



As the Osaka Expo draws global attention and Singapore marks its 60th year of independence, this special report highlights the evolving Japan-Singapore partnership — one built on trust, trade and forward-looking collaboration.

Ambassador Hiroshi Ishikawa and Singapore Business Federation CEO Kok Ping Soon offer insights on strengthening ties amid a rapidly changing regional landscape. Joining the conversation are Makino Asia, Singapore Management University, iO3, Hitachi High-Tech and Mitutoyo Singapore.

Together, these leaders in automation, digitalization and talent development reflect how cross-sector collaboration is opening new avenues for growth across the region amid the rise of artificial intelligence.

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Beyond borders: Celebrating bilateral progress from SG60 to Osaka



Makino Asia family MAKINO ASIA

From Japan to Singapore to the world: Makino Asia's 'Promise of Performance'

Rooted in Japanese engineering excellence and powered by Singaporean innovation, Makino Asia is leading a worldwide precision manufacturing revolution. Since establishing its headquarters in Singapore in 1973, this Japanese multinational has evolved into the regional command center of the Makino Asia Group — a network of operations spanning Singapore, China, India and more. Collectively, the group contributes over 40% of the global revenue of the Makino Group. Singapore provides Makino Asia with a strategic advantage — enabling it to attract top talent, consolidate regional insights and develop highly competitive, high-performance machines that deliver excellent cost performance. While maintaining Makino's brand promise of high speed, high precision and high quality, the company has also streamlined quality and costs across its manufacturing sites in Singapore, China and India by establishing a

regional procurement function in 2023. Customer-centric innovation drives Makino Asia's approach. The company collaborates closely with customers to develop technologies that address real-world production challenges ranging from predictive maintenance and labor-saving automation to



Makino Asia headquarters in Singapore MAKINO ASIA

digital connectivity. Supporting this is its Additive Manufacturing Centre of Excellence in Singapore, created to help customers integrate metal 3D printing into their production strategies. Makino Asia's smart factory, opened in 2019, demonstrates how performance and sustainability can coexist. Despite a 50% increase in production capacity, energy consumption has remained stable — driven by the integration of automation, artificial intelligence and the Internet of Things. As part of its regional expansion strategy, the company is building a new factory in Vietnam to strengthen its manufacturing footprint and better serve growing demand across Asia. In 2022, the Makino Asia Group surpassed 1 billion Singapore dollars (¥105 billion) in revenue, reflecting its global influence and steady growth over five decades. "In our more than 50 years of history, we've navigated many turning points," said Neo Eng Chong, CEO and president of Makino Asia. "What defines us is our ability to evolve, innovate and remain the trusted choice for precision manufacturing worldwide." ■ www.makino.com.sg



Mitutoyo Asia Pacific serves as the regional headquarters and marketing arm of Japan's Mitutoyo Corp. MITUTOYO ASIA PACIFIC

Redefining precision in the age of automation

"Smart factories aren't just a vision — they're happening now," said Takashi Matsuike, managing director of Mitutoyo Asia Pacific. "Mitutoyo is here to lead that transformation with automation, software and integrated measurement solutions." Established in 1978, Mitutoyo Asia Pacific serves as the regional headquarters and marketing arm of Japan's Mitutoyo Corp. Based in Singapore, the company supports a vast network of subsidiaries and representative offices across Southeast Asia, as well as business operations in Oceania, including Australia and New Zealand. From its base in Singapore, MAP continues to strengthen its regional leadership by expanding into emerging markets and building on its more than 40-year legacy. A new office and showroom are set to open in Australia, underscoring Mitutoyo's commitment to the Oceania market.

A key part of its growth strategy is MiCAT Planner, a smart software solution that automates parts programming for 3D coordinate measuring machines. "MiCAT Planner is central to our automation strategy," Matsuike



Takashi Matsuike, Managing Director of Mitutoyo Asia Pacific MITUTOYO ASIA PACIFIC

Mitutoyo's precision measurement systems are designed to integrate seamlessly with modern production lines, enabling real-time data capture, paperless reporting and digital connectivity.

explained. "It simplifies what was once a complex, manual task and helps customers save time while improving consistency." Mitutoyo's precision measurement systems are designed to integrate seamlessly with modern production lines, enabling real-time data capture, paperless reporting and digital connectivity. These full-spectrum solutions, including coordinate measuring machines, vision and optical machines, testing and form systems, sensor technologies and small tool instruments serve high-demand sectors such as automotive, semiconductors and electronics. "We don't just sell instruments, we deliver solutions that help manufacturers evolve," Matsuike said. "We focus on helping customers improve productivity and efficiency. That's where we create real value." With a pledge to be every client's "Partner in Quality and Precision," Mitutoyo continues to lead the way in enabling smart manufacturing across Asia and Oceania. ■

www.mitutoyo.com.sg/sg-en

Singapore and Japan on the world stage: Strengthening ties in a defining era

As the Osaka Expo unfolds and Singapore celebrates its 60th anniversary, known as SG60, Ambassador Hiroshi Ishikawa and Singapore Business Federation CEO Kok Ping Soon are close observers of the evolving partnership between Japan and Singapore. From digital transformation to green innovation, both leaders underscore a shared commitment to adaptability, collaboration and forward-looking leadership — the keys to navigating global shifts and unlocking new opportunities for the region.

Hiroshi Ishikawa, Japanese Ambassador to Singapore



JAPANESE EMBASSY

"Japan and Singapore share a wide range of strategic interests," Ishikawa said, reflecting on the more than five decades of strong bilateral ties. From their landmark economic partnership agreement to growing cooperation in artificial intelligence, green technologies and regional security, the ambassador emphasizes co-creation as a guiding principle. With Expo 2025 and SG60 as key milestones, the continuation of people-to-people exchanges and digital innovation will be vital going forward, Ishikawa said. "We can demonstrate to the

world how digital transformation can create a brighter and more prosperous future," he said, reaffirming Japan's commitment to regional connectivity, innovation and long-term friendship with Singapore. ■ Read the full Interview here: sms-bridges.com/SG25-Amb

Kok Ping Soon, CEO, Singapore Business Federation



SBF

"As Singapore approaches SG60 and participates in Expo 2025 Osaka, our focus at SBF is clear: to help build a future-ready business ecosystem," said Kok Ping Soon, SBF CEO. From the Johor-Singapore Strategic Economic Zone to enterprise grants and digitalization support, SBF is helping companies scale sustainably amid shifting global dynamics. Initiatives like the Tariff Playbook and overseas business missions guide members through uncertainty, while Japanese-Singaporean collaboration continues to expand in eco-innovation, AI and health care. "Expo 2025 is a strategic and symbolic milestone," Kok added, highlighting the role of enduring partnerships in driving regional progress. ■ Read the full Interview here: sms-bridges.com/SG25-SBF

Precision. Innovation. Makino

Discover more at www.makino.com.sg

Shaping the future in the age of high-tech collaboration

For more than five decades, Hitachi High-Tech (Singapore) Pte. Ltd. has been a driving force in Southeast Asia's technology landscape, serving as the Hitachi High-Tech Group's first office in the Association of South-east Asian Nations region. Today, it continues to lead regional operations from Singapore, delivering precision technologies, innovative solutions and trusted partnerships across critical industries. "Singapore's strategic location, political stability and robust infrastructure make it an ideal base for regional operations," said Genichiro Yamaguchi, managing director of Hitachi High-Tech Singapore. "We've been here since 1972, and over the past 50 years, we've built deep relationships and regional expertise that set us apart." As the regional headquarters, Hitachi High-Tech Singapore supports subsidiaries across ASEAN and India through centralized leadership, operational oversight, shared services



Genichiro Yamaguchi, Managing Director of Hitachi High-Tech Singapore HITACHI HIGH-TECH

and talent development. This setup ensures consistency and agility across diverse and fast-changing markets. The company's core strength lies

"Innovation is at the heart of our strategy. We continuously invest in R&D and digital transformation to develop cutting-edge solutions that meet the evolving needs of our customers and society."

in our global network as well as observation, measurement and analysis technologies, with applications in semiconductors, health care and industrial infrastructure.

Its product portfolio includes globally recognized systems, such as metrology and inspection systems using electron beam and optical technology, and conductor etch systems essential to semiconductor manufacturing. "Innovation is at the heart of our strategy," Yamaguchi said. "We continuously invest in R&D and digital transformation to develop cutting-edge solutions that meet the evolving needs of our customers and society." The Singapore government's focus on research and development, digitalization and artificial intelligence under its Research, Innovation and Enterprise 2025 Plan has also enhanced the company's ability to collaborate and co-create within a highly connected ecosystem. Leveraging the "One Hitachi" approach, Hitachi High-Tech integrates cross-functional expertise from across the Hitachi Group to deliver meaningful value and help build a sustainable society.

Looking ahead to the rest of 2025 and 2026, the company is focused on growth in emerging markets like India and Vietnam, where the semiconductor industry is expanding rapidly. "We're strengthening local partnerships, enhancing technical support and exploring new opportunities in back-end processes, data center solutions and global sourcing," Yamaguchi said. With a strong foundation in precision technology and a forward-looking strategy, Hitachi High-Tech Singapore continues to play a key role in advancing the region's innovation landscape. By combining global expertise with local insight, the company is well-positioned to support Asia's evolving industries and contribute to long-term, sustainable growth. ■

www.hitachi-hightech.com/sg/en/

The university that rewrote the rules

How Singapore Management University transformed the higher education experience and what the next 25 years demand



SMU's city campus — home to interdisciplinary education and research SMU

When Singapore Management University was founded in 2000, it set out not to follow conventions, but to redefine them — by creating a university that was student-centered, globally oriented and rooted in real-world relevance. SMU's approach was novel for its time: seminar-style classes instead of large lectures, a downtown campus woven into the city and real-world learning built into the curriculum. Learning was designed to be participatory, applied

and socially relevant from day one. Today, SMU stands as a symbol of bold academic experimentation. It was the first in Singapore to integrate classroom discussion, mandatory internships, community service and global exposure into the undergraduate journey. Its urban setting placed students close to the pulse of business, government and innovation. But SMU's legacy is not just one of firsts — it is one of impact. Over 25 years, SMU has built a strong reputation for interdis-

ciplinary, impactful research. Its faculty tackles real-world issues — from aging and climate risk to digital trust. Coupled with its strategic partnerships with industry leaders, public institutions and academic networks across ASEAN and beyond, it aims to connect Singapore to Asia and the world, and the world to Asia. Beyond research, SMU has redefined what it means to educate for purpose. Students lead social projects, arts initiatives and start-ups. The university has forged over 300 global partnerships, and its 60,000 alumni are making their mark in more than 100 countries. Looking ahead, SMU is investing in the future: artificial intelligence ethics, sustainability leadership and lifelong learning are now at the center of its agenda. From radical newcomer to respected innovator, SMU's journey is a case study in how institutions evolve — not by following precedent, but by rewriting the rules. ■ www.smu.edu.sg

Digital solutions for safer, smarter shipping

Established in 2019, iO3 Pte. Ltd. has quickly emerged as a leader in maritime digitalization. Its platform delivers integrated solutions that enhance asset performance, operational safety and data security while supporting the industry's broader shift toward sustainability and smarter shipping. "We tailor solutions to fit each vessel's unique requirements," said Joanna Soh, chief commercial officer of iO3. "Innovation is only meaningful when it solves real-world problems." "Our mission is to empower the maritime world through digitalization. We're here to help shipowners and operators navigate complexity with clarity and confidence." This vision was reinforced with iO3's recent launch of V.Sight AI-Assisted Navigation, developed in partnership with Seadronix. This enhanced solution combines real-time visual recognition, risk detection and decision support within the trusted V.Sight ecosystem. "It's a step forward in improving hazard detection and situational awareness at sea," Soh said. From its headquarters in Singapore, a global maritime innovation hub, iO3 has expanded across Asia, helping clients address evolving safety, regulatory and environmental requirements. The company's technology-agnostic approach, backed by collaborative partnerships, allows it to design purpose-built systems for any fleet. The recognition of iO3's solutions by ClassNK, a leading ship classification society, further underscores the company's credibility and technical excellence. "It validates that what we're building is both



Joanna Soh, Chief Commercial Officer of iO3 iO3

safe and necessary," Soh said. "It also assures our clients that we're aligned with the industry's highest standards." Looking ahead, iO3 is committed to accelerating decarbonization efforts through smarter fuel use and emissions monitoring. "We want to show that innovation developed in Singapore can deliver impact across global maritime corridors, from Japan to the rest of the world." ■ Learn more about iO3's smart shipping at: <https://io3.sg/>