this treat for tomorrow when my daughter joins me."

She then marvelled aloud at how Singapore has been rapidly evolving – from the sight of new skyscrapers adorning the city's skyline to the development of the recreational island Sentosa into an integrated resort by 2012.

"I'll definitely come back again," she smiled. "I like Singapore."

ASEAN CHARTS A NEW COURSE



ASEAN Foreign Ministers Retreat at the Sentosa Resort. ASEAN ministers who are here for the grouping's annual Foreign Ministers' Retreat met Singapore leaders for talks on bilateral and regional matters.

Foreign Ministers from the 10 ASEAN member countries were greeted with a welcome dinner on board a chartered boat when they met for their annual retreat in February.

Held at Sentosa Island in Singapore, the delegation spent the next two days discussing regional developments and ways to deepen ASEAN integration. The need for cooperation in building an East Asian Community was assessed and formation of an ASEAN Community by 2015 remained a priority. The focus of the retreat, however, was on the implementation of the ASEAN Charter following its signing at the 13th ASEAN Summit in November.

Like a sail erected to propel a boat on its course, the Charter is a manifesto of the members' resolve to become a more effective and cohesive organisation, and sets out to be a cornerstone for continued integration by outlining ASEAN's purpose, principles, rules and structure.

More specifically, the 31-page document includes provisions for the leaders to meet twice a year and the formation of four new coordinating councils of ministers. There will also be a committee of permanent representatives to be based in Jakarta, as well as a new human rights body.

Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong said that

the Charter will steer ASEAN from being a loose regional grouping to become a more effective and cohesive organisation, with clearer rules on how decisions should be made and disputes settled.

"With the Charter, ASEAN is streamlining its decision-making processes, strengthening its institutions and establishing mechanisms to monitor compliance and settle disputes," said Mr Lee. "These are important steps that will strengthen ASEAN, help it to attract investments and become a more integrated market in the face of intense global competition."

The signing of the landmark document also marks ASEAN's 40th anniversary. Since its inception in 1967, ASEAN has grown into a 10-member strong grouping with a combined GDP of US\$1.28 billion.

So far, six member countries – Brunei, Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia, Singapore and Vietnam – have ratified the Charter.

Mr Lee remarked that with growing interdependence, ASEAN countries will have to "adjust its traditional non-intervention approach in areas where the common interest dictates closer cooperation".

The process may or may not be smooth sailing, but ASEAN is set on its voyage towards progress as a group.

IN SINGAPORE

SINGAPORE FASHION FESTIVAL A RISING STAR

Resurgence was the theme of this year's
Singapore Fashion Festival



Main: Singaporean model Sheila Sim in one of Francis Cheong's haute couture creations at the Singapore Fashion Festival.

Inset: British fashion designer Matthew Williamson waves to the crowd at the end of his show at the Singapore Fashion Festival opening gala.



Main: Models showcase clothes from British design label Eley Kishimoto featuring 1970s prints and 1950s silhouettes in fruity colours at the 19th annual Singapore Fashion Week.

Inset, top: Singapore Fashion Week 2008 is ushered in with a bang at an exclusive gala dinner for fashion insiders at Suntec City.

Inset, bottom: VIP reception lounge at Singapore Fashion Festival outside Ngee Ann City.

It celebrated the legends of the fashion world while featuring rising starlets. Attracting world-renowned fashion designers from across the globe, the festival – which ran from 28 March to 6 April – included parties, designers’ salon shows, catwalk parades and fantastic shopping promotions.

Now in its eighth year, the Singapore Fashion Festival was launched by the Singapore Tourism Board (STB) in 2001 to boost the local fashion and retail scene. Singapore attracts about \$6 billion in shopping receipts from tourists each year, with fashion and accessories accounting for almost \$1.1 billion in 2006.

And this year’s festival was truly hard to miss. To make it more accessible to the public this year, a colossal white tent was erected at the Ngee Ann City Civic Plaza at the heart of Orchard Road. While most events held at this Tent@Orchard were by invites only, a huge screen installed in front of the tent showcased the highlights of the fashion week, allowing shoppers to catch a glimpse of the action.

This year’s festival featured the longest ever catwalk in its history at 60 feet, and also the largest show area with the capacity to accommodate 1,200, including standing room in the mezzanine. More than 500 model appearances were also booked for the 10 days.

Taking the helm as the festival’s creative director this year was local fashion show producer Daniel Boey. Fifteen years in the fashion and lifestyle industry working with the likes of Christian Dior and Vivienne Westwood have made Daniel a name synonymous with creative show choreography and one of the most sought-after show producers in Asia.

Reviving his first stint as creative director of the Singapore Fashion Festival in 2004, he was back at the forefront of the show with an aim to make this “a shopping and fashion-skewed creative event in which

every show should be an experience”.

And 10 days worth of sizzling style it was indeed.

Featuring an equal emphasis of quality international and local designers such as Ashley Isham, Francis Cheong and Sven Tan, the audience were treated to a visual smorgasbord of fashion aesthetics. It was a star-studded event graced by famous faces like Francesca Versace – niece of late designer Gianni Versace – and up-and-coming Chinese supermodel Emma Pei.

The festival kicked off with a grand gala opening by British fashion designer Matthew Williamson, whom along with compatriot and supermodel Erin O’Connor, showcased his colourful, ethnic-inspired spring-summer 2008 collection.

The event also served as a homecoming triumph for two much-respected local veteran designers, Tan Yoong and Thomas Wee, who staged their first runway shows in over a decade.

Singapore’s most enduring designer Tan Yoong, in collaboration with jewellery house Lee Hwa, presented a full collection for the first time in 17 years, while Thomas Wee worked with L’Oreal Professionnel for a much coveted comeback collection which showcased distinct forms and contemporary minimalism.

The festival drew to a spectacular close with Calvin Klein’s spring-summer collection, led by its creative director Kevin Carrigan, and the show “Little Runway”, featuring adorable child models.

This year’s show saw a total of seven international and 18 Singaporean designers. Its organiser Mercury Marketing recorded 20,000 people at the 24 shows over the 10-day run, with most of the shows filled to its maximum capacity of 800.

All in all, Singapore Fashion Festival is a young festival getting bigger and better with each year.

A GREAT PLACE TO fly

SINGAPORE'S
CHANGI AIRPORT
EMBRACES AVIATION
GROWTH WITH
THIRD TERMINAL

Minimalist yet ultra-modern – this is Singapore's newest Terminal 3 at Changi Airport, which opened at the beginning of this year.

The cool, clean efficiency of the multi-faceted services and the plush material installations can be found within sleek yet serene surroundings.

T3 adds a tremendous new dimension to Singapore's aviation service amenities. The \$1.75 billion facility spans a spectacular seven storeys and 380,000 square metres. The largest of Changi Airport's three terminals, it can handle an additional 22 million passengers a year – a jump of 50 percent – and will give a big boost to Singapore's airhub status.

By significantly expanding the airport's capacity and reach, the new terminal will enhance travel and help bring people closer together.

ARCHITECTURE AND AESTHETICS

The new T3 features the elements of light and space prominently while embodying a green concept. T3 has been designed to be energy-efficient mainly in terms of water and power conservation, while boasting state-of-the-art facilities, luxurious lounges and architectural aesthetics.

Its unique roof architecture allows soft natural light into the building while keeping the tropical heat out. There are more than 900 'smart' skylights in the roof with specially designed self-adjusting reflector panels to let in an optimal amount of daylight into the terminal building, creating a soothing ambience at all times of the day.

The centrepiece of the terminal is the "Green Wall" – a five-storey-high vertical

garden which stretches 300 metres across the main building, covered with layers of tropical foliage and interspersed with four cascading waterfalls.

Trees, plants and foliage are an integral part of the building's architectural design. These natural elements, coupled with 'warm' tones, balance the clean lines created by the largely glass and steel exterior of the building.

The underground water recycling system reduces wastage, while hybrid engine technology is used at the gates to cut energy consumption.

The terminal's 20 regular aerobridge gates and eight large A380-capable aircraft gates will complement the existing six A380 gates in Terminal 2 and five in Terminal 1. A380 is the new Airbus super-jumbo jet, the largest passenger airliner with a wingspan of 79.8m and a length of 74m. Comparatively, the



Singapore Airlines crew getting ready to check in for duty on the first day of operations at Changi Airport's Terminal 3 on 9 January 2008.

Boeing 747 – now relegated to second place in terms of size – has a wingspan of 68.5m and a length of 76.4m. T3 has also been fitted with a high-speed inter-terminal baggage transfer system which can transport bags from T2 to T3 in three minutes.

While a well laid-out floor layout enables passengers to move around with ease, a new automated people-mover system uses 16 trains on 6.5km of tracks to inter-link the three terminals and the Crowne Plaza Hotel (see report next page) at Changi Airport.



SHOPPING AND DINING

With 110 retail shops and 40 food and beverage outlets covering 20,000 square metres, T3 is poised to provide travellers with a markedly refreshing travel experience.



Travellers passing through Terminal 3 can soothe their frazzled nerves with a cup of ginger-infused hot chocolate or pick up some pralines at the first Guylian chocolate cafe outside Belgium.



Singapore Changi Airport's new \$1.75 billion Terminal 3. The new terminal is set to increase passenger traffic by 22 million to a total of 70 million yearly at Changi Airport.



Ferrari Store in Changi Airport Terminal 3. Terminal 3 houses the first and only Ferrari retail store in South-east Asia.



Singapore Airlines crew passing through the transit lounge of Changi Airport's Terminal 3.



Changi Airport's new Terminal 3 features a high-speed inter-terminal baggage transfer system which can move bags between Terminal 2 to 3 within three minutes.

Besides a variety of brands and new retail concepts such as the FIFA Official Store, Ferrari and the Wellness Store, T3 features an impressive collection of top names such as the Post Bar, Il Lido Wine and Tapas Lounge, local microbrewery Brewerkz and the Tiger Champions Bar offering the famous Singaporean beer and LCD TV screens to catch the latest sporting action.

Those who have access to SIA's posh lounges will find a private driveway leading to the first class check-in reception, complete with porter service, while the 4,000-square-metre SilverKris lounge offers free WiFi, food service counters, TV areas and showers.



A NEW ERA FOR AIR TRAVEL

After months of intensive preparatory tests and trials of various airport systems, the new terminal handled its first arrival flight on January 9, Singapore Airlines SQ001 from San Francisco, at 1150 hours.

Singapore Airlines was the first carrier to operate out of T3, which welcomed over 25,000 passengers on its first day. The airline has since been joined by four others in March – China Eastern, Qatar Airways, Jet Airways and United.

In more ways than one, T3 is poised to change the world's outlook on airports and air travel. Just a couple of months after its official opening, T3 saw its departure hall being turned into a fashion runway for Female and

Nuyou magazines' Catwalk Collections for Spring-Summer 2008, featuring designs from Paris, Milan and New York. Over 30 models strutted down four strips of conveyor-belt-turned-runways for about 500 guests and curious travellers.

The new terminal is expected to increase its total annual capability to about 70 million passenger movements, to meet the demands of the growing tourist and business traffic in and out of the country.

Demand is set to rise even further, especially when the country's two integrated resorts at the Marina Bay city centre waterfront and the resort island of Sentosa start operations in the next few years.

SIA SOARS WITH WORLD'S FIRST A380



Arrival of world's first A380 Airbus at Singapore Changi Airport.

Last year, Singapore Airlines (SIA) celebrated its 60th anniversary in style with the launch of the world's first A380 aircraft.

The first Singapore Airlines A380 – the biggest passenger jet ever built – was piloted to home base on 17 October 2007 by a four-member crew led by SIA's A380 chief pilot, Captain Robert Ting.

Flying in on a 12-hour flight from Toulouse in France where its maker Airbus is based, the double-deck super-jumbo aircraft coasted in to the applause of a 400-strong crowd at Singapore Changi Airport's new Terminal 3. A 'water cannon salute' – a salutary arc of water provided by two fire trucks – triggered by Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, who welcomed this historic flight to Singapore.

The aircraft is the first of 19 that SIA has bought. It will be fitted with just 471 seats –

12 suites, 60 in business class and 399 in economy – although it was built for a capacity of 525, to provide its passengers with space and luxury.

Airbus Chief Operating Officer John Leah, remarked that the Singapore Airlines A380 would provide exceptional comfort and spaciousness in all classes for passengers, with "clearly the best interior the A380 will ever see."

A week later, the Singapore Airlines A380 entered commercial service on 25 October, marked by a special charity flight between Singapore and Sydney.

The charity auction, which was done via global online marketplace eBay, raised approximately S\$1.9 million – all of which was split three ways, between charities in Singapore and Sydney, and a global humanitarian organization.



Top: The Singapore Airlines A380 comes with 399 economy-class seats, each with its own 10.6 inch screen, in-seat power supply and USB port.

Above: Singapore Airlines' A380 flights offer private suites in first class, which comes with leather seats and fully flat beds.

Rest AND RELAX

The Crowne Plaza Hotel is the first international upscale hotel to operate with direct access to T3. Besides the people-mover system, there will also be two linkways to connect both the departure and arrival halls directly to the hotel. The green concept of the terminal is also prevalent here – designed to encapsulate elements of both city and resort hotels, Crowne Plaza sees a perfect harmony of contemporary chic and tropical calm.

The nine-storey hotel, which cost

\$98 million to build, features the extensive use of technology. Besides having state-of-the-art meeting facilities, it is the first hotel here to replace magnetic-stripe keycards with contactless access cards.

These contactless cards make use of radio frequency identification (RFID) technology, which is said to be more secure. RFID cards cannot be cloned easily and also reduce wear and tear on door locks since no physical contact is required. Hotel guests will no longer need to exchange their keycards at the reception due to malfunctioning magnetic stripes. In Singapore, RFID is commonly used in "Ez-link" cards for commuters on buses and Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) trains, and also to track library books.

As an added security precaution, the hotel has 137 surveillance cameras installed at its corridors and exit stairways, compared with an average of 30 cameras at other hotels. This

is because any security breach at the hotel would affect airport safety as well.

With the airport and runways in such close proximity, the hotel has invested in soundproofing to ensure that its jet-lagged guests receive a good rest. All its 320 guest rooms, as well as conference rooms, lounges, restaurants and gymnasium are fitted with double-glazed windows and rubber-sealed door-frames.

On top of the technology and seamless functionality, Crowne Plaza also delivers on comfort and relaxation. The spanking new tower is laced with open walkways, outdoor gardens and courtyards, and a shaded pool. Guest facilities include a 100-seater club lounge overlooking the swimming pool, an all-day dining restaurant built around a show kitchen concept with chefs presenting cooking theatre, a 24-hour gymnasium, spa and massage rooms and a landscaped lap pool.

Building the Bridge of Commerce

By Goh Chok Tong

Since my last visit to Qatar in April 2005, Qatar-Singapore ties have grown. Last October, we were honoured and pleased to welcome the Heir Apparent His Highness Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani to Singapore. He led a high-level delegation for the second meeting of the Qatar-Singapore High-Level Joint Committee which consisted of Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs His Excellency Sheikh Hamad Bin Jassim Bin Jabr Al-Thani and several other cabinet ministers. It was an important milestone in our relationship, and seven agreements were signed to boost bilateral cooperation.

At the G-to-G level, our aim is to build bridges, facilitate and create the right environment for the businesses from both sides to interact fruitfully. Such interactions between the private sectors will strengthen bilateral ties. Hence, I commend the Qatari Businessmen Association and the Singapore Business Federation for organising this event. Your effort will enhance the growing business linkages between Qatar and Singapore.

But seeking bilateral opportunities is only one dimension of the business relationship. Another dimension is cooperation to jointly take advantage of the opportunities in both our regions – The Middle East and Asia – which are the two fastest growing regions in the world. Today, I want to highlight developments in Asia and the opportunity for a strategic partnership between our two economies.

Why turn to Asia? Very simply, Asia is the engine of global growth. Just China and India together would account for over 40% of global GDP growth in 2007. Not only that, they are respectively the 2nd and 4th largest economies in the world in PPP terms and they are growing at or near double digit levels. We will be wise to ride on their growth. Beyond China and India, there are other Asian success stories of sustained economic growth and rapid industrialisation.

In our region, ASEAN is working towards establishing an ASEAN Economic Community by 2015, and will become a single integrated market of 550 million people, with free flow of goods, services, investment, skilled labour and capital. These developments, together with the massive economic potential of China and India, augur well for the future of Asia. By 2020, Asia's share of world GDP is expected to be 45%, up from the current 36%. This is why we are cautiously optimistic that Asia will be able to weather the current turmoil in the global financial markets and the possibility of an economic recession in the US.

Next, why partner Singapore as you look east? Singapore companies have been active in Asia for many years,

accumulating extensive experience and knowledge of the region. Today, Singapore is the second largest foreign investor in Vietnam, and the sixth largest in China. Keppel's contract from Ashghal to design and build the largest Wastewater Treatment and Reuse and Sludge Treatment Facility in the Middle East is an example of how Qatar could leverage on Singapore's strengths in urban infrastructure development.

Singapore companies have a good international reputation as efficient, trustworthy and reliable business partners. The World Bank in 2007 rated Singapore as the world's easiest place to do business. Singapore's strategic location in Asia, and our familiarity, experience and network will enable us to value-add to Qatari companies which seek to make inroads into Asia. The signing of the MOU between the Qatar Investment Agency and Keppel Corp of Singapore to jointly invest in an eco-city in China, which we will witness later, is a fine example of Qatar-Singapore partnership. Going forward, I believe there is much potential for more Qatari and

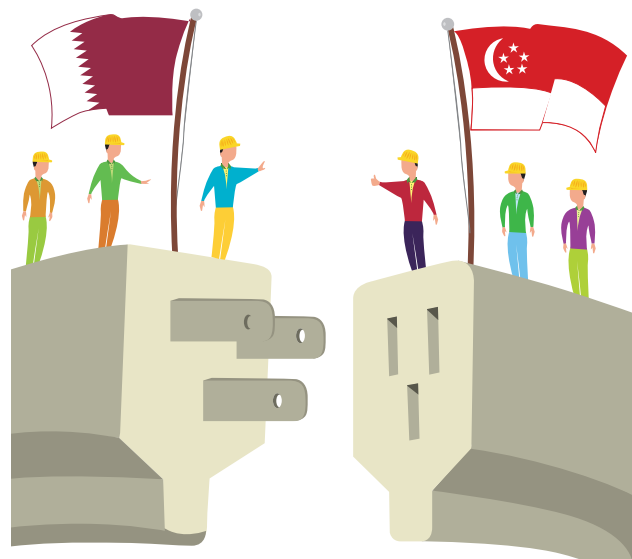
Singapore companies to work together on joint ventures in Asian countries.

Finally, why is Qatar Singapore's natural gateway to the region? I think our similarities in terms of size, strategic outlook and geographical position offer a natural fit. More importantly, the Qatari leadership is committed to developing Qatar into a regional hub by investing in both physical infrastructure and human resource development. As a result, Qatar has achieved tremendous progress – it is one of the fastest growing economies in the world

today and has one of the highest per capita incomes. Qatar is also the world's biggest exporter of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG), and the first Arab country to host the Asian Games. As a region, the Middle East is also developing rapidly. According to one estimate, the GCC economies will spend US\$1 trillion in planned public and private projects over the next six years. Hence, Singapore companies will be keen to work with Qatari companies to explore joint projects within the region.

It is therefore timely that the Qatari Businessmen Association has decided to partner the Singapore Business Federation and SPRING Singapore to strengthen the links between our business communities. I am confident that Qatari and Singapore businesses will do well by working together in our respective regions.

Extracted from a speech by Senior Minister Goh Chok Tong at the Qatar-Singapore business forum in Doha, Qatar, 30 January 2008.



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