

# ES

EXPERIENCE SINGAPORE

JUL - SEP 2015 / ISSUE 55  
A NEWSLETTER OF THE SINGAPORE  
COOPERATION PROGRAMME



## A Golden Year To Remember

The many ways in which we celebrated our 50<sup>th</sup> birthday



## To Singapore, With Love

Singaporeans abroad express their best wishes for the nation



## A New Milestone

The Singapore Cooperation Programme welcomes its 100,000<sup>th</sup> participant



# The Singapore Story

The Little Red Dot which you may or may not know

# Ed's Note

Dear readers,

**S**ingapore turns 50! To commemorate our special birthday, *Experience Singapore* has in store for you many interesting stories – local and abroad – which will help you to understand Singapore better.

For an idea of what Singaporeans, residents and visitors alike have been treated to, turn to **A Golden Year to Remember** for a cross-section of the plethora of activities and events that were planned across the island.

Get a glimpse into the Singapore which you may – or may not – know in **The Singapore Story**. Here, we have hand-picked 15 facts about Singapore, past and present, to encapsulate what makes this Little Red Dot tick!

And while Singapore's journey to a First World nation may have started in earnest after she attained independence in 1965, her story started way before that as immigrants from neighbouring lands came to her shores to build a life for themselves and their families. Now fast forward to present-day Singapore – and meet the 'global' Singaporean. Just as their forebears have journeyed to a new land, some 200,000 Singaporeans are now scattered throughout the world, living and working in foreign lands. Meet some of them in

**To Singapore, With Love** and find out how they have carried the Singapore brand with them wherever they may be.

The Singapore brand includes development experience – learnt through years of nation-building and help from developed nations – that countries around the world now come to Singapore to learn about. The Singapore Cooperation Programme (SCP) has become the primary platform through which the Republic extends technical assistance to over 170 countries. In July, it welcomed its 100,000<sup>th</sup> participant. In **Celebrating a New Milestone for the SCP**, read about what the SCP has planned for

the future, to ensure its relevance to the changing global landscape.

This Golden Jubilee is not just about reminiscing the past and celebrating our achievements, but also a moment to ponder about the future. While uncertainties abound, Singapore will continue to strive forward courageously together with our global friends. *Majulah Singapura* (Onward Singapore)!



Director  
Public Affairs Directorate  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs Singapore

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Share with us your memories, photos and experiences in Singapore under the Singapore Cooperation Programme.  
Email us at [mfa@sgmfa.gov.sg](mailto:mfa@sgmfa.gov.sg)



MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
SINGAPORE

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[www.timesprinters.com](http://www.timesprinters.com). ISSN: 0219-2896

*Experience Singapore* is a publication of the Public Affairs and Technical Cooperation Directorates of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Singapore. The Singapore Cooperation Programme (SCP) is administered by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Singapore, and is aimed at sharing Singapore's developmental experience with other developing countries.

**Publishing Consultant**  
MediaCorp Pte Ltd

# THE SINGAPORE STORY

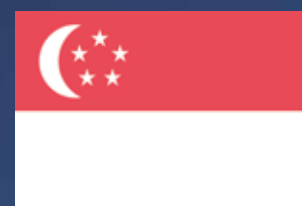


Focus  
AN SG50 SPECIAL

AS THE REPUBLIC MARKS ITS GOLDEN JUBILEE THIS YEAR, HERE ARE SOME FACTS TO HELP YOU GET ACQUAINTED WITH THIS LITTLE RED DOT.

TEXT BY FAIROZA MANSOR

↓ Changi International Airport is the world's most-awarded airport with over 490 accolades under its belt.



↑ The colours of the flag signify Singapore's goal of equality through purity and virtue. The crescent moon represents a rising young nation, while the five stars depict Singapore's ideals of democracy, peace, progress, justice and equality.



Singapore's size:  
**718 km<sup>2</sup>**

An increase of:  
**20%** SINCE 1965

**56 km<sup>2</sup>**

THROUGH MORE LAND RECLAMATION, BY 2030



**84**  
GOLD  
MEDALS

**73**  
SILVER  
MEDALS

**102**  
BRONZE  
MEDALS

Singapore's medal tally at the 2015 South East Asian Games



↑ Scientists from Nanyang Technological University in Singapore have recently discovered a new way to improve short and long-term memory, as well as reduce the effects of dementia-related conditions such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's diseases. The procedure involves sending electrical pulses to the front of the brain to enhance the growth of new brain cells.



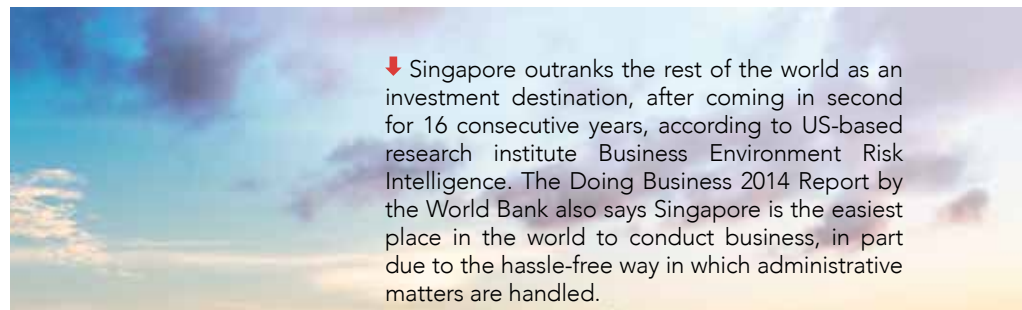
↑ In 2010, Singapore's latest and largest NEWater plant was completed. NEWater is high-grade reclaimed water that is safe to drink, and it is produced from treated used water.



↑ Recently declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the 156-year-old Singapore Botanic Gardens is the only English-style garden in the tropics — and the first and only tropical botanic garden on UNESCO's World Heritage list. The Gardens is also home to the National Orchid Garden which houses thousands of orchid species including 2,000 hybrid orchids.



↑ Since its soft launch in June 2014, the Singapore Sports Hub — which includes the 55,000-seat National Stadium, OCBC Aquatics Centre, OCBC Arena, and water sports centre — has hosted more than 100 events, including this year's South East Asian Games, with over 1.1 million attendees across all its venues.



↓ Singapore outranks the rest of the world as an investment destination, after coming in second for 16 consecutive years, according to US-based research institute Business Environment Risk Intelligence. The Doing Business 2014 Report by the World Bank also says Singapore is the easiest place in the world to conduct business, in part due to the hassle-free way in which administrative matters are handled.



◀ Though highly-urbanised, Singapore has a number of Agrotechnology Parks where food crops and fish are farmed. In fact, Singapore is the world's top exporter of ornamental fish.



➔ The Merlion, Singapore's icon, is a mythical creature with the head of a lion and the body of a fish. The fish symbolises Singapore's early beginnings as a port city and its dependence on maritime trade. The lion is a reference to a tale which narrates how 13<sup>th</sup>-century prince Sang Nila Utama encountered a lion when he first stepped on the shore here, leading him to rename the island *Singapura* ("lion city" in Sanskrit).



➔ Singapore is No. 1 in the world education rankings this year, according to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development. Singaporeans came out tops in maths and problem-solving.



➔ Visitors to Singapore are staying longer and spending more, staying on average 3.7 days in 2014, up from 3.5 days the year before — not a surprise given all the Republic has to offer. For example, in July this year, the region's first Universal Studios theme park at Resorts World Sentosa was voted the No. 1 amusement park in Asia by TripAdvisor.



↑ The hybrid orchid *Vanda Miss Joaquim* is Singapore's national flower. As part of an overall effort to foster national pride and identity, *Vanda Miss Joaquim* was selected in 1981 by a national committee for its vibrant colours, hardiness and resilience — qualities which reflect the Singapore spirit.



◀ To become a "City in a Garden", Singapore has about two million trees planted along roadsides, in parks and in protected nature areas. Singapore's Garden City journey began in 1963, when then-Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew planted a Mempat tree (*Cratoxylum formosum*), to kickstart this greening campaign.



*Reflections*

JOINING HANDS, MAKING FRIENDS

# Celebrating a New Milestone for the SCP



The Singapore Cooperation Programme welcomed its 100,000<sup>th</sup> participant in the year of Singapore's Golden Jubilee.

**O**n 1 July 2015, the Singapore Cooperation Programme (SCP) welcomed its 100,000<sup>th</sup> participant, Mrs Shelley Nicholls-Hunte, Director of the Financial Intelligence Unit in the Office of the Attorney-General of Barbados. She arrived in Singapore, together with 28 participants from different countries, to attend a course on "Singapore's Anti-Corruption Strategies". The course was conducted by the Civil Service College and the Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau.

community. The SCP 100,000<sup>th</sup> Participant Award Ceremony was graced by Singapore Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Law, Mr K Shanmugam. At the ceremony, Minister Shanmugam said, "In the 1960s and 70s, we were a small island with no natural resources or hinterland. Thankfully, we had friends from around the world, from whom we received tremendous help... Now, we share our own development experience with our friends around the world."

↑ Singapore Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Law, Mr K Shanmugam with the 100,000<sup>th</sup> SCP participant.

↓ Participants of the course "Singapore's Anti-Corruption Strategies" were presented with a copy of the late Mr Lee Kuan Yew's book, *From Third World to First*.

## JOINING HANDS AND MAKING FRIENDS

When independence was thrust upon Singapore in August 1965, the country faced pressing problems such as high unemployment, housing shortage, inadequate infrastructure, poor social amenities and an underdeveloped education system. At that time, Singapore received support, advice and technical assistance from developed countries like Japan and Germany and international organisations such as the United Nations Development Programme.

Having benefitted from international assistance, Singapore believes that developing human capacity is an effective way to give back to the international





← Strong friendships are forged among SCP participants. Course conducted by the Civil Defence Academy on “International Urban Search and Rescue”.



↑ African Ministers and senior officials on the Sub-Saharan Africa High Level Ministerial Exchange Visit toured the Institute of Technical Education (ITE) to understand Singapore’s management of technical and vocational education.



↓ The SCP also conducts courses in overseas training centres. The “Public Financial Management” course was conducted at the Singapore-Qatar Asia-Middle East Dialogue Regional Training Centre for Public Administration (RTCPA) in Doha, Qatar.



True to its motto of “Joining Hands and Making Friends”, the SCP has become the primary platform through which Singapore extends technical assistance to over 170 countries. Every year, the programme engages more than 6,000 foreign officials through 300 courses, workshops, seminars and study visits. These courses cover key governance topics such as public administration, trade and economic development, technical and vocational education and training, and sustainable development.

↑ Minister Shanmugam with Mrs Shelley Nicholls-Hunte and other participants from different countries including Cambodia, Indonesia, the Philippines and the Solomon Islands.

**“Thankfully, we had friends from around the world, from whom we received tremendous help... Now, we share our own development experience with our friends around the world.”**

MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND LAW, MR K SHANMUGAM

## LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Courses under the SCP are tailored to the needs and interests of Singapore’s foreign counterparts. The content and curriculum of the courses are constantly subject to review; this is to ensure the SCP’s relevance to the changing global landscape. Mrs Nicholls-Hunte commented on the relevance of the anti-corruption course, “The United Nations has called on all countries to focus more on anti-corruption. This opportunity provided by the Singapore Government for us to learn from each other is very timely.”

This year, the SCP has introduced three new training clusters to address fundamental hurdles to development. They are on “Women and Children”, “Resilience Building” and “Leadership”. Senior government officials attending these courses will take away useful experience from Singapore and be challenged to reinvigorate their vision and strengthen their leadership skills.

Through these programmes, the SCP hopes to create more opportunities for closer interaction among participants and to jointly find solutions to today’s multifaceted and complex challenges.



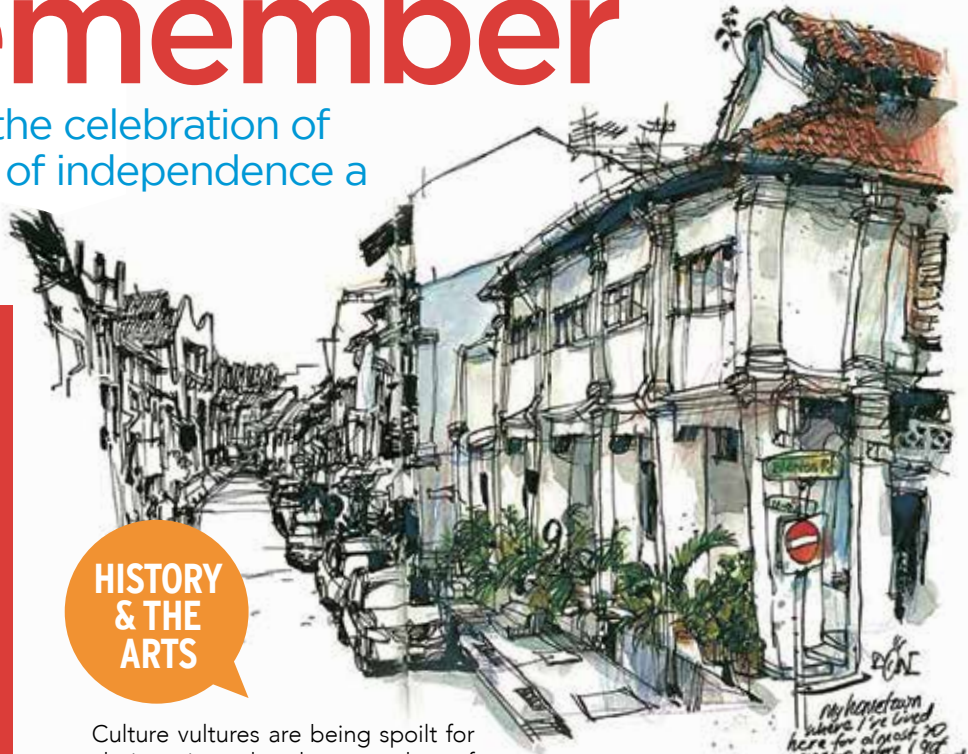
# A Golden Year to Remember

Varied events made the celebration of Singapore's 50 years of independence a truly national affair.

TEXT BY ASHUTOSH RAVIKRISHNAN

Enthusiasts of everything from art to butterflies to cocktails had the chance to get in on Singapore's Golden Jubilee SG50 celebrations as corporations, interest groups and individuals organised a year's worth of events and activities for the community. The scale of these non-government celebrations varied, with many being small, intimate events catering to specific audiences. As Mr Heng Swee Keat, Singapore Minister for Education and Chairman of the SG50 Steering Committee, said, "We hope that with this mix of programmes, everyone will be able to find something appealing and meaningful as we celebrate Singapore's Golden Jubilee as one people."

*Experience Singapore* showcases some events held in conjunction with SG50, many of which reflect Singapore's journey to her Golden Jubilee.



HISTORY & THE ARTS

Culture vultures are being spoilt for choice given the sheer number of exhibitions, films and publications that explore myriad subjects — from the changing roles of public buses during the transformation of Singapore's economy (**A History of Singapore School and Private Buses Exhibition**) to the hardships faced by *Samsui* women, depicted in lively murals around the historic Chinatown precinct (**Colouring Banda Street**). *Samsui* women were Chinese immigrants who took up construction jobs between the 1920s and 1940s, and whose red headscarves were distinct.

As part of **Let's Draw!SG**, a sketchbook was passed around within the local art community, whose

↑ Glimpses of everyday Singaporean life in Let's Draw!SG.

members filled its pages with scenes of daily life. The finished pieces, mostly in ink and watercolours, will be reproduced and exhibited towards the end of 2015, while the sketchbook itself will be auctioned for charity.

The performing arts, too, feature heavily in the roster of events. Retrospective programmes such as **50 Years of Singapore Tamil Theatre** highlight the achievements of the local arts scene to younger generations, while new works like **Quarters**, a play, explore the development of the Singaporean identity. Those seeking a more humorous approach to the country's past can find it at **Online 65** ([www.online65.sg](http://www.online65.sg)) which provides a tongue-in-cheek glimpse of life in Singapore during the 'Swinging Sixties'. The website's videos and articles often reference uniquely Singaporean events, characters and phenomena, both contemporary and historical.

↓ Singapore's history, albeit with a humorous twist at Online 65.



→ The performing arts such as **Quarters** and **50 years of Singapore Tamil Theatre** explored the Singaporean identity.







**WINE & DINE**

↑ Young and old bonded at dinner parties held as part of the *Let's Makan* initiative.

A string of culinary events put Singaporeans' enduring relationship with food and drink in the spotlight. Dinner parties reminiscent of the *kampung* (village) way of life were organised by Singaporeans eager to know and bond with the people who live next door to them. Initially part of the Singapore Kindness Movement (SKM)'s **Let's Makan** (Let's Eat) initiative, the parties were a runaway success. Many of the parties are independent affairs, suggesting that the SKM has met its goals of reviving the communal *kampung* spirit of early Singapore, and fostering closer friendships among neighbours. The food at such gatherings is largely traditional, in keeping with the nostalgic theme.

Worried that some local snacks might lose popularity with younger Singaporeans, four students from the Nanyang Technological University started the **My Ah Ma Make One** (The Things My Grandmother Made) campaign that featured snacks including *putu mayam* (Indian rice flour noodles) and *kuih bahulu* (Chinese sponge cake). Through island-wide exhibitions, the campaign brought such snacks and a host of anecdotes centred around them to various parts of Singapore. Sherry Goh, 23, one of the creators of the campaign said, "What better way to celebrate Singapore's 50<sup>th</sup> birthday than by sharing unique stories about the snacks our grannies enjoyed?"

Other foodie activities include competitions like the Singapore



↑ *Kuih bahulu* featured in **My Ah Ma Make One** (The Things My Grandmother Made) campaign.

Hotel Association's **SG50 A Toast to the Nation** in December 2014. Held nearly a century after a bartender at the iconic Raffles Hotel whipped up the first Singapore Sling cocktail in 1915, the competition saw connoisseurs voting for the tipples that best represent the Singapore spirit. Ultimately, the Regent Hotel's gin-based *Singapura*, garnished with a single orchid, beat out 11 others as the winning cocktail. The winning mocktail was the Grand Hyatt Singapore's Golden Harvest, a blend of peach and vanilla syrup, mango juice and strawberry.

→ A toast to the nation — Golden Jubilee creations *Singapura* (left) and Golden Harvest (right).



**MOTHER NATURE**

The celebrations also made their way to the thick of Singapore's forests and parks which are home to at least 305 varieties of butterflies. Unbeknown to the colourful beauties, the Nature Society (Singapore) conducted a month-long poll in April to find **Singapore's National Butterfly**. More than 7,500 votes were cast and ultimately, the Common Rose butterfly beat out five other species — the Painted Jezebel, Common Birdwing, Common Tiger, Common Tree Nymph and Knight. According to the society, it is a fitting tribute to the



↑ Singapore's newly-crowned National Butterfly, the Common Rose.

country, given the butterfly's bright red body, and black wings which are peppered with contrasting red and white patterns reminiscent of Singapore's national flag. Mr Anuj Jain, the chair of the society's Butterfly & Insect Group said, "In our 50<sup>th</sup> year of independence, we felt a project like this would also help us reflect on our national heritage."



## REVA ANANDA

UMM AL-QUWAIN, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES (UAE)

"UAE is a cosmopolitan country, just like Singapore. It is a melting pot of various cultures with people from different parts of the world. The cost of living is relatively lower than that of Singapore's. This gives me the opportunity to rent my own apartment, afford a car and still have extra cash to save up for my travels.

I am often appreciated for my diligence, meticulous work and even on my insistence to keep my surroundings neat and tidy. These are skills and habits I have acquired from my living, studying and working in Singapore.

I will always be appreciative of the fact that Singapore nurtured me to be a global citizen. Wherever I go, I feel as though I represent Singapore. Here is wishing The Lion City more successful years!"

✦ Ms Ananda, 31, left Singapore for Chennai, India in 2005 to pursue her studies in Digital Film Making. She also worked part-time at a local radio station in Chennai. Today, she is the Station Head of Radio Salaam 106.5 FM, a Tamil radio station in the UAE, and hosts its evening drive show.

# To Singapore, With Love

A sense of identity burns strong in these Singaporeans who have chosen to live and work abroad.

TEXT BY ASHUTOSH RAVIKRISHNAN

Singaporeans have become very cosmopolitan, Singapore Prime Minister Mr Lee Hsien Loong commented on his Facebook account in June. In the same post, he also commended his countrymen for their adaptability, noting that about 200,000 Singaporeans currently live, study and work abroad. Some of these Singaporeans give *Experience Singapore* a glimpse into their lives away from home, and share their wishes for the country's Golden Jubilee.

## ANNE TAN THIMPHU, BHUTAN

"The pace of life in Bhutan is considerably slower than in Singapore. Being here gives me the time to reflect on my life's purpose, instead of just checking off one task after another on my to-do lists. Life as a teacher in Singapore was hectic for me and I found myself always planning for tomorrow, instead of fully embracing the present. Another difference is that Bhutan is a predominantly Buddhist country while Singapore is multi-racial. I come from a humble family which experienced a fair share of struggle. But because meritocracy is the governing principle of Singapore, my siblings and I were provided the same opportunities as our peers to excel and succeed. This is what I wish to impart to my students in Bhutan — that if they work hard and get an education, they stand a chance of leading a better life.

My sense of belonging to Singapore deepens each time I come back to visit, usually once or twice a year. I can't quite describe or explain it, but it just feels good to be home. When I'm away what I miss most is durian!"



✦ For Ms Tan, 52, teaching in a developing country to underprivileged children is a childhood dream come true. She packed her bags for Bhutan to be a volunteer primary school teacher in 2013, just in time to celebrate her 50<sup>th</sup> birthday in Thimphu, the capital of Bhutan. Ms Tan teaches Mathematics and Science, helps the school develop its curriculum and also holds teachers' workshops for colleagues.

## JOSEPHINE TAN SANTIAGO, CHILE

"Working and living abroad humbles me and broadens my mind, heart and soul. While I have met many wonderful people in Santiago, it inevitably takes time to build the kind of relationships like the ones I have at home. I am also very mindful that I'm a 'foreign talent' and where possible, I try to integrate into the local culture. I work harder to be less critical about any conditions which are not to my convenience.

There is nowhere in the world with the diversity of food as we take for granted in Singapore. The taste and smells of Asian food is something I miss so much. Chilean food and others from the region are great too but when far from home, I often crave local comfort foods.

This SG50, I wish for racial and religious harmony for all Singaporeans. I wish that our respect and kindness for each other can be demonstrated in our daily lives as much as possible."



← Ms Tan, 48, left Singapore for Santiago, Chile in September 2012. She is the Country Manager of Marshall Cavendish Education (MCE), Chile. Singapore's Ministry of Education has partnered with MCE to develop a Mathematics curriculum based on a student-focused pedagogical framework aimed at developing critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Chile is among the earliest countries to adopt Singapore's Maths curriculum in Spanish.

## TAN HOWE YUAN LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM

"The work-life mix in London is quite different — we have more time on our hands (26 days of annual leave per year is common) to travel around Europe, pursue hobbies and recreational activities and to watch West End productions at reasonable prices. The working hours in Singapore would probably not offer the same amount of leisure or down time.

The London lifestyle is quite different from that in Singapore, and we love it. That said, cheap hawker fare is unheard of here, so cooking at home and inviting friends over for dinner parties is a common affair, unlike in Singapore where eating out is more affordable and usual. Taxis are expensive here and we rely exclusively on the Tube to get around most of the time. Simple things we used to take for granted like air-conditioning and 3G connectivity on trains in Singapore, you don't always get on the Tube here!

This SG50, we wish that Singapore goes from strength to strength, and continue to build on its excellent reputation around the globe as a world-class city for modern living. Everyone we meet always have good things to say about our Little Red Dot and we are very proud and thankful to be Singaporeans."



↑ Mr Tan, 30, started work for a global technology company in London in September 2013 — seven months after his then-girlfriend, now wife Chen Liping, joined a British bank as a Compliance Advisor. The couple had their wedding in Singapore in October 2014 before resuming their lives in the English capital.

## LAM SHUMEI KIGALI, RWANDA

"I came to Rwanda with a level of uncertainty as the country's history is mired in memories of the 1994 genocide. [But what quickly struck me] was that Rwanda is safe, clean, organised and in many ways like Singapore. The government is trying to model its country after ours — tapping into Singapore's roadmap for development. Rwanda's President Paul Kagame regularly references the Singapore success story in his speeches, so the Singaporean brand is very strong here. A big appeal of working here is being able to impart the Singaporean values of diligence and integrity, and our spirit of entrepreneurship to a country that is open for business.

I hope that Singaporeans never lose their thirst for entrepreneurship and adventure. We are incredibly blessed to be able to live in a country where there is always food, water, electricity, safety, jobs, growth and opportunity. May we continue to live in harmony, and be gracious and kind to each other."



↑ Self-described "chicken farmer" Ms Lam has been in Rwanda since 2011. The 30 year-old is Managing Director of Poultry East Africa Limited (PEAL). With its own automated feed mill, broiler farm and processing plant, PEAL supplies over 40,000 tonnes of poultry feed and 45,000 tonnes of poultry meat to the market annually. The project was set up as a social enterprise by Ms Lam's family to provide affordable and accessible meat protein to a growing population in the East African sovereign state.



MAJULAH

SINGAPORE

MAJULAH