

S'pore, Mongolia supported each other in times of need: PM Lee

Both countries share a common goal and complement each other's advantages, he says

Chin Soo Fang
Senior Correspondent

Singapore and Mongolia have supported each other in times of need, said Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong.

During the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, Temasek Foundation donated test kits to Mongolia.

The Mongolian government, in turn, gave gift bags to Singapore's front-line healthcare workers, which brought them much cheer and encouragement, he added.

PM Lee was speaking at an official lunch held in honour of Mongolia's Prime Minister Oyun-Erdene Luvsannamsrai, who is on a four-day visit to Singapore, at the Istana yesterday.

PM Lee said both countries shared a common goal of promoting international trade, maintaining regional peace and stability, and upholding an open and inclusive rules-based multilateral system.

The two countries also complement each other's advantages, he added.

"For example, while Mongolia has vast natural resources, Singapore has good connectivity and offers a hub and gateway for Mongolia's exports into our region and beyond," he said.

Both also recognise the value of developing their human resources, he added.

Through the Singapore Cooperation Programme, Singapore has welcomed more than 1,600 Mongolian officials to exchange views and discuss their experience in finance, economic development, language and communication skills, and public administration.

PM Lee said he looked forward to more Mongolian officials taking part in the programme.

"We have a sound foundation on which to grow our relations," he said.

"I am confident that our countries will continue to strengthen our collaboration as we move forward in a post-Covid-19 world."

Speaking at the lunch, Mr Oyun-Erdene said that while Singapore and Mongolia celebrated 50 years of diplomatic relations two years ago, historical ties and cooperation between trade representatives date back more than 700 years.

"The relationship that started 700 years ago by our forefathers has developed rapidly," he said.

"Today, Singapore has become Mongolia's reliable partner in South-east Asia, our fifth-largest investor and the main trade partner in Asean."

Though geographically far apart, both are connected through shared values, mutual understanding and a willingness to work together, he added.

Mongolia's long-term development policy Vision-2050 outlines its vision to lead the region in development by 2050.



Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong with Mongolia's Prime Minister Oyun-Erdene Luvsannamsrai at an official lunch held in honour of Mr Oyun-Erdene at the Istana yesterday. PHOTO: LIANHE ZAOBAO

"Singapore's model of development implemented under the leadership of the first prime minister of Singapore, Lee Kuan Yew, provides inspiration, energy and experience for development for many countries around the world," Mr Oyun-Erdene added.

Earlier yesterday, he received a ceremonial welcome at the Istana

and called on Acting President Eddie Teo, before meeting PM Lee.

Mr Oyun-Erdene was also presented with an orchid hybrid named the *Papilionanda Oyun-Erdene Luvsannamsrai* at the National Orchid Garden yesterday.

The orchid is a beautiful symbol of the Singapore-Mongolia friendship, said PM Lee, just like the

horse he was presented with during his visit to the Mongolian capital Ulaanbaatar in 2016.

He named the horse Bintang Temasek, which means Star of Temasek in Malay.

PM Oyun-Erdene will depart Singapore this morning.

chinsf@sph.com.sg

Mongolian NUS undergrad shares his impressions of Singapore with PM Oyun-Erdene

Singaporeans are active and hard-working, and they are why the Republic is great and modern, said 19-year-old Nyamdavaa Amar, a first-year Mongolian student at the National University of Singapore's (NUS) School of Computing.

Yesterday, he shared his impression of the country with Mongolian Prime Minister Oyun-Erdene Luvsannamsrai who was at NUS as part of his official visit to Singapore from Wednesday till today.

Mr Amar is on a Sea Olympiad

Scholarship sponsored by home-grown consumer Internet company Sea.

The scholarship is open to all students who have excelled in the International Olympiad in Informatics (IOI) and who intend to pursue their full-time undergraduate studies at NUS Computing.

He was a gold medallist at the IOI2020 and International Mathematical Olympiad 2021.

"Meeting my PM for the first time here definitely helped me overcome some of my homesick-

ness," said Mr Amar who received three Mongolian books and a plaque from Mr Oyun-Erdene.

They met on the sidelines of the signing of a two-year memorandum of understanding (MOU) between NUS' LRF Institute for the Public Understanding of Risk (Ipur) and Mongolia's Ministry of Justice and Home Affairs to collaborate on public service transformation in Mongolia.

It was inked by Professor Leonard Lee, Ipur's deputy director, and Mr Nyambaatar

Khishgee, Mongolia's Minister of Justice and Home Affairs. Witnessing the signing were Mr Oyun-Erdene and NUS president Tan Eng Chye.

The MOU builds on an existing partnership between Ipur and the National Academy of Governance in Mongolia to do capacity building in data literacy and risk communication in Mongolia's public sector.

Prof Lee said that the ongoing data innovation lab programme in Mongolia provides an excellent

foundation and framework to support this new partnership.

Assistant Professor Reuben Ng, lead scientist in data and technology at Ipur, will be leading the joint partnership.

He said: "We designed an online programme on public sector innovation that was attended by nearly 1,300 civil servants and received over 300 project ideas for piloting in our data innovation lab. Our next step is to scale this important partnership."

Chin Soo Fang