

Article Name: Dr Vivian Balakrishnan, 2nd Minister for Trade and Industry at the Asia Pacific Breweries' New Bottling Line Commissioning Ceremony on 8 April 2005

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Mr Koh Poh Tiong, CEO of Asia Pacific Breweries Ltd;

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen.

We are here to congratulate Asia Pacific Breweries on the commissioning of its new bottling line.

Overview of beer industry

The overall beer market has been recording only modest growth.

However, specialty beer or craft beer has outperformed the general market. Specialty beer commands a premium over mainstream beer because of its unique flavours and innovative bottle designs.

Significance of new line to APB

Over the years, APB has climbed steadily up the production value chain. From simple brewing and packaging, it has moved to innovate on more complex forms of packaging, culminating in today's complex brews and complex packaging – which are the hallmarks of specialty beers.

The new state-of-the-art bottling line will be a huge boost to APB's packaging capability and flexibility, as it is now able to handle frequent changeovers and shorter production runs whilst maintaining its high operational efficiency.

More significantly, with this new line, APB Singapore is now the undisputed innovation hub for the Group, assuming the lead in shaping the landscape of beer industries both at home and abroad.

APB – a successful Singapore company

APB is a wonderful example of a local company that has expanded beyond our shores, successfully marketing a global brand to the region and the world.

The past decade has seen APB expand aggressively in Asia Pacific as it formed partnerships and established operations to grow its beer brands in the region.

It has enjoyed increasing returns year-on-year in every overseas country it has gone into. This has resulted from its brand-building initiatives, targeted marketing activities, innovation, and adaptability.

The company has won numerous international awards over the past few years.

The most recent are its 'Platinum SuperBrand' status in the SuperBrands Survey 2004 for Tiger Beer, 'Top 100 Brands in Asia' by Synovate Survey 2004, and a 'Gold Medal Award' from the Association of Brewers World Beer Cup 2004. Other awards also recognise the brewery's creative branding, marketing and advertising campaigns.

Singapore – a strategic food hub

The Singapore government strongly supports APB's efforts in innovation and expansion as it adds to our vision to become a vital food hub.

The food sector ranks amongst today's growth industries. With Asia's burgeoning middle-class populace, we are experiencing a growing demand for more sophistication in food, including innovations in taste, nutrition and convenience.

Singapore, located at the axis of this exciting development, is strategically placed as an important innovation centre for the food industry. We are also the ideal site for the first introduction of food ingredients, products and processes.

Singapore's food industry – present and future

The government is committed to revitalising the food industry in Singapore. Currently, the Republic is home to over 680 food companies, including several global and regional players, with total output of some S\$4 billion. This makes up only 0.7% of our GDP, a figure we would like to increase.

Singapore has an excellent reputation worldwide for food safety, which will help 'Made in Singapore' food products command a premium. Not only do we want to attract more food players to our shores, we also want to encourage more companies to undertake their entire range of business activities here.

Four cornerstones of vital food hub

Singapore's vital food hub is built upon the four cornerstones of trust, innovation, science and connectivity. These cornerstones are distilled not only from the Republic's existing advantages, they also anticipate the future direction of the industry.

Trust refers to our international standing for food safety and certification, whilst innovation speaks of the new products, processes and business models for the industry.

Underlying this innovation is science, particularly in the areas of nutrition and functional ingredients. In order to build up this competence and develop appropriate manpower, we are working with the universities to create curricula tailored to industry needs. The National University of Singapore's food science and technology department is one of the fruits of our efforts.

The last cornerstone is connectivity. This points to the Republic's superb logistics network, as well as the increased ease of market access via our comprehensive network of Free Trade Agreements.

Conclusion

Today, APB has clearly taken a further step to transform Singapore into a vital food hub.

We look forward to working closely with the brewery as our strategic partner to realise our vision.

My heartiest congratulations once again to APB.

Thank you.

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