

# Rotary CROSSROADS

by Rotary Club of Singapore

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Lifetime Achievement Award Winner for 'Best Bulletin in District 3310'





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# Rotary's 120<sup>th</sup> Birthday & World Understanding And Peace Day



## PROFESSOR KISHORE'S SPEECH AT THE WORLD UNDERSTANDING AND PEACE DAY ON 23-02-2025

On 23 Feb 2025, the club celebrated the 120<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of Rotary International. In conjunction with the anniversary, the club paid tribute to World Understanding and Peace Day and had the honour of Professor Kishore Mahbubani as the Guest of Honour. Professor Kishore provided an explanation of the nature of our current world. He highlighted three key points:

- 1) We are living in a time of remarkable change, which is historically unprecedented in both scale and nature. Unfortunately, this period of significant transformation coincides with considerable geopolitical shifts, increasing the risk of conflict.
- 2) The second point is that during this time of geopolitical change, the demand for global leadership has reached an all-time high, while the supply has dwindled, creating a worrying situation.
- 3) Finally, we must ask: What can we do about this? Professor Kishore suggested a small way in which we can begin to light a candle to make the world a more peaceful place.





Regarding the first point about geopolitics, Professor KISHORE NOTED THAT none of our ancestors have experienced the scale of change that we are currently witnessing in our lifetime. We are entering a very different world, characterized by what he calls the "new 3 M-world": multi-civilizational, multi-polar, and multi-lateral. These three aspects are fundamentally reshaping our world, with the most significant change being the emergence of a multi-civilization society. For the past 200 years, our world has largely been dominated by a single civilization: Western civilization, which has emerged as the strongest civilization globally.

A century ago, Western powers were actively colonizing various parts of the world. Professor Kishore cited the Fullerton Hotel as an example from his childhood in Singapore; it was once the general post office. He would visit this location with his father during the time of British colonial rule, an experience he documented in his memoirs. As an Asian child growing up in Singapore, he felt mentally, spiritually, and culturally inferior to Westerners, particularly the British. The British were able to convince many that they were superior and, therefore, had the right to govern over others.

Professor Kishore reflected on a significant historical moment that occurred exactly 100 years ago, when 300 million of his ancestors in India were governed by just 100,000 Englishmen. However, that era has passed. Today, we are witnessing the resurgence of numerous strong civilizations, including Chinese, Indian, Islamic, and others. The world is markedly different now. Unfortunately, we are struggling to navigate this multi-civilizational landscape, which is one reason why conflicts are emerging and continuing to rise. The very structure of the world is changing.

In the geopolitical context of a multi-polar world, we can observe a significant shift since the end of the Cold War. Initially, there was only one major global superpower, the United States, which seemed to dominate all others. Many believed we had reached the "end of history." However, we are now witnessing the return of other major powers, and this transition to a multi-polar world presents a series of complex challenges.

Professor Kishore confidently stated that the competition between the US and China is likely to intensify over the next 10 to 20 years, regardless of who is president. Additionally, we are all witnessing the ongoing situation in Ukraine, where the war continues. We also observe conflict developments in the Middle East. These events illustrate the consequences of an emerging multipolar world for which we have not adequately prepared in terms of potential conflicts.

Professor Kishore urged us to do our part in contributing to world peace. He also mentioned that he established an "Asian Peace Centre" at the National University of Singapore, to which he had donated S\$ 100,000.

**By Rtn Dr Hoon Sing Keow**





# RI 120<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Zoom Meeting

**Rtn VJ Africa:**

The Rotary International Community recently celebrated its 120<sup>th</sup> Birthday in style by organising its annual Sun Never Sets in Rotary (SNSR25) event. This 24 hour global activity started on 23 February 10pm SGT and ended on 24 February at 9pm SGT. All in all, the virtual gathering brought together 39 districts across 44 countries, showcasing a vast blend of cultures rich in diversity and united in the Rotarian value of Service Above Self .

Each slot gave Rotary Districts an opportunity to share the uniqueness of their countries and the impact of their respective projects and endeavours. Our very own Rotary District 3310 was well represented by our District Governor Dr Yap Lip Kee as he astutely shared the rich history of our district while PP June Jonet (District Communications Chair and District Deputy Secretary) gave key updates on our district initiatives across Singapore, Malaysia, and Brunei.

You can listen to the official SNSR25 song and the message of RI President Stephanie Urchick here: <https://youtu.be/IZ0HFBxSUK0?si=fmGvpOz4Fjb6YNwS>





# The 23<sup>rd</sup> Weekly Meeting

## WELCOME OF GUEST

By Rtn Adnan Ansari



## ROTARY TOASTS

By Rtn Ranga Somanathan



**TO** Rotary International

## EXCHANGE OF BANNERS



**Edwin**  
from RC San Marino



**Lynn Yeoh**  
on behalf of RC Kabete



**RC Sacred Hearts -**  
Clarieyenne





Trump 2.0

After President Trump takes office again, he implements a series of policies, including a 25% tariff on imports from Mexico. What are the effects of Trump’s proposed tariffs on Mexico? How do Mexico and Singapore cooperate in response to these strategies? H.E. Agustín García-López Loaeza will address and answer questions regarding Mexico’s response to President Trump’s new administration and more.

Ambassador of Mexico to Singapore

H.E. Agustín García-López Loaeza

Rtn Liesa Desisca:

TRUMP 2.0: NAVIGATING THE 25% TARIFF ON MEXICAN IMPORTS – HOW SINGAPORE & MEXICO ARE ADAPTING TOGETHER

Singapore, 26 February 2025 – The Rotary Club of Singapore hosted *His Excellency Agustín García-López Loaeza, Ambassador of Mexico to Singapore*, for an insightful discussion on the evolving economic landscape following the newly elected U.S. President’s decision to impose a 25% tariff on Mexican imports.

ABOUT AMBASSADOR AGUSTÍN GARCÍA-LÓPEZ LOAEZA

Ambassador Agustín García-López Loaeza is a seasoned diplomat with over 30 years of experience in international relations and foreign affairs. Since his appointment as Ambassador of Mexico to Singapore in 2022, he has been a key figure in strengthening bilateral ties between the two nations.

His distinguished career includes notable positions such as:

- Director General of AMEXCID (Mexican Agency for International Development Cooperation) (2015–2018)
- Ambassador of Mexico to France & Permanent Representative to UNESCO (2013–2015)
- Consul General of Mexico in Los Angeles, USA (2007–2013)
- Deputy Permanent Representative of Mexico to the United Nations (2001–2007)

During his speech, Ambassador García-López Loaeza reflected on his lifelong passion for diplomacy, emphasizing that foreign affairs is not just a profession for him but a calling and passion that drives him to serve Mexico with dedication.

He also shared some of the most challenging moments of his career, including his experience during the September 11 attacks in New York and the devastating 1985 earthquake in Mexico. These events, he noted, shaped his perspective on the resilience and adaptability required in international diplomacy.

H.E. Agustín García-López exemplifies the Rotary Club's ethos of **"Service Above Self"** and is a proud honorary member of the **Rotary Club of Raffles City**, reinforcing his commitment to diplomacy, global collaboration, and community service.

#### MEXICO AND SINGAPORE: A STRONG AND ENDURING PARTNERSHIP

The longstanding diplomatic and economic ties between Mexico and Singapore date back to 1975 and have continuously strengthened over the decades. In 2022, both nations reaffirmed their commitment to free and open trade by signing the Pacific Alliance-Singapore Free Trade Agreement, further enhancing economic cooperation and investment opportunities.

As Singapore's third-largest trading partner in Latin America, Mexico plays a key role in fostering bilateral trade, cultural exchange, and investment collaborations. During his speech, H.E. Agustín García-López highlighted Mexico's rich agricultural heritage and its vital contributions to the global food supply chain. He emphasized that key Mexican exports such as avocados, chili, zucchini, chocolate, peanuts and many more are widely distributed in international markets, including Singapore's food industry.

Conversely, Singapore has been a key supplier to Mexico, exporting semiconductors, machinery, petroleum oils, pharmaceuticals, and precious metals, further strengthening their trade relationship. This growing partnership underscores the mutual economic benefits and shared vision between both nations as they continue to expand cooperation in trade, investment, and innovation.

#### MEXICO AND THE U.S.: ALLIES, ADVERSARIES, AND EVERYTHING IN BETWEEN

Notwithstanding former President Donald Trump's famous declaration—**"I will build a wall, and Mexico will pay for it!"**—Mexico and the U.S. remain strategic allies, bound by trade, security cooperation, and economic interdependence. Ambassador Agustín García-López Loaeza highlighted the transformative role of NAFTA (1994-2020) in making Mexico one of the U.S.'s largest trading partners, fostering a North American free trade zone. Its successor, the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA), signed in 2018 and implemented in 2020, continues to drive bilateral economic growth, solidifying the nations' shared economic interests despite political tensions.

While trade serves as a foundation for cooperation, immigration and drug trafficking remain major friction points. The U.S. demands tighter border security and cartel crackdowns, while Mexico pushes back against U.S. gun trafficking, which fuels cartel violence. These ongoing disputes reflect a complex relationship where economic collaboration is often overshadowed by security and diplomatic tensions.

Despite being a major producer and transit hub for narcotics, Mexico has comparatively lower domestic drug consumption than the United States due to a combination of cultural, economic, and legal factors. While **strong family values and social structures** discourage substance abuse, strict drug laws, lower disposable income, and government prevention programs also play key roles. Additionally, social stigma surrounding drug use acts as a deterrent in many communities. In contrast, the United States experiences higher drug consumption rates, driven by economic disparities, opioid overprescription, and a culture that emphasizes personal freedom. These differences highlight how Mexico primarily functions as a supplier and transit point, while the U.S. remains a major consumer. Addressing these challenges requires a collaborative approach that tackles both supply and demand dynamics.

During his speech, H.E. Agustín García-López drew parallels between President Donald Trump and Mexico's first female president, Claudia Sheinbaum Pardo. Both leaders secured strong electoral mandates, winning more than half of the popular vote, which grants them significant authority to advance their respective national agendas.



THE 25% TARIFF AND ITS IMPACT ON SINGAPORE

The U.S. 25% tariff on Mexican imports, set to take effect on March 4, 2025, will raise production costs for Singaporean-invested factories in Mexico (such as Flex Ltd, Keppel Corporation, and ST Engineering), reducing their competitiveness in the U.S. market. This could lead to reduced production, lower profitability, and declining investments for Singaporean businesses relying on Mexican manufacturing.

The tariff also disrupts Singapore’s supply chains, as Mexican factories rely on Singaporean high-tech components and materials. If Mexican production slows, demand for Singaporean exports drops, impacting trade and investment stability.

As global trade policies continue to evolve, Mexico and Singapore must explore adaptive strategies to maintain economic stability. Strengthening regional partnerships, diversifying export markets, and investing in resilient supply chains will be crucial in mitigating the effects of protectionist policies. By leveraging their shared commitment to free trade and innovation, both nations can turn these challenges into opportunities for sustained economic growth.

The discussion on Trump 2.0 and global trade shifts was insightful and engaging, concluding with a lively Q&A session where Rotarians exchanged perspectives with Ambassador Agustín García-López Loaeza. The Rotary Club of Singapore was honored to host him, gaining valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities ahead for Mexico, Singapore, and global trade partnerships.





# The Four-Way Test

Of the things we think, say or do:

- 01. Is it the **TRUTH**?
- 02. Is it **FAIR** to all concerned?
- 03. Will it build **GOODWILL** and **BETTER FRIENDSHIPS**?
- 04. Will it be **BENEFICIAL** to all concerned?

# The Guide to Daily Living

Before doing the things we want to do, consider first, the Precepts of the guide. Ask ourselves these 4 questions and act upon them:

- 1. Have I spent some time in self-examination?
- 2. Have I spent quality time with my family?
- 3. Have I given my best to my work?
- 4. Have I given some time to someone near and far?

The Guide, in fact, encompasses the 4 parts of the Object of Rotary.

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