

Led by HRH Raja Nazrin Shah Ibni Sultan Azlan Muhibuddin Shah, the KLBC delegation to Singapore sought to build bridges with Singaporean thought leaders from the economic and business community as well as individuals from the senior most echelons of the Singaporean Government, including Hon. Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong.

The visit also enabled the delegation to gain a deeper understanding of the opportunities and challenges facing Singapore and its approach to various issues ranging from economic issues to domestic and geopolitical concerns.

The two-day visit, from 23 to 24 April 2014, was an eye-opener for most. It left the delegation in awe with the pace at which Singapore had developed over the years and continues to develop through its practical and sensible policies.

On the first day, the delegation were kept abreast on developments in Singapore through breakfast presentations by Dr Arup Raha, Chief Economist, CIMB Group and Associate Professor Dr Farish Noor, S Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University. Both presentations were well received and the delegation found them useful for the subsequent meetings with the Singaporean senior government leaders and business community.

The delegation later paid courtesy visits on the good offices of Hon. Deputy Prime Minister Teo Chee Hean, Deputy Prime Minister of Singapore and Minister for Home Affairs and Hon. Minister Heng Swee Keat, Minister for Education.

The delegation was also feted to a lovely lunch at the St Regis Hotel by Temasek Holdings Pte Ltd. Ms Ho Ching, the Executive Director and CEO of Temasek, and a list of more than 40 individuals comprising the who's who of the business and corporate community in Singapore ranging from senior officers of Temasek, heads of financial institutions, utilities, ports and shipping, private equity, chambers of commerce, real estate, hospitality and retail. It was an excellent opportunity for KLBC members to build new bridges and to strengthen existing ties.

Later that evening, KLBC hosted a dinner with H.E. Ambassador Chan Heng Chee, Ambassador-at-Large, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Singapore and Former Ambassador to Washington DC. During dinner, H.E. Ambassador Chan gave a presentation on the topic of "America's Rebalance to Asia".

On the second day, the delegation paid courtesy calls on the good offices of Hon. Minister Chan Chun Sing, Minister for Social and Family Development and Second Minister of Defence and Hon. Minister K Shanmugam, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Law.

The final and most anticipated visit for the delegation was the courtesy call paid on Hon. Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong which took place at the Istana, the official residence of the Prime Minister, at the conclusion of the event.

The meetings with the various leaders covered many important aspects which concern both Malaysians and Singaporeans ranging from education, geo-political concerns, crime, immigration, population demographics, current youth preferences, domestic policies and investment opportunities.

The Singapore trip proved to be an invaluable experience for the KLBC delegation. The kind hospitality shown by our southern neighbour and the gesture of openness in communications allowed members to discuss freely on various topics and issues. We discovered much. We made new friends. We strengthened existing ties - all of which we hope to continue to bind us in the years to come.

We wish to thank Royal Patron HRH Raja Nazrin Shah, President Emeritus Dato' Rohana Mahmood and the organising committee led by President Tengku Dato' Zafrul for the successful visit. We would also like to extend our deepest appreciation to His Excellency Ong Keng Yong, High Commissioner to Malaysia, who had gone out of his way to assist KLBC in our preparations for the event.

