

DEFENCE RELATIONS

# IISS Shangri-La Dialogue bolsters Malaysia-S'pore ties

**D**ATUK Seri Hishammuddin Hussein said his working visit to Singapore has further strengthened defence relations with the island republic and other allied countries.

The Senior Defence Minister, who was in Singapore from June 10 to June 12, said the main purpose of his visit was to fulfil an invitation to the Shangri-La Dialogue, organised by The International Institute of Strategic Studies (IISS).

The IISS Shangri-La Dialogue is a defence summit where ministers debate the region's critical security challenges and provides a platform for government ministers, senior officials, as well as business leaders and security experts to engage in bilateral talks.

In a statement, Hishammuddin said he was given the honour of delivering a speech on behalf of Malaysia in the dialogue's third plenary session entitled "Developing New Forms of Security Cooperation".

"It is also important for me to mention that I have met some of the top leaders of the Singapore gov-

ernment as part of this working visit at the Shangri-La Dialogue.

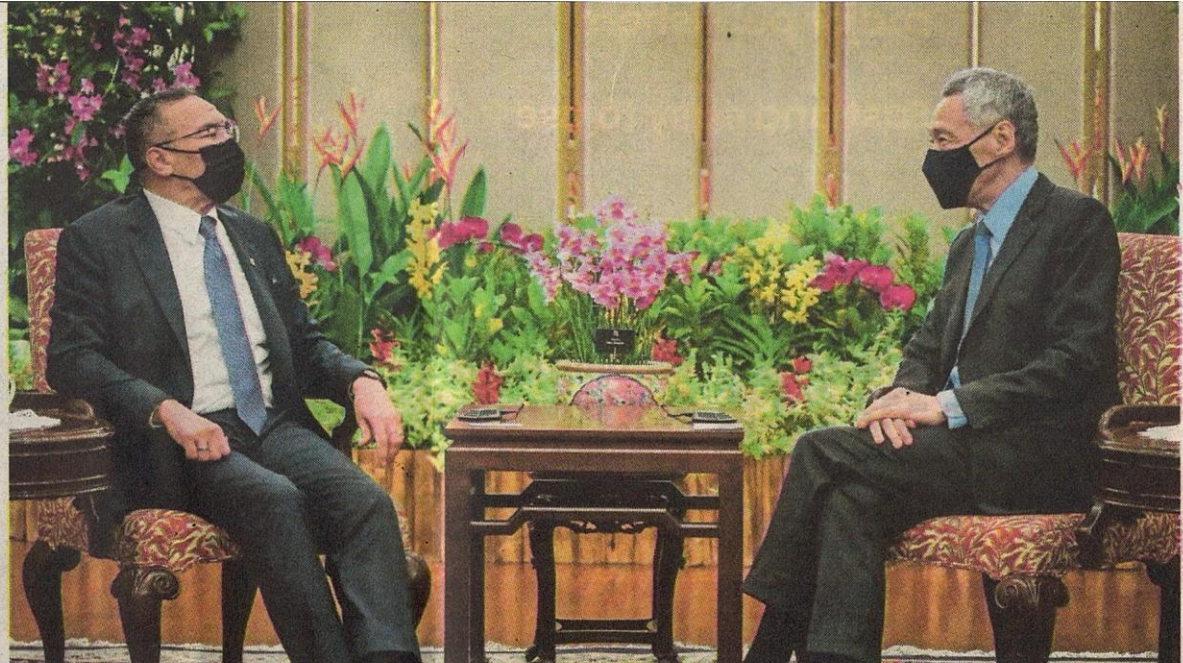
"They include Singapore president Halimah Yacob, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, Senior Minister and Coordinating Minister for National Security Teo Chee Hean, and Home Affairs and Law Minister K. Shanmugam.

"I am pleased to report that the meeting with these leaders took place in a friendly and harmonious atmosphere which highlighted the close and special relationship between Malaysia and Singapore that has been established for decades."

Hishammuddin said he also held a bilateral meeting with his Singaporean counterpart, Dr Ng Eng Hen, where both leaders discussed refining efforts towards further strengthening defence cooperation between Malaysia and Singapore, particularly between the armed forces of the two countries.

He added that Ng and himself also brought up a number of regional and international security issues of common concern.

During his visit, Hishammuddin



Senior Defence Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein (left) speaking with Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong at the Shangri-La Dialogue organised by The International Institute of Strategic Studies in Singapore, yesterday. PIC COURTESY OF THE DEFENCE MINISTRY

ernment as part of this working visit at the Shangri-La Dialogue.

They include the United States Secretary of Defence Lloyd James Austin III, Commander of the US Indo-Pacific Command Admiral John C. Aquilino, Australian Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Richard Marles, and China's Defence Minister Wei Fenghe.

"(The meeting) opens up space for us to exchange views on many global security issues, as well as share our commitment to take defence diplomacy between our respective countries to a higher level," he said.

It was reported that as part of the visit, Hishammuddin called Lee to a meeting at the Istana last Saturday, which was also attended by the republic's Senior Minister of State for Manpower and Defence Zaqu Mohamad.

In an earlier statement by the Defence Ministry, it said Lee and Hishammuddin reaffirmed the long-standing relationship and extensive cooperation, as well as strong people-to-people ties between Singapore and Malaysia.

It also said both leaders had discussed the countries' responses to common regional security chal-

lenges such as cyber and maritime security, as well as counter-terrorism.

"They reiterated the importance of strengthening existing defence cooperation through multilateral platforms such as the Asean Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM), the ADMM-Plus, the Five Power Defence Arrangements.

"They also underscored the effectiveness of combined co-operative measures, such as the Malacca Straits Patrol and the Counter-Terrorism Information Facility, in enhancing regional security and stability," it added.