

‘A Special Evening with His Excellency Tharman Shanmugaratnam, President of the Republic of Singapore’

Tuesday, 14 July 2026 | Astor 2 & 3, The St Regis Kuala Lumpur



The Board of Directors of the Kuala Lumpur Business Club (KLBC) had the honour and privilege of hosting His Excellency Tharman Shanmugaratnam, President of the Republic of Singapore and Mrs. Jane Ittogi Shanmugaratnam, at a dinner held at The St. Regis Kuala Lumpur on 14th July 2024. The event was graced by HRH Sultan Nazrin Muizzuddin Shah ibni Almarhum Sultan Azlan Muhibbuddin Shah Al-Maghfur-Lah, Sultan of Perak Darul Ridzuan, Royal Patron of the KLBC.

The dinner event commenced with welcoming remarks and the introduction of His Excellency Tharman Shanmugaratnam by KLBC President YBhg. Datuk Ruben Emir Gnanalingam Abdullah. He highlighted that Malaysia and Singapore have long demonstrated that close neighbours can also be close partners, working together to strengthen regional stability, deepen economic integration, and create shared prosperity for its peoples.

YBhg. Datuk Ruben also noted that the KLBC has had the distinct honour of hosting Singapore leaders such as President Halimah Yaacob and Senior Minister Lee Hsien Loong, which reflect the depth of mutual respect, trust and friendship that the KLBC has been fortunate to cultivate with Singapore's leaders over the years.

In his special remarks, His Excellency Tharman Shanmugaratnam touched on the challenges of a post-unipolar world and of having a multipolar order. He spoke of the need to keep up links with the major powers even as we strengthen bridges with other regions, with ASEAN playing a bigger role as a bridge builder. He also drew attention to the shared risks of climate change and AI, and spoke of the need to reform multilateralism, while stepping up the pace of ASEAN integration and bilateral cooperation.

During the dialogue session moderated by KLBC Founder and Director, Dato' Dr. (h.c.) Rohana Tan Sri Mahmood, the areas of discussion encompassed Malaysia and Singapore playing a lead role in AI application, joint R&D and pandemic preparedness were flagged as strong collaboration areas, and on fostering greater talent exchange and innovation.

The discussion also touched on de-dollarisation, the Global North and Global South rhetoric, ASEAN becoming more cohesive and integrated, Singapore-Malaysia relations including areas of positive development as well as the Indonesian situation.

In concluding the dialogue session, Dato' Dr. (h.c.) Rohana highlighted three key takeaways: the global order remains in transition; resilience begins with strong institutions and social cohesion; and ASEAN's strength lies in remaining open, trusted and connected. She also reaffirmed KLBC's role in strengthening partnerships across nations, institutions and people.

KLBC Deputy President Dato' Fad'l Mohamed delivered the closing remarks at the intimate event, which was attended by industry leaders who are esteemed members of the KLBC and guests. The special dinner was co-hosted by KLBC President Datuk Ruben Emir Gnanalingam Abdullah, Founder and Director Dato' Dr. (h.c.) Rohana Tan Sri Mahmood, Deputy President Dato' Fad'l Mohamed and

Board Members Datuk Chua Sai Men and Nurul A'in Abdul Latif.

This being His Excellency President Tharman's first state visit to Malaysia, it was truly a memorable milestone event for the KLBC. The KLBC thanks sponsors Westports Holdings Berhad, YTL Corporation Berhad, Malayan Banking Berhad and United Overseas Bank (Malaysia) Bhd for contributing to the success of the event.