

Cameron pledges to strengthen S'pore links

British PM urges region's investors to help his nation end over-reliance on European trade

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British Prime Minister David Cameron yesterday pledged to step up Britain's trade links with Singapore and Asia as he sought to woo investors from the region and counter his country's dependence on trade with Europe.

Mr Cameron used his speech at the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy to showcase business opportunities in Britain.

"Britain is back and Britain means business... And we are more focused than ever on making our country one of the very best places to do business," he said in his lecture, which was attended by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance Tharman Shanmugaratnam and Minister in the Prime Minister's Office Grace Fu.

Mr Cameron, who arrived in Singapore yesterday with a delegation of mainly business leaders and officials for his first official visit, acknowledged that Britain had been too reliant on its European neighbours for trade and investment for too long.

He urged his country's businesses to look beyond their backyard to markets in a rapidly rising Asean.

"There is a world beyond Europe and where Britain must not miss out. And nowhere more so than in South-east Asia. It's a striking statistic that Britain still does more trade with Belgium than with the whole of Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Vietnam combined," he said, referring to the three other countries on his four-nation South-east Asia tour this week.

He highlighted that Asean was now the seventh-largest economy



Mr David Cameron (centre) in the National Orchid Garden yesterday with (from left) Ms Grace Fu, Minister in the Prime Minister's Office; Britain's Minister for Small Business Anna Soubry; and Mr Kenneth Er, CEO of National Parks Board. The British leader had an orchid named after him. ST PHOTO: LIM YAOHUI

in the world. He also referred to the much-anticipated Asean Economic Community, which comes into full swing in December. These were the reasons he had chosen the region for his first major trade visit since being re-elected in May.

Mr Cameron also urged those seeking to do business in Britain to look beyond its traditional markets — particularly to northern England, an area focused on the research and

development, manufacturing, science and technology sectors.

Earlier yesterday, Mr Cameron visited the Botanic Gardens where an orchid, *Papilionanda David Cameron*, was named in his honour.

He also met top business leaders from Singapore and Britain at a reception organised by UK Trade and Investment (UKTI) to promote business links between the two countries.

Mr Cameron and Ms Fu also witnessed the signing of two statements of intent between UKTI and the Monetary Authority of Singapore with private sector co-signatories Lloyd's and Aviva.

The agreements seek to support the development of regional insurance markets, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement.

Mr Cameron wraps up his visit today and will attend an official wel-

REASONS FOR SUCCESS

It was his commitment to tackling corruption that helped to give people confidence to invest in this incredible country. And it is no coincidence that Singapore's climb to the top end of the global indices for anti-corruption and ease of doing business have gone hand-in-hand with its global success.



BRITISH PREMIER DAVID CAMERON, on Mr Lee Kuan Yew's commitment to transparency and tackling corruption

come ceremony at the Istana, where he will call on President Tony Tan Keng Yam and meet Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, who will host him to lunch.

Mr Lee and Mr Cameron will also witness the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding on Cyber Security Cooperation between Singapore and Britain.

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