

THE SIX TREES

@ THE SINGAPORE EMBASSY IN TOKYO

ISSUE 2

2 August 2020

AMBASSADOR'S GREETINGS

Mina-san ogenki desuka? I hope everyone is doing well during this extraordinary time of COVID-19. The pandemic has caused significant disruptions to our daily lives and has had a profound impact on the global economy. In Singapore, we have made good progress in containing the virus, allowing us to move out of the Circuit Breaker and gradually resume some activities. Japan is similarly progressively restarting its economy, while paying close attention to the infection situation in the country. However, the fight against coronavirus is far from over, and we must learn to live with the virus for some time. We urge everyone to stay vigilant and continue taking necessary precautions.

On the part of the Embassy, we have an even greater responsibility of helping overseas Singaporeans in need during COVID-19, including those affected by travel restrictions. We are continuing to promote Singapore-Japan relations, as we work towards the early resumption of connectivity



between our countries. In this issue of "The Six Trees", we share with you a glimpse of the Embassy's work and Singapore-Japan relations amid COVID-19. While the pandemic has limited social gatherings and travels back home, I hope this newsletter can help fellow Singaporeans stay connected with home as well as the Embassy. I look forward to seeing everyone again soon, hopefully at the E-National Day Celebration for Singaporeans in Japan on 9 August! In the meantime, please stay safe and keep well.

Peter Tan Hai Chuan
Ambassador

NEWS FROM HOME

What's been happening in Singapore?

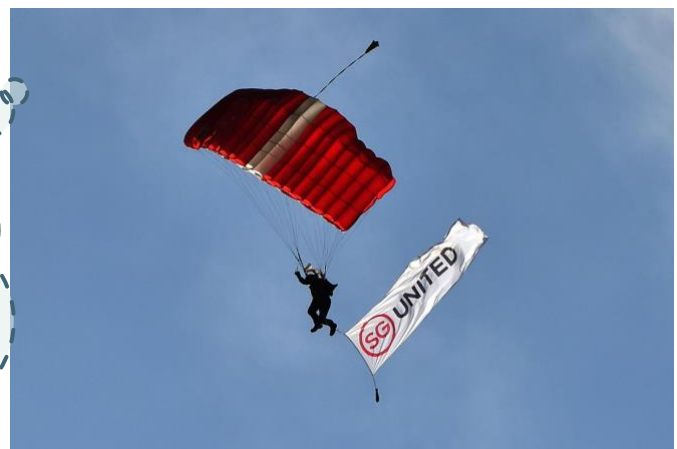
Singapore exited the Circuit Breaker on 1 June, and has entered [Phase 2](#) of our **reopening** on 19 June. In addition to the restart of retail businesses and resumption of dine-in at restaurants, cinemas, libraries and museums have also reopened their doors with safe distancing measures over the past month. It is good to see that community infection rates have stabilised, cases in migrant worker dormitories have declined, and there are no new large clusters emerging. Kudos to all Singaporeans who have played their part by staying at home and complying with the restrictions! We must also not forget our healthcare professionals who have helped to keep Singapore's fatality rate one of the lowest in the world, as well as others working tirelessly on the frontline. Let us continue the good work and aim to move into the next phase of reopening as soon as possible!

We trust that you have closely followed Singapore's recent **General Election** on 10 July, including by voting at the Overseas Polling Station in Tokyo. The election results reflect a growing desire among Singaporeans for a diversity of voices in Parliament, while renewing the mandate of the People's Action Party which won 83 out of 93 seats in the Parliament. PM Lee Hsien Loong announced on 25 July a [new Cabinet lineup](#) that will lead Singapore in confronting the challenges of COVID-19.

National Day is just around the corner! The theme this year is "**Together A Stronger Singapore**" – a rallying call to Singaporeans to play our part to push forward and determine Singapore's future, in spite of the difficulties and crises. Although the National Day Parade (NDP) this year will only be attended by around 150 representatives of society, NDP2020 will be brought into every Singapore home, and overseas Singaporeans can also participate in the digitalized and immersive experience! "[Bringing NDP to our homes](#)" comprises three main components: The Strength of Our Nation, Active Participation by Singaporeans, and the Evening Show. Don't forget to also join the E-National Day Celebration for Singaporeans in Japan at 3pm (JST).

Did you know?

For the first time ever, Singapore's Red Lions will be landing in selected residential estates throughout Singapore for this year's National Day celebrations!



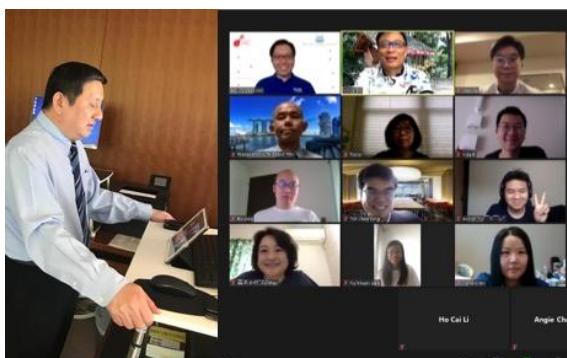
The Red Lions, the Singapore Army's parachute team, in action

[Photos credit: Straits Times File]

SG IN JAPAN:



New Year Reception



Videoconference with OS



Ambassador with NUS students in Hiroshima

[Photos credit: Singapore Embassy in Tokyo]

EMBASSY EVENTS

In January this year, the Embassy met up with around 350 Overseas Singaporeans (OS) in Japan at our annual New Year reception before the outbreak of COVID-19. While the pandemic has made physical gatherings difficult, the Embassy has made use of technology to keep in touch with OS, for example through a series of videoconferences with the Singapore Association in Japan, the Merlion Club and the Singapore Students' Association (Japan), as well as Singapore businesses in Japan. We were glad to learn that the OS in Japan have been coping well with the pandemic.

Our next event will be the **E-National Day Celebration** that the Embassy is jointly organising with Singapore Global Network (SGN) for Singaporeans in Japan on 9 August at 3pm (JST)! Make sure to [register](#) and we look forward to having you join us then! Don't forget to share your well-wishes, thoughts and hopes for Singapore on social media with #TogetherSGinJP #NDP2020xJP.

PREFECTURAL VISITS

Prefectural visits are an important way for the Embassy to engage local personalities and businesses, as well as keep in touch with OS living outside Tokyo. Ambassador Tan visited Hiroshima in December 2019 and Nagoya in February 2020. In Hiroshima, Ambassador met 15 National University of Singapore students who were on a one-week homestay programme there! As travel restrictions gradually ease throughout Japan, the Embassy is looking forward to resuming our prefectural activities soon. Ambassador is next scheduled to **visit Osaka in August**, if the COVID-19 situation permits, during which we hope to be able to meet up with OS living in the Kansai area!

SPECIAL FOCUS: EMBASSY'S WORK DURING COVID-19

COVID-19 has brought significant disruptions and challenges to the Embassy's activities, from telecommuting to reorienting work priorities, as we navigate the uncharted waters of the pandemic. But it has also given us opportunities to reach out to and help Singaporeans in meaningful ways. In this section, we share with you some highlights of what the Embassy has been doing during the pandemic.



Diamond Princess cruise ship in Yokohama Port

[Photos credit: Nikkei Asian Review]

One of the Embassy's first major missions was to render assistance to five Singaporeans aboard the **Diamond Princess** cruise ship, where over 700 COVID-19 cases have been reported. The Embassy worked closely with the various Japanese Ministries to formulate the evacuation plan and subsequently received the Singaporeans in Yokohama upon their disembarkation.

We are fortunate that commercial flights have continued to run between Singapore and Japan during the pandemic, although on a reduced schedule. However, some Singaporeans have been stranded in other countries due to COVID-19 lockdowns and travel restrictions. Some of them were able to return to Singapore via Tokyo. For example, the Embassy facilitated their transits, such as the **repatriation of seven Singaporeans from Fiji** in April 2020.



Receiving Singaporeans from Fiji at Narita Airport

[Photos credit: Singapore Embassy in Tokyo]



Polling Day at the Embassy

[Photos credit: Lianhe Zaobao]

Singapore's **General Election** was held on 10 July. Tokyo was one of the 10 overseas polling stations. It was an unprecedented election, with various safety measures, such as temperature checks, glove-wearing, hand sanitation and safe distancing taken to protect the health and safety of voters. We are glad that the polling proceeded smoothly, and thank the cooperation of all Singaporeans who came down to the Embassy to vote!

LIFE IN THE LAND OF THE RISING SUN

In this issue, Wang Hui Ling shares with us her time in Iwate Prefecture, where she has lived since she first came to Japan under the JET programme in 2007. You can read her full story [here](#).

I first came to Iwate Prefecture in August 2007 as an Assistant Language Teacher under the JET Programme. I have always had a love for travel, and I have fond memories of many trips taken to various countries with family and especially with friends as soon as I turned 21 and was allowed to travel without my parents. When I was informed of my placement on the JET Programme, I had never heard of Iwate Prefecture, let alone Sumita Town in Iwate Prefecture. Regardless, I basked in the idea of experiencing everything new. Sumita Town is as rural as it can get, with a population of a grand total of about 7000 people. I quickly adapted to the pleasant rural life, and on my job I had the opportunity of being posted to the Prefectural Board of Education in Morioka City, the capital of Iwate Prefecture. Now I live in a smaller but up-and-coming town a few train stations away from the capital. I consider my current living environment a much smaller version of Sendai City, but with many similar chain shops and restaurants, and all the facilities adequate for my daily life coupled with the safety, comfort and convenience needed for raising a young family.

In my first few years here, I had a list of struggles and challenges that most foreigners here would experience, such as the language barrier, the differences in cultural behaviour, the sudden earthquake tremors, and, something on almost every foreigner's list who is living in northern Tohoku, the extremely cold, snowy and long winters with very inadequate indoor heating. However, it is amazing to realise that as my years in Iwate increase, the challenges seem to gradually become manageable. Life is never boring here in Iwate, and as much as learning all there is about my second home, don't be mistaken, I have never stopped living a fulfilling life as a Singaporean, remembering my home country and the people I left, and embracing my roots and identity. My family here is brought up with Singaporean-ness, and friends and colleagues around me would always see a Singaporean representative walking around parading her very excellent country of birth.



Hui Ling and family
[Photos credit: Wang Hui Ling]

LIFE IN THE LAND OF THE RISING SUN

Amidst COVID-19, Singapore companies in Japan have been doing their part to support and give back to the local community.



UOB Tokyo Country Head Ho Chai Seng
presenting the donated foodstuff
[Photos credit: Toshima Kodomo WAKUWAKU Network]

United Overseas Bank (UOB)

In May 2020, [UOB Tokyo](#) donated close to [420,000 yen](#) worth of foodstuff to local charity organization Toshima Kodomo Wakuwaku Network, which went into feeding 110 families hit by the pandemic.

CapitaLand

CapitaLand donated 15,000 masks to children homes and orphanages in Japan. The masks were presented to local welfare associations in Tokyo and Chiba in May 2020.



Representatives of Citadines Shinjuku Serviced Apartments
presenting the donated masks to Futaba Infant Home
[Photo Credit: CapitaLand Limited]



Feel inspired? You can **do your part** through initiatives like [Pledge from the Heart](#), which allows you to choose from at least 55 curated pledges for a variety of causes.

A TALE OF TWO ISLANDS: SINGAPORE-JAPAN RELATIONS

Even though COVID-19 travel restrictions have put a temporary hold on bilateral visits between Singapore and Japan, we managed to keep up our regular high-level exchanges with the help of technology! Our **Foreign, Trade and Defence Ministers** held telephone and videoconferences in April and May. One important outcome was our [joint statement](#) on cooperating to secure **supply chains** for essential goods and strengthen economic resilience amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. Most recently, Minister (T&I) Chan Chun Sing spoke to Economic Revitalization Minister Nishimura Yasutoshi in July, where they discussed the resumption of essential business activities and enhancing bilateral cooperation in areas such as digital economy. On a related note, we welcomed the Japanese government's announcement on 22 July that it would begin [talks with Singapore on the resumption of essential travel](#)!

Multilateral engagements also continued apace, as Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong and Prime Minister Abe Shinzo participated in the **Special ASEAN Plus Three Summit on COVID-19** via videoconference in April 2020. We are looking forward to the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' and Related Meetings hosted by Vietnam later this year!

At the prefectural level, we welcomed then-Kagoshima Governor Mitazono Satoshi to Singapore in January 2020 for the **20th Singapore-Kagoshima Conference**, which has been running since 1982!

In April, we also celebrated the conferment by the Japanese government of the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Star on **former Ambassador to Japan (2012 – 2017) Chin Siat Yoon** in recognition of his contributions in promoting friendship and mutual understanding between Singapore and Japan!



Minister (T&I) Chan Chun Sing with Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry Kajiyama Hiroshi, 1 May
[Photo Credit: Minister (T&I)'s Facebook page]



Special ASEAN Plus Three Summit on COVID-19
[Photo Credit: PM Lee Hsien Loong's Facebook page]



20th Singapore-Kagoshima Conference
[Photo Credit: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Singapore]

CONSULAR ADVICE

As the level of socio-economic activities gradually increased, the Japanese government has announced advisories under the "new normal" to prevent the spread of infections in daily life and at workplaces. Below are some of the key points:

1. Wash your hands frequently and thoroughly. Wear a face mask. When going out, keep a two-meter distance from people.
2. Avoid closed spaces with poor ventilation, crowded places with many people nearby, and close-contact settings such as close-range conversations.
3. Refrain from leaving home when feeling unwell.

More information can be found at Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare:

https://www.mhlw.go.jp/stf/seisakunitsuite/bunya/newpage_00032.html

The Embassy puts up regular consular updates on our [MFA webpage](#), [Facebook page](#) and through email blasts to [E-Registered](#) Singaporeans. Make sure to follow our pages and E-Register!

In particular, you may find the **list of links** below to be useful amid COVID-19:

- Update on [Singapore-Japan flights](#)
- [FAQ on re-entry to Japan](#)
- [Japan's immigration measures and related information](#)
- Websites of [Japan's prefectural governments](#)
- Updates on [precautionary measures implemented in Singapore](#)
- Updates on [Singapore's border control measures in response to COVID-19](#)
- Information on the [SG Arrival Card with Electronic Health Declaration](#)

While medical care in Japan is generally good, English-speaking physicians and medical facilities may be limited. Below are some of the medical facilities which may provide English-speaking staff:

Tokyo Medical & Surgical Clinic

Tel:	03-3436-3028
Fax:	03-3436-5024
Hours:	9:00-17:00 After hours: yes
Address:	No. 32 Shibakoen Bldg 2F, 3-4-30 Shiba Koen, Minato-ku, Tokyo 105-0011

Japanese Red Cross Medical Center

Tel:	03-3400-1311
Fax:	03-3409-1604
Hours:	Mon-Fri 8:30-15:00 After hours: yes
Address:	4-1-22 Hiroo, Shibuya-ku, Tokyo 150-8935

* For emergency, please dial 119 immediately for help.

The Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO) operates a 24-hour visitor hotline (**050-3816-2787**) for assistance in case of accidents or emergencies including COVID-19. Support is available in multiple languages.

Singaporeans in Japan who need emergency assistance can call the Embassy at (03) 3586-9111/2 during office hours; or the Embassy's 24-hour duty handphone at (090) 3208-4122 after office hours. Alternatively, assistance can also be sought from Singapore Ministry of Foreign Affairs Duty Office at +65 6379-8000. More information can be found at <https://www.mfa.gov.sg/Overseas-Mission/Tokyo/Consular-Services/Emergency-Consular-Assistance>

This wraps up the second issue of the Embassy's e-newsletter! We hope you've enjoyed reading it and managed to learn a little more about the Embassy's work during COVID-19. If you have any suggestions on how this newsletter could be improved, please feel free to drop us an email at singemb_tyo@mfa.sg, and don't forget to follow us on [Facebook](#)! We look forward to seeing you soon! じゃあ、またね！