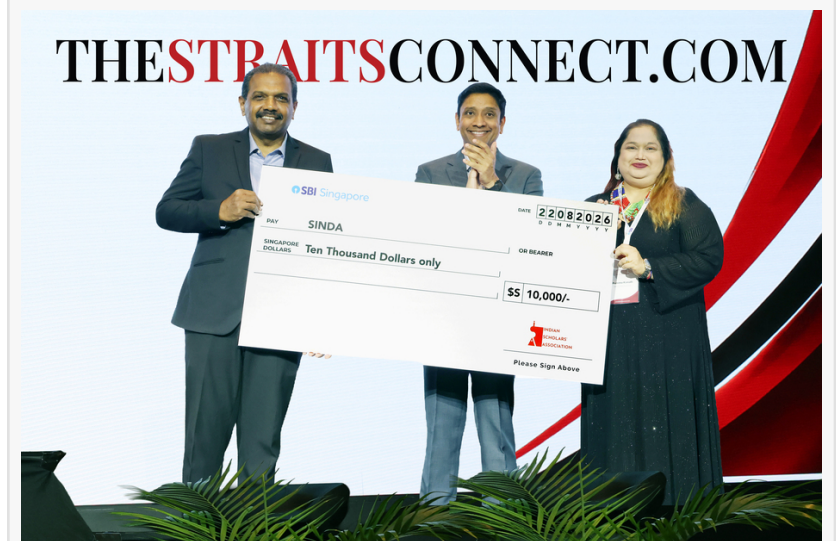


'A Living Bridge Between Singapore and India': The Straits Connect 2026 Concludes with Call to Deepen Ties

SINGAPORE, SINGAPORE, August 24, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Indian Scholars' Association (ISA) hosted the inaugural Straits Connect today at Amara Sanctuary, Sentosa, bringing together more than 350 attendees and over 25 speakers across government, diplomacy, business, technology, and academia for a full day of dialogue under the theme Integrating Communities, Creating Impact.

Delivering the keynote address as the Guest of Honour, Mr Dinesh Vasu Dash, Minister of State for Culture, Community and Youth, and for Manpower, and Mayor of the South East District, laid out the scale of the Singapore-India relationship: Singapore is the largest foreign direct investor in India, accounting for almost a quarter of India's cumulative FDI inflows since 2000, with bilateral trade standing at about \$60 billion. He noted that the just concluded the fourth India-Singapore Ministerial Roundtable on 21st Aug had identified new opportunities to deepen this partnership further.

However, economic treaties and capital flows, he said, "provide the framework, but people-to-people relationships provide the substance for the soul of our bilateral ties." He added, "You are a living bridge between Singapore and India. Many of you came to Singapore as students. Over the years, you've built your careers and businesses here, raised your families as well, and



developed networks spanning both India and Singapore. You understand the nuances of operating in both environments.”

Mr Rahul Singh, President of the Indian Scholars’ Association, highlighted, “When we look back on our journeys, the analogy that comes to mind is that of a bridge. We are here to build bridges: an International Bridge between Singapore and India, a Generational Bridge between alumni and students, and a Socio-economic Bridge between the privileged and those that may have fallen behind. These bridges are about creating greater understanding, opportunity, and inclusion, and ensuring that we move forward together as a community.”



The day's centerpiece brought three sitting High Commissioners to Singapore onto a single stage: Dr Shilpak Ambule (India), Mr Paul Thoppil (Canada) and Mr Nikesh Mehta (United Kingdom), in a discussion on shifting geopolitics moderated by Prof Kishore Mahbubani, former President of the United Nations Security Council. The day closed with a fireside chat featuring Mr Piyush Gupta, Chairman of SMU, Keppel Ltd., and Mandai Wildlife Group, followed by a networking cocktail reception. The conclave also featured panel discussions on leadership, careers of the future, and the intersection of technology and society, alongside a series of personal reflections from changemakers including Dr Jack Sim of the World Toilet Organization and Senior Lieutenant Colonel James Suresh on building a We-First Mindset.

“The Straits Connect is more than a gathering. It is a celebration of our journeys, a cherishing of the friendships we have built along the way, and an opportunity to give back to society. Today, we have made a small contribution to SINDA and aim to work closely with all our Supporting Partners. I hope this platform inspires meaningful conversations, enduring connections, and collaborations that create an impact far beyond today,” said Ms Purnima Kamath, Convenor of The Straits Connect.

The Straits Connect was supported by Singapore Airlines as Platinum Sponsor, GIG International School as Gold Sponsor, and Accenture, LinkedIn, Olam Agri, Singapore Global Network and SBI Singapore were Silver Sponsors, alongside supporting partners EY, KPMG, Singapore Management University, Nanyang Technological University, TiE Singapore, and the Singapore Indian Chamber of Commerce & Industry.

Speakers featured at The Straits Connect 2026 included:

Mr Dinesh Vasu Dash, Minister of State, Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth & Ministry of

Manpower, and Mayor, South East District

Dr Shilpak Ambule, High Commissioner of India to Singapore

Mr Paul Thoppil, High Commissioner of Canada to Singapore

Mr Nik Mehta, British High Commissioner to Singapore

Prof Kishore Mahbubani, Former President, United Nations Security Council

Mr Piyush Gupta, Chairman, SMU, Keppel Ltd. and Mandai Wildlife Group

Maithili Dabadgaonkar

The Straits Connect

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