

PRESS RELEASE

"Three biggest growth stories are taking place simultaneously- rise of China, India & ASEAN"

The global strategic environment is undergoing a major flux. Starting with Brexit, rise of protectionist policies around the world and the weakening of western order, we are currently witnessing a re-balancing of global power equations. The simultaneous rise of China, India and ASEAN is unprecedented in world history. At the same time, we are challenged by the rise of populism in the US and Europe. Are we seeing the end of the post-World War II World Order?

Keeping the global environment in mind, it is crucial to analyse the current strategic relationship between India and Singapore. Singapore has always supported a greater role for India in the Indo-Pacific region. Singapore would like to see PM Modi's "Act East" policy implemented with concrete action and initiatives. It is important that India and Singapore keep nurturing these relations especially in the changing global scenarios where there is a sense of growing protectionism and geopolitical uncertainty in the world. The public forum will focus on these and various other aspects about the future of India-Singapore ties in these changing times.

New Delhi, 23rd March, 2017

Ananta Aspen Centre in partnership with Institute of South Asian Studies, National University of Singapore and Confederation of Indian Industry organized a session on "**India-Singapore ties in a changing global environment**" in New Delhi. **Ambassador Tommy Koh**, *Co-Chair, India-Singapore Strategic Dialogue, and Ambassador-at-Large, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Singapore* chaired the session with **Ambassador S K Lambah**, *Chairman, Ananta Aspen Centre and Former Special Envoy of the Prime Minister of India*. **Ms. Preeti Saran**, *Secretary (East), Ministry of External Affairs, India*, **Ms. Indrani Bagchi**, *Diplomatic Editor, The Times of India*, **Associate Professor Tan Khee Giap**, *Chairman, Singapore National Committee for Pacific Economic Cooperation & Co-Director, Asia Competitiveness Institute, Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy*, **Mr. Vikram Nair**, *Member of Parliament & Partner in Rajah & Tann (S) LLP* and **Mr. B J Panda**, *Member of Parliament, Lok Sabha* were among the panelists.

Ambassador Lambah in his opening remarks highlighted the significance of India's relationship with Singapore. He said "Singapore continues to be significant for India because of its strategic location (access to Indian and Pacific Ocean) and important trade & energy routes with India. It has emerged as a world class center for education, research and scholarship in addition to being a multicultural and multi-religious society." He also added "In the changing global environment, India should leverage its position in ASEAN and focus on building a new relationship which fits in with the new environment. Singapore is an important player in India's "Look East policy" as there are no bilateral irritants between the countries and both have a common approach to regional and maritime security." **Ambassador Tommy Koh** stated that "India and Singapore is currently participating in three biggest growth stories i.e. the simultaneous rise of China, India and ASEAN and by mid-century, India will be the second largest economy and ASEAN

will be the 4th largest economy.” He also said that Europe and the US are no longer interested in preserving liberalism which had enabled India, ASEAN and Singapore to rise. **Ms. Preeti Saran** affirmed that “India and Singapore enjoy a strategic partnership and great bilateral relations with institutional frameworks of dialogue created to sustain and allow the relationship to grow.” She also spoke about the MOUs between India and Singapore which focus on IPR and skill development.” She mentioned about the world class skill development centre which will be set up in Assam. Singapore being a centre of finance, innovation and knowledge hub, would be a perfect partner to guide India and help achieve its objectives. Apart from trade and investment, other areas of cooperation include urban rejuvenation, state focus on cooperative federalism and smart cities, she added. India and Singapore have renewed a bilateral agreement that will allow Singapore's Air Force to continue its joint military training with Indian Air Force for another five years. The Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP) is the first regional government-to-government agreement to promote and enhance cooperation against piracy and armed robbery against ships in Asia. The two Prime Ministers also endorsed the continuation of the National security roundtable between the two sides on an annual basis and agreed to establish a Joint working Group on Intelligence cooperation on combatting terrorism. This is being organized to enhance cooperation on information and intelligence sharing on terror networks and share experiences on dealing with scourge of radicalisation. Trade and investment are a strong component of India-Singapore relationship. In 2016, India received maximum FDI inflows from Singapore, she highlighted. **Mr. Vikram Nair** stated that both countries have profited from each-other with free trade and free movement of capital. The main focus of the relationship is smart cities, skill development, Skills India initiative and air connectivity as it will open up more opportunities. **Mr. B J Panda** said that Singapore was a window to the world for India and for decades, Indians only wanted to travel to Singapore as it has been our friend, philosopher and guide. He also highlighted open sea routes; rules based engagement and freer trade as the parameters of a strategic relationship between the two countries. **Associate Professor Tan Khee Giap** also spoke about India as a both export led and domestic driven economy. India will be the 5th largest economy in the world, he added. India has the fastest economic growth in addition to being more competitive. He said “Singapore can also help India with smart grid, sustainable cities, comprehensive urban solutions, aviation, maritime and logistics along with affordable housing and public education.” **Ms Bagchi**, stressed the importance of new areas between India & Singapore on countering terrorism, radicalization & working towards cyber security.

About Ananta Aspen Centre:

Engaging India, Nurturing Change

Ananta Aspen Centre is an educational and policy studies organisation based in New Delhi. It focusses on values based leadership and open dialogue on challenges facing Indian society to help foster its transformation. The Centre engages civil society, business, governments and other key stakeholders to share ideas and bring a wide range of perspectives on issues important to India's development, foreign policy, strategic affairs and national security. Ananta Aspen Centre is an independent non-profit organization registered under the Indian Trusts Act and under 12A and 80G of the Income Tax Act. For more information, contact:

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