

## MILESTONES



Two Armenians were founders of The Straits Times. Merchant Thaddeus Apar wanted to set up a printing press and bought equipment from England for this while another merchant, Catchick Moses (left), bought the machine as a favour to Apar. And Robert Carr Woods, an Englishman who arrived in Singapore in 1845 from Bombay where he worked as a journalist, persuaded Moses to use his new press to publish a newspaper. The first issue of ST appeared on July 15, 1845, under the masthead 'The Straits Times And Singapore Journal of Commerce'. It had this cheery greeting from the editor, "Good morning to you kind reader!". In its early years, ST appeared once a week, on Tuesday afternoons, selling about 300 copies each week. It had eight pages of general news, market reports and lots and lots of advertisements.

March 10, 1855: The Johor treaty is signed in Singapore in which Tengku Ali ceded sovereignty over Johor (except Muar) to Temenggong Daeng Ibrahim, in exchange for a titular recognition as Sultan of Johor and a monthly allowance. William Butterworth, who was the then governor of the Straits Settlements, officiated at the signing of the treaty, through which the British hoped to end hostility between the Malay states.

March 1856: Johnston's Pier, which was located opposite Fullerton Square at Collyer Quay, was completed. By the 1920s, it could no longer handle increased traffic and made way for Clifford Pier, located opposite Change Alley a short distance away.

Feb 1, 1858: Robinsons department store is established by Philip Robinson, an immigrant from Australia, and James Gaborian Spicer, a former jailkeeper.

April 1, 1867: The Straits Settlements, which comprised Singapore, Malacca and Penang, became a crown colony under direct British control.

1906: The Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce was founded in 1906 by prominent members of the Chinese community in Singapore as the General Chinese Trade Affairs Association.

June 28, 1924: The Singapore-Johor Causeway opens.

Dec 8, 1941: World War II. Japan bombs Singapore leaving 61 people dead and 133 injured.

Feb 15, 1942: With Europe in the throes of World War II, the Japanese invade Singapore. The British are taken by surprise and surrender. No publication of ST during Japanese Occupation.

Aug 14, 1945: The Japanese surrender, and the British return. ST resumes publication on Sept 7, 1945.

## MILESTONES



April 1, 1946 - Singapore becomes separate crown colony, while the nine Malay states and the Straits Settlements of Penang and Malacca officially formed the Malayan Union.

March 1, 1948: Singapore's new constitution came into effect and the first legislative elections were held on March 20, 1948

Dec 11, 1950: Maria Hertogh riots erupt

Nov 21, 1954: People's Action Party is formed

June 5, 1959: Self-government attained with Lee Kuan Yew as prime minister.

Sept 16, 1963 - Singapore joins the Federation of Malaysia, Sabah (North Borneo), and Sarawak

Aug 9, 1965: Singapore becomes independent after separating from Malaysia. A month later it is admitted into the United Nations as the 17th member and in October, the Republic becomes a member of the Commonwealth.

Dec 8, 1965: The survival of newly independent Singapore was top of mind for the Republic's first head of state Mr Yusof Isahak, who was president from 1965 to 1970. In his address at the opening of the first Parliament he said: "We cannot allow anyone to work up heat on the gut issues over language, culture and religion, grating the raw nerves of our people."

March 14, 1967: National service becomes compulsory. Thereafter, then PM Lee Kuan Yew introduces the garden city concept.

Aug 8, 1967: Singapore joins Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and Philippines to form ASEAN, to promote economic and social growth as well as maintain peace and stability.

Nov 12, 1978: Senior Vice-Premier of the People's Republic of China, Deng Xiaoping, made his first and only official visit to Singapore. He was accompanied by a 36-member delegation and Singapore was the last stop on his three-nation tour of South-east Asia that included Thailand and Malaysia.

## MILESTONES



Oct 31, 1981: The Anson by-election was a landmark poll that saw J. B. Jayaratnam of the Workers' Party elected into Parliament, breaking a 16-year PAP monopoly. In Dec 1984, two opposition MPs and three PAP women MPs were elected to Parliament for the first time.

Oct 3, 1990: Singapore and China established formal diplomatic relations, 14 years after PM Lee Kuan Yew's first visit there. The two countries marked the agreement at the United Nations headquarters in New York in a simple ceremony attended only by their foreign ministers, embassy officials and a few reporters.

Nov 28, 1990: Mr Goh Chok Tong became the second PM of Singapore after Mr Lee Kuan Yew stepped down after 31 years. He thereafter became a Senior Minister in Mr Goh's government.

May 5, 1994 - The caning of American teenager Michael Fay for vandalising 18 cars over a ten-day period in September 1993 caught the world's attention and even had a bearing on US-Singapore ties.

Nov 23, 1995 - Rogue trader Nick Leeson's disastrous moves that led to the collapse of Britain's oldest merchant bank, Barings, saw him being convicted in Singapore, after he was extradited from Frankfurt.

Dec 19, 1997: SilkAir Flight MI 185 crashed into Musi River near the city of Palembang in South Sumatra while on its way to Singapore from the Indonesian capital of Jakarta. 104 people were on board. All died.

Jan 16, 1998: Singapore announced that it will give American aircraft carriers and other warships access to its new Changi Naval Base, in a major boost for US presence in the region. Five years later in May 2003, the two countries signed the United States-Singapore Free Trade Agreement.

Jan 7, 2002: Singapore announces the arrest of 15 suspects for terrorism-related activities in the Republic, which began a month ago.

Aug 12, 2004: Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong is sworn in as the third Prime Minister of Singapore. In April 2005, the government approved a plan to legalise casino-gambling in Singapore and build two integrated Resorts.

Sept 26, 2008: Singapore hosts the inaugural Formula One (F1) SingTel Singapore Grand Prix at the Marina Bay street circuit, making the first F1 night race and the first to be held on a street circuit in Asia.

## MILESTONES



May 7, 2011: PAP wins 81 of 87 seats in parliamentary elections. It's share of valid votes dropped from 66.6 per cent in 2006 to 60.1 per cent. For the first time an opposition party - the Workers Party - wins the Aljunied GRC.

July 1, 2011: The Tanjung Pagar Railway Station used by trains running between Singapore and Malaysia ceased operation.

ST moved decidedly into the multimedia age in 2012 integrating its print and online teams into one multimedia newsroom. The paper announced the launch of its ST Asia Report website and the ST Asian of the Year award at its Global Outlook Forum in November that year. SPH radio stations started broadcasting ST news from 2013.

In August, Singapore voted in the first Presidential election. On Sept 1, Dr Tony Keng Yam Tan was sworn in as the seventh President of Singapore.



President Halimah Yacob is elected the first female President of Singapore in Sept 2017.

March 23, 2015: Singapore's founding father Lee Kuan Yew dies aged 91 at the Singapore General Hospital where he had been ward for severe pneumonia since Feb 5.

June 12, 2018: Singapore hosts the historic Singapore summit between United States President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un.

April 17, 2019: Jewel Changi Airport, opened on April 17, 2019. The nature-themed retail complex includes the world's tallest indoor waterfall - a 40m-high Rain Vortex.

Jan 23, 2020: Singapore confirms the first Covid-19 case in the Republic involving a 66-year-old Chinese national from Wuhan.