

New agreement to open doors for Singapore firms in Myanmar

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An agreement signed at a joint ministerial meeting in Singapore this week will make it easier for the city-state's companies to do business in Myanmar, media reports said.

The memorandum of understanding is between government-owned trade promotion agency, International Enterprise (IE) Singapore and the Myanmar Investment Commission, the reports said.

The MoU was signed on June 8 on the sidelines of the sixth Singapore-Myanmar Joint Ministerial Working Committee meeting by IE Singapore's assistant chief executive, Mr Tan Soon Kim, and MIC secretary, U Aung Naing Oo.

The MoU would open doors for more Singapore firms to explore collaboration in urban and housing projects, utilities, transport and logistics, manufacturing, oil and gas, and professional services, said the Straits Times.

"Myanmar has shown steady growth since its political and economic reforms started in 2011," Tan said in a statement, the daily reported.

"Whilst teething challenges are present, as with any emerging economy, we note the government's efforts to create a conducive business environment for foreign investors. For instance, its newly passed investment law shows the government's commitment to promote investments," he said.

IE Singapore has been working closely with Singapore companies across all sectors in Myanmar, the Straits Times said.

It said support provided by the trade agency had helped Singapore food and beverage company BreadTalk to successfully negotiate a franchise agreement with diversified conglomerate Shwe Taung. BreadTalk's first outlet in Myanmar opened on the ground floor of Shwe Taung's Junction City mall in downtown Yangon early last month.

IE Singapore had also helped Singapore firm Bok Seng Logistics to partner with big Ayeyarwady Region company, Ayeyar Hintha.

Bok Seng signed an MoU in February with Ayeyar Hintha, which owns Patheingyi Industrial City, Ayeyarwady's first large-scale industrial park, the Straits Times said.

Singapore is the second biggest investor in Myanmar, show government figures released in April.

They showed that since the former ruling junta eased restrictions on foreign direct investment in 1988, Singapore had invested a total of US\$16.8 billion, behind China with \$18.5 billion.

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