

2013 Business China Excellence Award Recipient

Liang Baohua

Age: 68

Member of the Standing Committee, the 12th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference

Former Secretary of the Jiangsu Provincial Committee of the Communist Party of China

Background

- Born in 1945, a native of Jiangxi province. Joined the Communist Party of China (CPC) in 1965
- Jiangxi province governor from 2003 to 2007, a post he held till 2010
- In December 2010, he became the Deputy Director of the 11th National People's Congress (NPC) Financial and Economic Committee
- Currently, he is the Director of the Standing Committee of Jiangsu Provincial People's Congress
- Best known for his role as China's key representative in developing the Suzhou Industrial Park (SIP) since 1998, when he served as the secretary of the CPC Suzhou Municipal Committee
- While it was not always smooth sailing, Mr Liang had played an instrumental role as the mediator and executive who ensured that the project went according to plan
- He had been a strong supporter of the joint venture, saying that the cooperation with Singapore was different from that with other countries, because it combined China's long history and culture and Singapore's expertise and experience in creating an industrial park that had attracted over 3,500 foreign investment companies in the 15 years since its inception

Achievements

- The SIP owed much of its success to Mr Liang, as he constantly urged local authorities to lend support to the joint venture, especially during the late 1990s when the SIP faced fierce competition from other industrial parks in the region
- He remained supportive during the difficult times when the SIP incurred losses of some US\$90 million (\$111 million) over five years

- After several rounds of negotiations, the Singapore consortium lowered its stake to 35 per cent in 2001, raising the Chinese consortium's stake to 65 per cent from 35 per cent. In the same year, the China-Singapore Suzhou Industrial Park Development Co. Ltd successfully turned around and posted a profit. In 2008, the SIP had grown to contribute 15 per cent of Suzhou's GDP.
- Today, the SIP enjoys an iconic international status and has been hailed as a model of innovative master-planning within and beyond China. The Chinese Central Government has established a national training institute within the SIP to train officials from all over China involved in urban planning and industrial park development.
- Mr Liang's important contribution to the SIP has won praises from Singapore leaders. Mr Lee Kuan Yew noted that among all the Chinese provinces, Singapore enjoys the best relations with Jiangsu, where the industrial park – the earliest and most famous bilateral project between Singapore and China – is situated.

Contributions to Singapore-China Relations

- Set up in 1994, the SIP has become both a blueprint and inspiration for other provinces in China for developing Sino-foreign joint projects. Being the earliest key Sino-foreign joint venture, Mr Liang described it as "the common responsibility of the whole city".
- Mr Liang mentioned that more than 15,000 officials from the Jiangsu province had since gone to Singapore for training and brought back invaluable skills. The SIP represents the synergy between Singapore's modern expertise and China's vast resources and talent, and Mr Liang is one of the chief architects who ensured its success.
- Besides the SIP, Mr Liang has also contributed greatly to Singapore-Jiangsu cooperation through the Singapore-Jiangsu Cooperation Council (SJCC). Established in 2007, Mr Liang as the inaugural co-chair on the Jiangsu side saw through its early development phase.
- The SJCC has played a pivotal role in building strong mutual understanding between the leaders of both sides, promoting bilateral economic cooperation, launching iconic projects and broadening exchanges to areas like education, tourism and environmental services. For example, at the 5th SJCC held in Singapore in 2011, 17 Memorandum of Understandings and commercial agreements worth \$3.3 billion were signed. This was the highest value recorded since SJCC was set up in 2007.

- Currently, there are two iconic projects – the Su-Tong Hi-Tech Park and the Singapore-Nanjing Eco Island Development – which are supported under the auspices of the SJCC and both have been elevated to provincial level projects at the 2012 SJCC.
- Today, at least one third of Singapore's FDI into China goes to Jiangsu province. It is also the top province for Singapore investments into China. Total bilateral trade between Singapore and Jiangsu in 2012 amounted to US\$12.7 billion (S\$15.7 billion). Singapore's cumulative contractual investment in Jiangsu by end of 2012 was US\$34.8 billion (S\$43 billion).