

# OPPORTUNITY **Russia**



**BILATERAL**  
**NEW HIGHS INKED FOR  
SINGAPORE-RUSSIA CO-OPERATION**

**INVESTMENT**  
**SINGAPORE PITCHES TO FURTHER  
ITS INTERESTS IN THE REGION**

**RSBF 2014**  
**A BID TO ENHANCE CO-OPERATION  
IN RUSSIA'S REGIONAL EXPANSES**



A PUBLICATION BY THE EMBASSY OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, SINGAPORE



# Stand Out With A Globally Recognised Qualification

SINGAPORE'S  
**OLDEST**  
NOT-FOR-PROFIT  
PROFESSIONAL  
INSTITUTE

**59**

YEARS OF  
ACADEMIC  
EXCELLENCE

**10**

UNIVERSITY  
PARTNERS

STUDENTS  
FROM

**82**

COUNTRIES

**126**

RECORD BREAKING  
FIRST CLASS  
HONOURS  
AWARDS  
IN 2014



MDIS Malaysia



MDIS Tashkent

As Singapore's oldest not-for-profit professional institute for lifelong learning, the Management Development Institute of Singapore (MDIS) is proud to count itself as one of Singapore's foremost providers of higher learning.

The world today is a complex and ever-changing one, and we understand that the market demands more than mere technical competency from the modern graduate. This is precisely why an education at MDIS only begins – but never ends – in the classroom. Supplemented by industry visits, soft-skill workshops, and talks from industry experts, we aim to provide all of our students with a holistic and well-rounded educational experience.

With our campuses in Tashkent, Uzbekistan and Educity@Iskandar, Malaysia, we will continue to make MDIS an unparalleled institution of academic excellence.

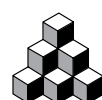
THINK SUCCESS. THINK MDIS.



Cert No.: EDU-2-2016  
Validity: 30/12/2014 - 29/12/2018



Management Development Institute of Singapore  
Reg. No. 201001793H  
20 May 2014 to 19 May 2018



**MDIS**

Management Development  
Institute of Singapore

Singapore • Uzbekistan • Malaysia



# OPPORTUNITY Russia Contents



## MESSAGES

From The President Vladimir Putin	2
Address by the Russian Ambassador to Singapore	4

## COVER STORY

President Putin Marches in "The Immortal Regiment" Parade	6
---	---

## BILATERAL TIES

New Highs Inked for Singapore-Russia Co-operation	7
---	---

## ECONOMY

Eurasian Economic Union (EEU): Roots and Wings for Economic Development and People Welfare	8
--	---

## INVESTMENT

Investments in Infrastructure to Add Impetus to Russia's Economic Development	9
Invest in Tatarstan Winter Forum 2014: Singapore Pitches to Further its Interests in the Region	10

## ASEAN-RUSSIA

ASEAN Ups the Ante to Become a 'Single Market and Production Base' by Year-end	11
--	----

## RSBF 2014

The Dynamics of Entrepreneurship and Successful Cross-Border Ties	12
Russia-Singapore Inter-Governmental Commission: A Bid to Enhance Co-operation in Russia's Regional Expanses	13

## BUSINESS

Doing Business in Russia: Long-Term Commitments and Up-Close Interactions	14
---	----

## EDUCATION

Russia's Innopolis University Signs Fresh MOU with Singapore's National University	14
--	----

## ART & CULTURE

Colours of Chingay 2015	15
Russian Art Woos Asian Market	16

## REVIEW

Sound of Colours: A Study in Artistic Curiosity and Creativity	16
--	----

## SHIPPING

On-Board the Pallada	17
----------------------	----

## SINGAPOREAN IN RUSSIA

Living in the Russian city of Kaliningrad	18
---	----

## TRAVEL

Romance of the Rails	19
----------------------	----

## FACT FILE: RUSSIA

20

Published in association with  
Embassy of the Russian Federation, Singapore



51 Nassim Road  
Singapore 258439

Tel +65 6235 1832/1834  
Fax +65 6733 4780

russian\_embassy@singnet.com.sg  
www.singapore.mid.ru

**PUBLISHER** Sun Media Pte Ltd | **EDITOR-IN-CHIEF** Nomita Dhar

**EDITOR** Ranees Sahaney

**ADVERTISING & MARKETING** Jamie Ho Hui Xin

**CREATIVE PROJECT MANAGER** Valerius Reza Boenawan

**PRINTING** Stamford Press Pte Ltd

**MCI (P) 056/05/2015**

© Copyright 2014 by Sun Media Pte Ltd. The opinions, pronouncements or views expressed or implied in this publication are those of the authors or contributors. The aim of this publication is to guide and provide general information. While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of all the information contained, the publisher cannot be held responsible for any loss incurred in any way whatsoever by any entity, company, organisation or a person relying on this information.

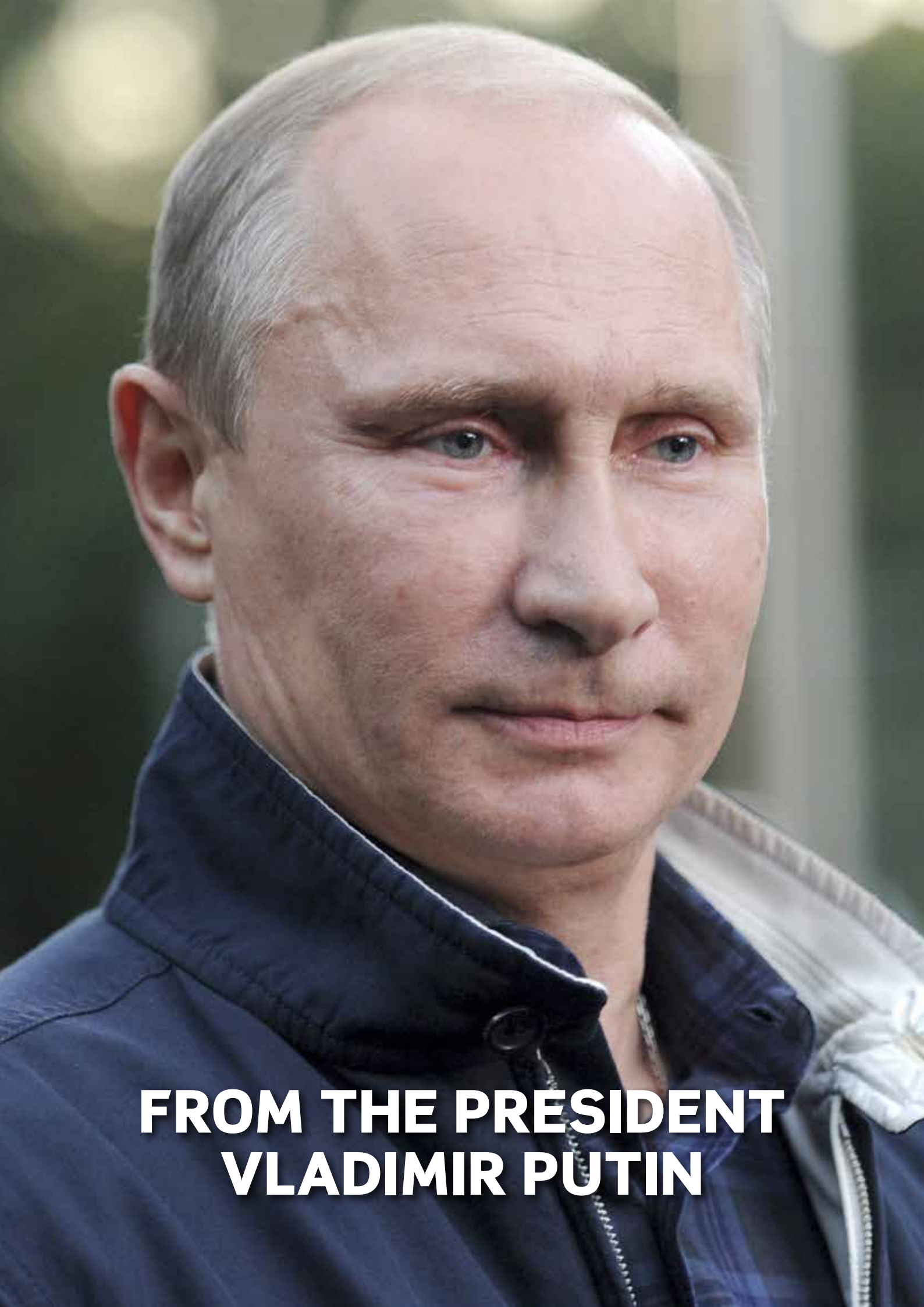
Published by



20 Kramat Lane #01-02  
United House  
Singapore 228773

Tel +65 6735-2972  
Fax +65 6735-3114

admin@sunmediaonline.com  
www.sunmediaonline.com



**FROM THE PRESIDENT  
VLADIMIR PUTIN**





**President Putin, in an impassioned patriotic speech honoured the war veterans who brought victory to Russia and the world. We bring you excerpts from the speech he gave at military parade on Red Square in Moscow to mark the 70th anniversary of Victory in the Great Patriotic War.**

**T**oday, when we mark this sacred anniversary, we once again appreciate the enormous scale of Victory over Nazism. We are proud that it was our fathers and grandfathers who succeeded in prevailing over, smashing and destroying that dark force.

Hitler's reckless adventure became a tough lesson for the entire world community. At that time, in the 1930s, the enlightened Europe failed to see the deadly threat in the Nazi ideology.

Today, seventy years later, history calls again to our wisdom and vigilance. We must not forget that the ideas of racial supremacy and exclusiveness had provoked the bloodiest war ever. The war affected almost 80 percent of the world population. Many European nations were enslaved and occupied.

The Soviet Union bore the brunt of the enemy's attacks. The elite Nazi forces were brought to bear on it. All their military power was concentrated against it. And all major decisive battles of World War II, in terms of military power and equipment involved, had been waged there.

And it is no surprise that it was the Red Army that, by taking Berlin in a crushing attack, hit the final blow to Hitler's Germany finishing the war.

Our entire multi-ethnic nation rose to fight for our Motherland's freedom. Everyone bore the severe burden of the war. Together, our people made an immortal exploit to save the country. They predetermined the outcome of World War II. They liberated European nations from the Nazis.

Veterans of the Great Patriotic War, wherever they live today, should know that here, in Russia, we highly value their fortitude, courage and dedication to frontline brotherhood.

The Great Victory will always remain a heroic pinnacle in the history of our country. But we also pay tribute to our allies in the anti-Hitler coalition.

We are grateful to the peoples of Great Britain, France and the United States of America for their contribution to the Victory. We are thankful to the anti-fascists of various countries who selflessly fought the enemy as guerrillas and members of the underground resistance, including in Germany itself.

However, in the last decades, the basic principles of international cooperation have come to be increasingly ignored. These are the principles that have been hard won by mankind as a result of the ordeal of the war.

We saw attempts to establish a unipolar world. We see the strong-arm block thinking gaining momentum. All that undermines sustainable global development.

We welcome today all our foreign guests while expressing a particular gratitude to the representatives of the countries that fought against Nazism and Japanese militarism.

Our fathers and grandfathers lived through unbearable sufferings, hardships and losses. They worked till exhaustion, at the limit of human capacity. They fought even unto death. They proved the example of honour and true patriotism.

We pay tribute to all those who fought to the bitter for every street, every house and every frontier of our Motherland.

We bow in loving memory of sons, daughters, fathers, mothers, grandfathers, husbands, wives, brothers, sisters, comrades-in-arms, relatives and friends – all those who never came back from war, all those who are no longer with us.

Long live the victorious people!

Happy holiday!

Congratulations on the Victory Day!

Hooray!



**ADDRESS BY  
THE RUSSIAN AMBASSADOR  
TO SINGAPORE**



## Russia and Singapore are on a fast track of greater mobility when it comes to enhancing mutually-beneficial relationships that aim to go beyond trade ties

**R**ussia and Singapore have a history of long-standing friendly and mutually advantageous relations. The trade agreement, signed in April, 1966 between the two countries, was the first that Singapore negotiated following Independence.

Mr Lee Kuan Yew paid his first official visit to our country in September 1970. In September 2013 the “Order of Honour” was conferred on him by Russian President Vladimir Putin, for Mr Lee’s personal contribution to promoting friendly relations between the two countries. More recently Mr Lee received an honorary doctorate from the Diplomatic Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia.

Bilateral ties between Russia and Singapore have become much broader and deeper in scope in recent years. Russia and Singapore share many common interests. In 2014 bilateral trade in goods surpassed USD 8 bln. There are over 400 Russian companies operating in Singapore.

Singapore companies are now active in a wider range of business sectors in Russia, including areas such as urban development, agribusiness, information technology, innovations and education.

Singapore is also engaging Russia at the regional level, with projects and investments going well beyond the ambit of the big cities of Moscow and St Petersburg.

Economic cooperation between Russia and Singapore is getting stronger through the Russia Singapore Business Forum (RSBF), which can rightly claim to be Russia’s launching pad in Asia. Since its conception in 2006, RSBF

has gathered high momentum, establishing itself as the most effective platform for Singapore and Asian companies to forge business-to-business linkages, launch business projects and tie-ups, and bridge pan-regional and global businesses across Russia, Singapore and the rest of Asia.

Bilateral ties between Russia and Singapore go well beyond economics, extending as they are into the fields of education, the arts, culture and tourism— all of which have great potential for collaboration. The Russian Cultural Centre will add a new dimension to our relations and cultural ties.

Many more Singaporeans are also heading to Russia for business and leisure. Singapore is also home to an estimated 5,000-strong Russian-speaking expatriate community. Many of them are high-quality specialists engaged in the most advanced scientific research. Singapore’s universities too have established links with more than 30 educational and research institutes in Russia.

The year 2015 is special for our relations. For the first time a Russian dance company from the Far East has participated in the Singapore’s Chingay Parade. The Russian community will stage a Russian Ball in Singapore — the first ever in Asia-Pacific, to celebrate Singapore’s Golden Jubilee.

June 2018 will mark the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of our diplomatic relations. The half a century milestone of diplomatic ties is an important and timely opportunity to further strengthen relations between Russia and Singapore, which already possess significant potential to build on our joint accomplishments of the past five decades.





Photo Courtesy of Vadim Savitsky/AP

# PRESIDENT PUTIN MARCHES IN “THE IMMORTAL REGIMENT” PARADE

**On Victory Day, Russian President Vladimir Putin joined the Immortal Regiment march at the Red Square with a photograph of his father, a war veteran who fought in the World War II against Nazis**

A sea of people took to the streets on 09 May, holding up placards with photographs of their fathers and grandfathers, war veterans who fought in the Great Patriotic War against the Nazis. Carrying his father's photograph, the Russian President Vladimir Putin showed his solidarity and joined hands to march along with over 500,000 Russians at Red Square. Aptly named the “Immortal Regiment” to honour soldiers of the war, Russians all over the country came out in huge numbers to salute their friends, relatives and family members. This year's march was the fourth of its kind and one of the grandest parade in Russian history.

Around Russia and abroad, an estimated 12 million people joined Victory Day parades to mark 70 years since victory over Nazi Germany in WWII. Among the first to host the march were people of Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky in Russia's Far East – about 3,000 people rallied there after a military parade.

The march in the homeland of the Immortal Regiment, the city of Tomsk in Siberia, attracted some 30,000 participants. The

first time such an event was held to mark Victory Day of the Great Patriotic War was in 1965, with many war veterans coming out to join the public festivities.

Omsk, the city administration, bestowed the 70th Victory Anniversary medal on Russia's oldest WWII veteran, Akim Pokatilo, who turns 107 this year. Russia lost over 20 million people in the ‘Great Patriotic War’. Over two and a half years of German occupation in the city of Staraya Russa in the west, saw the death of 850,000 soldiers, according to official figures.

Tigr and Kornet D armoured vehicles, advanced BMD 4M and Rakushka vehicles were presented at the parade. Armata-based T-14 tanks, which will become the backbone of the Russian armoured forces, also rolled across Red Square

With the guests of honour Chinese Premier Xi Jinping, DPRK's Chairman of the Supreme People's Assembly Kim Yong Nam and President of Vietnam Truong Tan Sang, the Victory Day Parade in Moscow highlighted the solidarity between the leaders.

President Putin addressing the media and fellow Russians said, “The significance of the [Immortal Regiment] movement is that it was born in the hearts of our people rather than in administrative offices. It is a demonstration of the respect our people have for the older generation.”

He further added, “It affirms our commitment to keep the high bar set by the defenders of our Motherland. It also shows our confidence in ourselves, in our strength and in the bright future of our children.” The nationwide commemorative WWII event is aimed at raising the level of patriotism among Russians.

Answering a question later about his participation in the Immortal Regiment event, the president said that it was the courage and blood of ordinary Russian and Soviet soldiers that laid the road to Victory.

“When we carry their photos, we pay tribute to all that they did for our country, and at the same time, we are conscious that now the responsibility for Russia lies on our shoulders, and we must be worthy of our fathers' and grandfathers' feat.”



# NEW HIGHS INKED FOR SINGAPORE-RUSSIA CO-OPERATION

**Singapore-Russia economic ties are on fast track mode as both countries open up more conversations on the many new opportunities available to take this relationship forward**



Singapore's Senior Minister of State for Trade and Industry Lee Yi Shyan with the Governor of St Petersburg Georgy Poltavchenko signing of an agreement to continue nurturing the cooperation between Singapore and the Russian city. Photo courtesy of Ministry of Trade & Investment, Singapore.

It was a momentous occasion for bilateral ties between Singapore and Russia, when Senior Minister of State for Trade & Industry and National Development, Lee Yi Shyan, accompanied by a team of Singapore's top businessmen, arrived in St Petersburg to co-chair the 2<sup>nd</sup> Singapore – St Petersburg Joint Working Group meeting together with the Vice-Governor of St Petersburg Oleg Markov. The Joint Working Group itself was formed earlier in June 2013 to lay the foundations for closer interactions and business partnerships between the two countries.

The meet, set up in three of Russia's biggest cities— St Petersburg, Novosibirsk and Moscow from 16 to 20 June 2014, augured well for future collaborations between the two

countries. Russia is Singapore's 24<sup>th</sup> biggest trading partner today. In 2013 the bilateral trade between Russia and Singapore racked up business to the tune of S\$7.14 billion— a 17 per cent increase from the previous year.

In St Petersburg, Mr Lee and the city's Governor, Mr Georgy Poltavchenko, got the ball rolling with the signing of an agreement to continue nurturing the cooperation between Singapore and the Russian city in sectors such as transport, science parks, urban planning, e-government and training programmes. Mr Lee's visit to Novosibirsk, the third largest city in Russia, was significant as it is famed for its many scientific and research institutions. His congenial meeting with acting governor of Novosibirsk Vladimir Gorodetsky set the tone for a lively dialogue with both sides

focusing on the many opportunities open for partnership, in particular, the fields of education and research. Mr Lee's visit to Novosibirsk State University, as well as the Technology Park Academpark, for a firsthand exposure to Novosibirsk's excellent research capabilities, turned out to be a quite an eye-opener. Mr Lee also introduced the feasibility of a direct flight between Singapore and Novosibirsk.

Moscow's Minister and Head of External Economic and International Relations Mr Sergei Cheremin's interactions with Mr Lee also resulted in the inking of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Singapore Cooperation Enterprise and the Department for External Economic and International Relations. The agenda of the MoU was to further strengthen relations between Singapore and Moscow through cooperation in the fields of public transport and road infrastructure, urban planning and development, culture, tourism and sports etc. In a meeting with the First Deputy Minister for Development of the Russian Far East Mr Alexander Osipov, Mr Lee was apprised of the many opportunities in regions such as Primorsky, Amur and Khabarovsk (located in Far East Russia) that could be capitalised on by companies in Singapore.

The climate for forward-looking initiatives between the two countries was further heightened by a round of business meets and dinners organised in all three cities for representatives of business firms in Singapore and Russia. These proved to be a congenial platform for some hectic networking and identifying of areas for future business partnerships.



EURASIAN ECONOMIC UNION (EEU):

# ROOTS AND WINGS FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PEOPLE WELFARE

**An ambitious exercise in creating the largest common market on CIS territory, backed by massive production, research and technological potential and huge natural resources**

**A** major new integrated regional economic organisation was put in place on 1 January 2015, with the historic setting up of the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) with three member states who were part of the earlier Eurasian Custom Union; the member states are the Russian Federation, the Republic of Belarus and the Republic of Kazakhstan. A fourth member, who joined shortly before the EEU came into being at the beginning of the year, was the Republic of Armenia. Since then Kyrgyzstan has joined the union — bringing the total number of member states to five. Membership to the EEU is open to other states that share its common goals and are ready to assume its required obligations to ensure its success.

The core tenets of the EEU (aimed at the development and modernisation of the economies of the member states and the welfare of their people) are rooted in the common understanding that the member countries will jointly work on diminishing the negative effects of global uncertainty and work apace to actively promote their interests in the global markets. The union allows for each individual state to fully retain its sovereignty.

Russian President Vladimir Putin, a vibrant force behind the EEU, shared the common vision that fuels its

engine — “We ensure a close and coherent economic collaboration and cooperation. Today we have created a powerful and attractive centre of economic development, a large regional market that brings together more than 170 people. Our union has huge reserves of natural resources including energy, which accounts for one fifth of the world’s gas reserves and 15 per cent of oil reserves,” said the President.

The EEU envisages increasing trade and lower prices with the ‘Single Economic Space (SEC) through which goods, services capital and labour would move seamlessly from one member-state to the next in a borderless world— free of hassles such as visas, work permits and import taxes. Its coordinated policy addresses key aspects of the economy which include energy, industry, agriculture and transport. Mr Putin pointed out, “...we are shaping the largest common market in the CIS, with huge production, scientific and technological potential and enormous natural resources.” At a recent meet, the Russian President introduced the possibility of a common currency to be used by the member-states of the Eurasian Economic Union.

The establishing of the Eurasian Economic Union has been no easy task —given that Belarus and Kazakhstan are smaller economies in terms of

economic power and population numbers than Russia —and there are still serious issues to be addressed and glitches to be ironed out. But as President Putin said the union attempts to ‘move ahead in the same way – based on mutual understanding and a desire to achieve a compromise acceptable to all’. “A new geopolitical reality of the 21st century is born...this as an open space and a new bridge between the growing economies of Europe and Asia”, observed Kazakhstan’s President Nursultan Nazarbayev, who has recently been re-elected to continue to steer the course of the oil-rich country. It was he who, back in 1994, first introduced the idea of creating a regional trading bloc.

Based on the principles of the World Trade Organisation, the EEU, with its goal of creating a common financial market, is already gathering interest from the global business community. Though using the basic template of the European Union, the EEU aims to avoid its pitfalls.

Estimates by the promoters of the Eurasian integration project reveal that the synergistic effect of the union is expected to boost the growth of between 17 and 20 per cent of the GDP of each EEU member over the next 10 years. Some experts even opine that the EEU could lead to a 25 per cent growth in GDP in the member states by 2030.



# INVESTMENTS IN INFRASTRUCTURE TO ADD IMPETUS TO RUSSIA'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**The clear and defined purpose presently of the Russian government is to shift the focus of its economy on infrastructure**



Russian Economic Development Minister Mr Alexei Ulyukayev. Photo courtesy of russiatimes.org

**R**ussia's infrastructure market is still in its infancy so it comes as no surprise that the government sees a concerted need to up the ante in favour of infrastructure development to spur on economic growth. It has since started creating policies and strategies to grow the market. This includes developing infrastructure on the basis of a PPP framework.

President of The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development Mr Suma Chakrabarti believes that, 'Though it's been lagging behind Russia is keen to increase both infrastructure investment and the private sector's share in it to speed up infrastructure development. A growing trend in the last decades has been to take the share of the private sector in a country's infrastructure investments as a measure of such quality.'

A cautioning note was introduced in the first quarter of 2014 which anticipated a growth of around 1.4% GDP for the year— in effect setting the agenda for the government to focus on increasing inward investment while maintaining low inflation.

Economic Development Minister Mr Alexei Ulyukayev, while announcing plans to start seven major new infrastructure projects financed by the National Welfare Fund, was of the opinion that 'If these, and other projects already underway, are properly implemented, they have the potential to improve vastly the business environment as well as the standard of living of the general population.'

Russia's transport sector is a major thrust area with its pipeline of transport infrastructure projects under development by government agencies, state-owned companies and regional authorities. Russian railway has the lion's share of funding, especially those related to projects in the agenda of high-speed railway development through 2030. The other areas targeted for planned infrastructure investments is road and bridge construction. These come under Avtodor, the state corporation, as well as those in the Russian transport strategy through 2030.

While addressing the high stakes involved in the government's agenda on infrastructural development Mr Maxim Sokolov, Minister of Transport of the Russian Federation, hoped that 'direct contracts between major Russian and foreign players will encourage new investors to expand to the Russian market. The road industry generates the highest number of concession agreements. This year, Avtodor plans to invite bids for 10 large-scale projects.' Mr Sokolov felt that 'any investor interested in taking part in Russian infrastructure development should primarily do two things: create a partner network in Russia and take an active part in project discussions as well as bidding competitions.'

The PPP mode of investment is attaining a position of empowerment— especially in air and maritime transportation infrastructure projects set to receive PPP financing than those set only to receive public financing EY knowledge analysis reveals that 'Most investment projects are located in Western Russia, which has higher population density and features more economic activity than the Eastern part of the country.' The leading regions include Moscow and St Petersburg as well as resource-rich regions such as Tyumen Oblast and Komi Republic. Over the last five years, labour productivity has correlated with active investment in infrastructure development in the regions of the Tatarstan Republic and Kaluga Oblast.

For Mr Alexander Galushka, Minister for the Development of the Russian Far East, 'The best solutions for infrastructure projects involve the use of foreign experience. That's why we're working actively with our neighbors — for example, companies in Japan, China and South Korea.' He added, 'We're also interested in having investors stay in the region long term and share their advanced technological solutions with us.'



# INVEST IN TATARSTAN WINTER FORUM 2014: SINGAPORE PITCHES TO FURTHER ITS INTERESTS IN THE REGION

**The ‘Tatarstan Davos’ Forum is not only an important platform for exploring investment opportunities in Tatarstan, it also provides a congenial climate to discuss specific issues directly with the leadership of the Republic**

**T**oday, it is one of Russian Federation’s most important and progressive regional economies. Pivotal to the Republic of Tatarstan’s growth has been its location at the very heart of the country – just 800 km distance from Moscow, at the juncture where the country’s major rail, air, water, and overland transport corridors are connected to both Europe and Asia.

Additionally, Tatarstan has very clear-cut policies and strategies to further intensify investments for its core focus areas— the chemical and petrochemical, machinery and automotive parts, construction and building materials production, agriculture and food processing, medicine and pharmaceuticals, IT and telecommunications, halal industry, and service industry and tourism sectors—all of which came up for discussion in the B2B sessions during the forum.

The Tatarstan Investment Development Agency (TIDA), in conjunction with the government-run Tatarstan Development Corporation and the Tatarstan Export Corporation, was highly instrumental in showcasing the attractions of investments in the region at the II International Winter Forum— Invest In Tatarstan, held in March 2014 at the Kazan ski resort. Attended by 470 delegates from 16 countries including the US, Great Britain, Singapore, India, China, UAE , as well as representatives of 11 of Russia’s most important regions, the forum was a huge success.

The importance of the forum was underscored by the presence of the President of the Republic of Tatarstan, Mr

Rustam Minnikhanov and Prime Minister of the Republic of Tatarstan, Ildar Khalikov. The lively two-day session saw a slew of meetings between the attending businessmen, foreign investors, managers of international companies, federal and regional agencies representatives.

For Singapore’s Indorama group, a world leader in polymers, it was a critical platform to propose the setting up of a plant in Tatarstan to further its business interests in the Russian Federation and countries of the former Soviet Union. President Rustam Minnikhanov has asked the delegation from Indorama for further details regarding the proposal. During the meeting with the Prime Minister of the Tatarstan, conversations opened up on the possible opportunities— for Tatarstan, in the areas of raw materials, transport infrastructure etc.

The Republic of Tatarstan is striding ahead of many other regions of Russia because of its focus on creating the all-important infrastructure that would ultimately support and attract foreign capital. Already in place at Tatarstan are four industrial parks, seven technoparks, six business incubators, three agro-industrial parks, and two large industrial platforms. Alabuga, its Special Economic Zone (SEZ) set up in 2005, is already accruing the benefits of forward planning—with over \$1 billion of investment and creation of over 2,800 jobs.

The Kazan Smart City, an initiative for urban development and investment, aims to pull in investment in high technology, medicine, education and tourism in a bid to convert Kazan into an international business hub.



# ASEAN UPS THE ANTE TO BECOME A 'SINGLE MARKET AND PRODUCTION BASE' BY YEAR-END

**Anticipating the burgeoning strength of ASEAN as a global market player in the years to come Russia plans on wooing the region with increasing vigour**

**T**he end-game of the economic strategy of ASEAN Centrality as the hub of developing a wider Asia-Pacific regional architecture, is one highly ambitious agenda. In 2003, the 10-member countries of ASEAN adopted the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) — conceived as an economic and strategic initiative, to deliver 'a stable, prosperous and highly competitive ASEAN economic region in which there is a free flow of goods, services, investment and a freer flow of capital, equitable economic development and reduced poverty and socio-economic disparities in the year 2020'. To this end, ASEAN would be made into a 'single market and production base' and a 'more dynamic and stronger segment of the global supply chain'.

In 2007 a call was taken to fast track the agenda for implementing the AEC at the end of 2015. Despite the brouhaha created by this move (given the plethora of difficulties emanating from the disparities in development amongst its member economies) ASEAN, propelled by the business community to speed up economic integration, is firm on its goal to take things forward. During the recent World Economic Forum at Davos, Malaysia's Trade Minister Mr Mustapa Mohamed revealed in an interview that, "ASEAN will officially call itself a single market by year end, but "big things" like seamless travel within the 10-nation bloc would only come in 2020'. He conceded that though, "We don't have complete integration or harmonisation yet, 2015 is laying the stage for bigger things to come."

A KPMG report underscores the perception of the international business community for whom the AEC's fundamental freedoms are of increasing attraction. Given the rising importance of this global market scenario, it has become an imperative for Russia to dovetail its future plans with ASEAN, in this regard, within the broader framework of its foreign policies which recognise the Asia-Pacific region potential as a game changer of the highest order— not only for its position as a global economic powerhouse, but also for its increasing importance as an epicentre of the world's political decision-making.

The Russian delegation of senators led by Federation Council Chairwoman Ms Valentina Ivanovna Matvienko, to Laos and

China on 19-23 September 2014 came away with highly productive conversations with potential Asian partners. The visit to Vientiane, Laos, dovetailed with the 35<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the ASEAN Inter Parliamentary Association (AIPA) which was aimed at addressing the prospects for tighter collaboration in putting into practice the ambitious blueprint for the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC).

Ms V. Matvienko, while addressing the august gathering at the forum, was unstinted in her praise for the initiative to create unified humanitarian space over all of Southeast Asia; she also shared her confidence in the fundamental objective of instituting the ASEAN common market that would be accomplished in the coming years. She reiterated that Russia intended to strengthen its bilateral and multilateral ties with the ASEAN countries.

During the interactions between the country's President and Lao People's Revolutionary Party General Secretary, Mr Choummaly Sayasone about the economic aspect of the bilateral relations, both parties were in agreement that there exists ample untapped potential in the fields of mineral resources exploration and extraction, hydro-power generation, aircraft building, and the pharmaceutical industry; both countries believed that this could be pursued with greater vigour. In a conversation with the Speaker of the Singapore Parliament, Ms Halimah binte Yacob, Ms V. Matvienko said 'We count on Singapore's investments in the projects centred around the modernisation of the Russian Far East and generally expect the cooperation between Russia and Singapore in the investment sphere to gather pace'.

In her meeting with Vietnam's National Assembly chairwoman, Ms Tô Thị Phóng, Ms V. Matvienko was pleased with the positive response she received when she informed her that Moscow sees Vietnam as a reliable and time-tested partner.

Not only would it be a godsend for ASEAN's 10 small economies during times of economic vulnerabilities, when the 'foundations of a single market and production base allowing for the free movement of goods, services, investment, capital and skilled labor' is fully realised, it would also deliver on a bigger market space of 600 million people to attract FDI and help strengthen its potential as a 'hub' in the larger Asian region.

# RSBF 2014: THE DYNAMICS OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND SUCCESSFUL CROSS-BORDER TIES



**Armed with untapped regional strengths, a burgeoning entrepreneurial spirit and a slew of new economic policies, Russia is looking to capitalise on successful cross-border business ties**

**H**eld at the Shangri-La Hotel in Singapore from 9 to 10 September 2014, the Russia-Singapore Business Forum (RSBF) provided a platform for Singapore and Russia to identify new strategies of growth and mitigate the impact of global volatility in an increasingly uncertain global economic scenario. International Enterprise (IE) Singapore's RSBF, focuses on fostering investment, trade and thought leadership between the two countries. The Forum this year took cognizance of Russian 'entrepreneurship, success factors for cross-border collaborations and new paradigm shifts in global demand patterns for commodities'.

A growing imperative, backed by political and economic reforms, in Russia's global agenda in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is to encourage entrepreneurship by developing Siberia and the Far East— gateway to the highly lucrative markets of Asia. For Russia, Singapore is an important partner as it is ideally positioned as a gateway to the markets of the Asia-Pacific region. The fastest growing regions, in the liberalised climate of the Federation, have been the regions of the big cities such as Moscow and St Petersburg. The aim now is to capitalise on untapped regional resources, and with fresh incentives and funding, accrue the fruits of successful cross-border collaborations with the global business community.

Aimed at attracting long haul investments is a network of Special Advanced Economic Development Zones in the Far East and Eastern Siberia, armed with special conditions for organising non-extractive production. Rejigged conditions, related to procedures for construction, connecting to electricity networks and customs, are now competitive with key business centres of the Asia-Pacific region.

In the forefront of regional entrepreneurship has been the Far

East's Tatarstan Republic. Its Minister of Education and science, Mr Albert Gilmudinov, referring to his own government's policy to make Tatarstan an international business hub says, "We've formed a dense and rich infrastructure to stimulate investment; we've minimised administrative barriers to the private sector; and we've established scientific and educational institutions to make sure our workforce is ready for any project." Singapore-based Radiance Hospitality Group has signed an MOU with the Tatarstan Development Corporation for investment in Kazan Smart City to the tune of USD\$180 million for the construction of a transit hotel, service apartments, and University of Management and Hospitality. Dubai-based GT Oil and Gas Services' MOU aims at setting up scientific research and an industrial park. World leader in latch technology, Kiekert, opted to localise production in Kama Industrial Park in Tatarstan's city of Naberezhnye Chelny. Key factors in making this choice were the competitive rental rates and high quality industrial site, hassle-free customs procedures on-site, and the management companies ability to prepare the industrial site on the tight schedule needed— and of course support from the local government throughout this process.

Vladivostok, envisaged as a gateway to Asian markets, is another important development hub. The New Vladivostok Industrial Park, the airport and the seaport, transport, power, education, scientific research—all throw up countless opportunities for consultancy, human capital, urban planning and project management.

The spirit of entrepreneurship rides high in the country in the light of economic reforms which includes privatisation. With exposure to the Internet, the possibility of global partnerships and Russia's burgeoning consumer market, savvy entrepreneurs have a good thing going.



# RUSSIA-SINGAPORE INTER-GOVERNMENTAL COMMISSION: A BID TO ENHANCE CO-OPERATION IN RUSSIA'S REGIONAL EXPANSE

**Russia and Singapore are looking to strengthen their cooperation in the Far East regions**



Photo courtesy of nus.edu.sg

**T**atarstan President Mr Rustam Minnikhanov's attendance at the 5<sup>th</sup> session of the Russia-Singapore Inter-Governmental Commission on 10 September 2014 in Singapore, underscored Russia's regional plans for global business. The Tatarstan region's policies are tailored to attract foreign investment. The session was co-chaired by First Deputy Prime Minister of the Russian Federation Mr Igor Shuvalov and Mr Tharman Shanmugaratnam, Singapore's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance.

Speaking of the growing relations between Singapore and Russian regions, Mr Shanmugaratnam revealed how impressed he was (during a visit of Tatarstan) with the ambitious drive of the local authorities to develop and cooperate. Apart from the financial and investment sector, he shared, Russia and Singapore are also working on enhancing cooperation in fields of the healthcare and social service. He also spoke of the ongoing process of cooperation with regional Russia. In this regard, he pointed out to regions of cooperation between Singapore and Russia— the St Petersburg region and Far Eastern Seaport of Vladivostok and the Siberian city of Novosibirsk where Singapore was boosting its linkages.

Mr Shuvalov, in his address, reiterated the importance of the successful and long-haul experience of cooperation between Tatarstan and Singapore and hoped that Russia's other regions too would follow the lead. He shared it was imperative to step up trade and economic relations with the countries of the Asia-Pacific region. The session also saw the signing of an agreement between Innopolis University and National University of Singapore.

# Welcome to Russia

**Mandarin Tour Pte Ltd**

One Travel Agent  
For Whole Russia

**We speak English, Chinese and Russian.**

**Mandarin Tour** provides the following services:

-  Air and Railway Tickets
-  Hotel Booking
-  Individual and Group Tours
-  Excursions
-  Sea and River Cruises
-  Trans-Siberian Railway
-  MICE
-  VIP Services
-  Transfers and Car Rental
-  English and Chinese speaking Guides & Interpreters
-  Travel Insurance
-  **Full Russian Visa Support Service**

TA01677

**mandarin  
tour**

European Travel Agency

120 Lower Delta Rd, #09-07  
Cendex Centre, Singapore 169208  
Office: +65 6275 9941, Fax: +65 6275 9942  
Email: [info@mandarintour.com.sg](mailto:info@mandarintour.com.sg)

**[www.mandarintour.com.sg](http://www.mandarintour.com.sg)**



## DOING BUSINESS IN RUSSIA: LONG-TERM COMMITMENTS AND UP-CLOSE INTERACTIONS

**A hands-on understanding of this market of over 140 million consumers and limitless opportunities for ventures, will go a long way in being successful in conducting business in Russia**



Russia's President Vladimir Putin (C) looks on as Rosneft's President Igor Sechin (R) signs an agreement at the 18<sup>th</sup> St. Petersburg International Economic Forum on 24 May 2014. Photo courtesy of ITAR-TASS/ Stanislav Krasilnikov

**R**ussia continues to move forward into the global economic arena. During the International Economic Forum

at St Petersburg in 2014, Russia indicated that even as it continued to maintain economic relations with the West, it would actively develop and grow its economic relations with the East. Spurred on by the immense possibilities represented by the lucrative Asia-Pacific region, Russia has sustained its strategy for improving its attractiveness for investment—as is evident for its plans for investment and foreign partnerships in the gateway regions of Siberia and Far East. In the World Bank's 2015 comfort levels of Doing Business rating — out of the 189 countries, Russia stands 62<sup>nd</sup>. Mr Andrey Nikitin, Director General of the Agency for Strategic Initiatives (ASI) puts this growth in stature down to... 'the measures facilitating the registration

of business and property and getting building permits.' He says, 'In addition, the preparation of tax reports has become less consuming. I think such a substantial improvement of Russia's position in the Doing Business ranking proves the effectiveness of direct and open dialogue between the authorities and the business community'. Formal conditions such as ease in starting a business, in registering the ownership right, and the ease in tax payment mechanism enforcement, accessibility and clarity are playing their role in attracting foreign investment. Those serious about venturing into this market need to look at long-haul commitments to projects, in terms of 'time, personnel and capital'.

### EDUCATION

## RUSSIA'S INNOPOLIS UNIVERSITY SIGNS FRESH MOU WITH SINGAPORE'S NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

**Russia - Singapore ties go beyond trade and commerce as clearly indicated by the second MoU signed between two prestigious universities for mutual enhancement of academic and training programmes**

**I**t comes as no surprise that with education as one of Russia's foremost focus areas the country is looking for appropriate partnerships with prestigious academic institutions beyond its own borders. In view of its global vision for the development of the country on many fronts, National University Singapore (NUS) is highly regarded for the wide spectrum of academic choices and training available for students. In September 2014, an MoU was signed as part of the 5<sup>th</sup> Russia-Singapore High Level Inter-Governmental Commission (IGC), between Prof. Dr Alexander Tormasov, Provost of Russia's Innopolis University and NUS School of



Computing Dean Prof. David Rosenblum, in the presence of Singapore's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance Mr Tharman Shanmugaratnam and Russia's First Deputy Prime Minister Mr Igor Shuvalov. The Agreement opens up the channels for both universities to collaborate on the development of academic programmes and research

fields of mutual interest; this facilitation will encompass faculty and graduate student recruitment and development also.

The MOU follows on the heels of the earlier MOU signed in January between the two universities. Located in Kazan capital of the Republic of Tatarstan, Innopolis University's agenda 'is to produce highly qualified specialists, to create and commercialise cutting-edge technology, and contribute in the advancement of the Russian IT industry'; Innopolis is recognised as Russia's first university to specialise in advanced Computer Science and its applications.



# COLOURS OF CHINGAY 2015

Leading Choreography Ensemble Rovesniki wowed the crowd with their jaw-dropping performance at Chingay 2015, Singapore



One of the grandest street performance and float parade ever held in Singapore, Chingay 2015 held a crowd of over 100,000 enthralled with its multi-cultural performance. The yearly fiesta celebrated Singapore's golden jubilee with its largest contingent yet of 11,000 performers from over 1000 countries. Flying the Russian flag high at the annual parade was the popular folk culture choreographic ensemble Rovesniki. The trained dancers performed alongside other multi-national participants hailing from China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Philippines, Rwanda, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, Turkey, Vietnam and of course, Singapore.

The popular Russian folk dance troupe of 550 graceful dancers are aged between five to 20 years old. With one of the youngest dancers in the parade, their great choreography and dazzling

costumes left the audience breathless and wanting for more. The troupe is known for their creativity in terms of both dance theory and techniques. Representing the significance of having a strong family through dance, this ensemble has toured all over the world including stops in England, France, Denmark, Bulgaria, China, Greece and Japan. Shining brighter than anyone in their vibrant outfits representing Russian culture, preserving and multiplying the national tradition, the dance troupe highlighted the reinforced friendship between Singapore and Russia.

In high spirits about participating at such an iconic event, Elena, team leader of the dancers said, "We are very happy to perform here. It is a great opportunity for us to be involved in this event, as it is being held in conjunction with Singapore's 50th anniversary of independence." Another enthusiastic dancer exclaimed "We are

very impressed by Singapore. Especially the cleanliness, food and warmth of the locals has really left an indelible mark in our mind about this little country. We would like to invite Singaporeans to Russia and experience our rich cultural heritage. They are very much welcome to take a short course with us."

Thankful for the wonderful opportunity, one of the performers said, "Through our efforts at Chingay 2015, we want people all over the world to know that we are warm, friendly and hospitable. We invite Singaporeans to our country and make some wonderful memories there."

Originally founded in 1967 by Vyacheslav Vasilievich Beloglazov, Rovesniki has garnered many international and national accolades. The repertoire of the dance troupe includes Russian folk dance, international dance and choreographic compositions.



# RUSSIAN ART WOOS ASIAN MARKET

**Russian Platform makes its debut at South East Asia's biggest Asian and global contemporary art fair**



Photo courtesy of Art Stage Singapore

**T**he fifth edition of Art Stage Singapore held from 22 to 25 January 2015 at the Marina Bay Sands Expo and Convention Centre was the perfect occasion for the launch of edgy, contemporary art works from Russia, under the banner of the Russian Platform. The featured Special Exhibition-Russia was curated for the

South East Asia's flagship art fair, by the Director of the Multimedia Museum Moscow, Ms Olga Sviblova.

Art aficionados were treated to two exceptional video works by famed Russian art collective AES+F— *Allegoria Sacra*, and *The Feast of Trimalchio* — both a wonderful first time treat for Singapore.

## 11.12 GALLERY

The unusually named 11.12 GALLERY (until 2011, known as Art-Kvartal) was launched in 2005 in Moscow's centre for modern art— Vinzavod. The Singapore branch was established in 2012. The art world here now associates the gallery with works evocative of traditional Russian realism with current trends of avant-garde and post-modernism. Young artists, famed for their exceptional styles and choice of technique, find a voice here as the gallery mounts their portfolios for its Asian market for the first time; for Asian collectors the gallery's offerings have proved to be an excellent window into Russian contemporary art.

## Triumph Gallery

Founded in 2006 by Emelyan Zakharov and Dmitry Khankin, the Triumph Gallery showcases contemporary art and works of top Russian and international artists. Apart from taking exhibitions all over Russia and abroad it supports young talent through its aptly named project— Launchpad.

## REVIEW

# SOUND OF COLOURS: A STUDY IN ARTISTIC CURIOSITY AND CREATIVITY

**Versatile Russian pianist Mikhail Rudy returns to Singapore with his world-travelled Sound of Colours recital of programme music**

**I**n 2013, Marc Chagall's family invited the Paris-based Russian, Mikhail Rudy, 'a pianist with an enormous musical appetite... an intrepid explorer', to create an animated film based on Chagall's unpublished sketches. Chagall, who was commissioned to paint the ceiling of the opera house, discovered his gift for colours when he came to Paris. Mr Rudy conceived his final multimedia version of Chagall's Paris Opera ceiling, 'Chagall, the Sound of Colours', as a recital of program music—'a genre of descriptive, story-telling pieces', which he has taken the world over.

While the Hong Kong multi-media concert of 'The Sound of Colours' featured film and moving images, Mr



Rudy's Singapore concert in March 2015 was a no-frills piano recital. Brought to Singapore with the collaboration of the Hong Kong Arts Festival and Singapore's Yong Siew Toh Conservatory, the concert of the renowned Tashkent-born, Paris-based pianist was held at Yong Siew Toh Conservatory Hall.

Stravinsky's ballet *Petrushka* arranged for piano solo, dominated the first half of

the performance. Mr Rudy had conceived the piano recitals for four hands and the Three Movements from *Petrushka* for two hands.

This was followed up by *The Shrovetide Fair*, where he was able to conjure up (as a critique described it) the 'lush old world atmosphere for this busy piece'. The recital went on to feature shorter pieces in the second half— including Gluck's *Melody from Orpheus* as transcribed by Giovanni Sgambati, Mozart's *Fantasy in D minor*, and Ravel's piano version of his *La Valse*. The audience thoroughly enjoyed Mr Rudy's relaxed renditions of pieces such as Tchaikovsky's *Barcarolle* from *The Seasons* and Chopin's lovely *Nocturne in D flat major* (Op.27 No 2).





## ON-BOARD THE PALLADA

Far Eastern State Technical Fisheries (FESTF) University of Vladivostok and Singapore Maritime Academy (SMA) meet once again

**O**n 16 March in Singapore this year, a man with an amicable demeanour, Captain Nikolay K. Zorchenko of the tall ship Pallada – also the world's fastest and largest sailing ship – welcomed aboard guests and students from SMA.

The aim of the Pallada's visit was to create awareness, instil passion and attract the interest of young adults to choose to become seafarers. The Pallada crew would provide them first-hand experiences in the field of maritime education.

Guests and SMA students were ferried directly to the ship in batches by boat. From the Pallada's majestic height of 50.5m and length of 126.8m, these boats appeared minuscule; hopping on to the rocking vessel in the middle of the sea seemed like an adventurous task – a rare experience for urbanites. Already stationed on the deck were the Russian crew and cadets, steadily falling in line respectfully for the inspection of the Captain and

FESTF University President Mr Georgii Kim. They were all about to embark on a 10-day journey to Brunei to meet the Brunei Maritime Academy (BMA) team and the Ambassador of the Federation of Russia to Brunei Darussalam, HE Vladlen Stanislavovich Semivolos.

Also present was SMA's Director Mr Roland Tan, who had signed an MoU with Mr Kim. The two agreed that this close-knit relationship between the university and SMA would continue for the long run and would benefit both institutions and aspiring maritime students.

"The students will gain the many practical skills of a sailor, such as rope work and ship maintenance— they will be busy all day and every day," said Captain Nikolay.

When asked how life is, being away at sea from ones family, the captain responded with a smile, "It is difficult, but I like what I do. This is life as a seafarer."

## Best wishes on Russian National Day

VFS Global is honoured to be associated with the Embassy of the Russian Federation in Singapore



St Basil's Cathedral on Red Square in Moscow

**About VFS Global:** VFS Global is the world's largest outsourcing and technology services specialist for governments and diplomatic missions worldwide. With **1582 Application Centres** and operations in **120 countries** across **five continents** as at 31 March 2015, VFS Global serves the interests of **45 client governments**. The company has successfully processed over **97 million applications** since its inception in 2001. VFS Global's worldwide operations are certified **ISO 9001:2008** for Quality Management System, **ISO 27001:2005** for Information Security Management System and **ISO 14001:2004** for Environmental Management System. For more information, please visit [www.vfsglobal.com](http://www.vfsglobal.com)

# LIVING IN THE RUSSIAN CITY OF KALININGRAD

**Based in Kaliningrad in Russia, Ms Liu Lishan — a dedicated Russophile, suggests one learns the language to really get the best of the Russia experience**

**H**ow long have you been in Kaliningrad and could you elaborate on your stay there?

I came to Kaliningrad in September, 2009. I was a correspondent in Lianhe Zaobao for ten years, and worked for almost two years as a manager in our publishing arm, Focus Publishing. The decision to come to Russia was a well-calculated move that culminated half a life-time of genuine interest in matters related to Russia. It all started in 1980s when my very first copies of National Geographic magazines ran reports on the USSR, its attempt at political reforms and its vibrant mix of peoples and cultures. I felt a keen sense of closeness to the Slavic culture, although I never really dreamed of learning the language or even visiting the country at that time. In 2007 I started learning the language with a Russian living in Singapore, and used it to convince myself how difficult it was, and that sooner or later that interest would frizzle away.

The learning process actually rekindled a dormant desire to be re-connected with this massive landmass. Thanks go to Ms Ekaterina Drozdova, who was such a dedicated teacher and sustained my interest in the language for over 14 months. I knew this was not enough, because, though I knew the complex grammar by heart, I needed to speak the language in order to master it. When I sounded out the idea of pursuing it further in her home country Ekaterina was very supportive. Mulling over the various aspects of such a move I short-listed three cities that would be cost-effective for me. Ekaterina suggested Kaliningrad as it lies in Europe and has a milder climate.

I enrolled in Kaliningrad State Technical University as a Russian-language student as the university runs a strong language department and has trained thousands of foreign students from over 74 countries. More

importantly, I received a reply from the Dean of Foreign students within an hour of my applying and this firmed up my decision to study here.

**How different is the work culture in Russia from that of Singapore?**

To be honest, I don't think there is any marked difference in the work culture between the two, except that the Russians are not such sticklers for the rules. There is always a human dimension to any issue they encounter, and most often it can be discussed and resolved amicably. Language plays a critical role in the quality of communication amongst the Russians.

Difference? Yes, there is. At work places, they behave differently for example standing in a queue. In Singapore, we take it for granted everyone stands behind the one who came ahead—or we rely on an electronic screen to wait for our turn. In Russia, there is no queue, and surprisingly there is no disorder or chaos either.

I notice people here make small talk while standing around in a queue— and even make friends. From a crowded room full of tension, it can temporarily turn into a magical space of much laughter. This has happened quite often when people realised that I was the only Singaporean around; they'd help me in every possible way— such as taking me along by car to the next place for medical check-ups or fill in the forms.

**Please share an anecdote on one of the most challenging and one of the most rewarding experiences during your stay.**

Seriously, I have never encountered any serious problems with the Russians at work or in life in general; most of them are good paymasters, rational and understanding. As a single woman when I was travelling I

would get all kinds of help if needed. My only unpleasant experience was perhaps living in the government-subsidised dormitory, where students of different nationalities lived together. It sounded absurd but I fought for the rights of female students to have exclusive rights to the use of the ladies toilets— and quarreled with other foreign students with different habits and cultures. My Russian language improved by leaps and bounds in the process!

**“Being a quick-tempered person, I realise living in Russia has tamed me a lot—in a good way. I actually enjoy speaking the language at slower pace than I speak English and Mandarin back home.”**

Ms Liu Lishan

Singaporeans are used to speaking their minds; in Russia, I was advised to be patient and gentle and the world would go round. Being a quick-tempered person, I realise living in Russia has tamed me a lot—in a good way. I actually enjoy speaking the language at a slower pace than I speak English and Mandarin back home. I am always toying with the right words to use, trying to grasp fully what the locals are saying among themselves with slang. Every day I learn something new.

**Any advice you would like to share with other fellow Singaporeans living abroad?**

Speak the language. There is no other way to appreciate and understand Russia. Don't be afraid to make mistakes, Russians fully understand how daunting the task is, they will help you more than you can imagine.





# ROMANCE OF THE RAILS

**From Moscow to China with a side trip to mesmerising Mongolia, the Trans-Siberian Rail takes you on a classic rail odyssey of memorable delights**

It's legend, as one of the world's most amazing journeys of discovery and historical and cultural enrichment, is hard to beat. Just a regular working train — the Trans-Siberian Rail, connecting Europe and the Pacific Coast— from Moscow to Vladivostok, is the world's top uninterrupted rail link. An astonishing engineering marvel, the Trans-Siberian Rail has been featured in the Guinness Book of World Records. Today the historic rail runs a good 9,298 km, covers 80 stations in 160 hours, from Moscow to China.

For travellers, it's an epic journey which carries them from Europe to Asia through the drama of a rich and varied wonderland choreographed by Nature's bounty as they hurtle through ancient forests, past silvery rivers, high mountain grandeur and steppes of deep antiquity; it's truly a journey of many discoveries. Stopping by classic destinations, enjoying conversations with new people on the train— all add to the wonder that makes travel so addictive.

One can opt for the Westbound or the Eastbound route. An adventurous rail

odyssey of classic proportions, the Trans-Siberian Railway is actually a part of Russia's huge railway network. Some summers a couple of luxury tourist cruise trains run the course from Moscow to China. There are three classic routes to choose from— there's the historical mainline Moscow-Vladivostok run through the Urals and legendary Lake Baikal; the weekly Trans-Manchurian Line connect to Beijing in China and the third, and most popular, is the weekly Trans-Mongolian Line from Moscow through Siberia and Mongolia onto Beijing.

## THE PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN VFS GLOBAL AND THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION FOR VISA PROCESSING SERVICES COMMENCED IN 2009

**More recently, the Russian Federation selected VFS Global as the outsourced visa processing service provider for Russia in the Republic of Singapore**

VFS Global is privileged to be the visa support service provider for the Government of Russia in several countries. Renowned internationally for high standards of customer service within the visa application processing domain, VFS Global also implements stringent data security and privacy mandates of every client government it partners with. This particular association dates back to 2009 and has always focused on continuous improvement resulting in innovative solutions for effective processes.

On 17 April 2015, the Embassy of the Russian Federation in Singapore signed a contract with VFS Global to outsource its visa processes for residents of Singapore. The contract was signed by HE Mr Andrey Alexeyevich Tatarinov, the Ambassador of Russia in Singapore and Mr Sriram Narayan, Chief Operating Officer – Australasia, VFS Global, for services to be introduced later this year.

This will be the first VFS Global Russia Visa Application Centre in the country. The introduction of this service offers access to a modern and state-of-the-art facility that will be supported with online and offline support via a dedicated website, contact centre and help desks for Russia visa applicants. The online application tool makes the process available as per the convenience of the applicant, while a conveniently located application centre supports an impressive front office service. At the centre, applicants will be afforded responsive and professional



HE Mr Andrey Alexeyevich Tatarinov (Ambassador of Russia in Singapore) (right) and Mr Sriram Narayan (COO – Australasia, VFS Global) (left) signing the contract for Russia in Singapore

services by dedicated VFS Global staff. Additionally, for those who prefer personalised attention, a premium lounge is available offering assistance with the process in the comforts of a luxurious lounge. VFS Global will also provide services like pre-scrutiny and acceptance of application submissions and fee collection and remittance.

In Singapore, VFS Global offers visa support services to several diplomatic missions including Australia, Austria, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Italy, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, the UK and the USA.



# RUSSIA

The largest country in the world, Russia shares land borders with Norway, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Belarus, Ukraine, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, China, Mongolia, and North Korea. The country shares maritime borders with Japan by the Sea of Okhotsk, and the U.S. state of Alaska across the Bering Strait

## OFFICIAL NAME

Russian Federation

## GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION

41° and 82° North, 19° East and 169° West

## AREA & POPULATION

17,075,400 sq km & 143 million

## CAPITAL

Moscow

## FEDERAL DISTRICTS (ADMINISTRATIVE CENTRE)

Russia is made up of 85- federal entities. Russia's territory, including all its entities, is grouped into seven federal districts, each administered by an envoy appointed by the President. They act as a link between the federal entities and the federal government. Their key task is to make sure the federal entities comply with the federal laws.

## MAJOR CITIES

Moscow, St. Petersburg, Novosibirsk, Yekaterinburg and Nizhny Novgorod

## OFFICIAL LANGUAGE

Russian

## RELIGION

Orthodox Christianity, Islam, Judaism and Buddhism

## CLIMATE

Humid continental climate dominates most of Russia. Northern European Russia and Siberia has a subarctic climate, with extremely severe winters. There are only two distinct seasons in most of the territories in Russia—winter and summer; the coldest month is January and the warmest usually is July.

## ECONOMY

Unit of Currency: Russian Ruble

1USD – Approx. 50 ₴ Russian Ruble

The Russian economy is the world's ninth largest by nominal GDP

GDP - 2.097 trillion USD (2013) (World Bank)

Foreign currency reserves – US\$509,692,081,493 (2013)

## EDUCATION

Russia has a free education system guaranteed for all citizens by the Constitution. There is a great emphasis on science and technology in education, Russian medical, mathematical, scientific and aerospace research is generally of a high order. The oldest and largest Russian universities are Moscow State University and St Petersburg State University.

## CULTURE

Over 160 different ethnic groups and indigenous peoples. Ethnic Russians with their Slavic Orthodox traditions, Tatars and Bashkirs with their Turkic Muslim culture, Buddhist nomadic Buryats and Kalmyks; shamanistic peoples of the Extreme North and Siberia, highlanders of the Northern Caucasus, Finno-Ugric peoples of the Russian North West and Volga Region contribute to the country's rich cultural diversity.

## PLACES OF INTEREST

Major tourist routes in Russia include a journey around the Golden Ring of ancient cities, cruises on the big rivers like the Volga, and long journeys on the famous Trans-Siberian Railway. The most visited destinations in Russia are Moscow and St Petersburg, the current and the former capitals of the country.

### Embassy of Russia in Singapore Consular Services

The Consular Section of the Embassy of the Russian Federation in the Republic of Singapore is open for visitors on weekdays from 10 am to 12 am at 53 Nassim Road.

Essential information on Russian visa application procedures, requirements and fees, as well as on legalisation of documents and notary services provided by the embassy can be found at [www.singapore.mid.ru/consular\\_selection.htm](http://www.singapore.mid.ru/consular_selection.htm)

Singapore nationals require visas for travel to Russia. For more information on visa eligibility and requirements, visit: [www.singapore.mid.ru/Visa\\_Information.htm](http://www.singapore.mid.ru/Visa_Information.htm)

Telephone Numbers:

(65) 6235 1832 (Embassy Operator)

(65) 6235 1834 (Embassy Operator)

(65) 6737 0048 (Consular Section)





## REPUBLIC OF TATARSTAN (RT)

### 2014 Annual Tatarstan Education Conference

Educare gave a presentation at the annual Tatarstan education conference held in Sabinsky, RT to the Tatarstan Prime Minister Ildar Khalikov and the panel team.

### Schools of Excellence (SOE)

Educare set up 54 SOE to model best teaching practices in their niche areas. The programme builds teaching capacity through application in classroom lessons.

### Delegation Visits

Educare hosted several groups of delegates from RT to share about Singapore's education system, policies and challenges. The groups also visited various schools and interacted with local educators.

- June-July 2014: Master Teachers Programme
- August 2014: SOE Principals Visit
- October 2014: MoES and Technical Vocational Education and Training Leaders Visit
- January 2015: Minister Delegation Visit led by Dr. Fattakhov Engel, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education and Science



# SHAPING DESTINIES IN RUSSIA



## TYUMEN, TYUMEN OBLAST

### November 2014

Educare presented on Singapore's education system and the global challenges for educators to keep up with the transforming economy in Tyumen to 13 education leaders including school principals and directors of IED, PTRF and DoES during a visit to Tyumen.

### September 2014

Tyumen officials visited Educare and were briefed on Singapore's policies and development in various aspects, namely: education, investment, healthcare and community.



## VLADIVOSTOK, PRIMORSKY KRAI



### November 2014

Educare participated in a business mission led by IE Singapore to Vladivostok and visited schools in the city for learning and future development.



### Professional Development Online Learning Portal (PD Portal)

The PD Online Portal was developed to create and deliver professional development courses online. This innovation reached out to teachers in Russia, improving their teaching skills set. Since its launch in April 2014, the response and participation has been encouraging, with more than 6000 users and 700 lesson plans uploaded and shared.



🏠: 72 Keng Lee Road, Level 2, Singapore 219248

☎: (65) 6296 0563

📠: (65) 6297 7386

🌐: eic.educare.sg

# BEST WISHES TO RUSSIA ON NATIONAL DAY!



# CONGRATULATIONS

## TO RUSSIA ON YOUR NATIONAL DAY

Best wishes from the  
National University Hospital,  
Singapore

A member of the National University Health System, it is the principal teaching hospital of the NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine (YYL SoM) and NUS Faculty of Dentistry (FoD). With Combined resources from the NUS YLL SoM and NUS FoM, the NUH is poised to meet the healthcare needs of patients, train future generations of doctors more effectively, and help develop solutions to our healthcare problems through research.

In 2007, the NUH was chosen by the Ministry of Health to develop two new national centres, the National University Cancer Institute, Singapore (NCIS) and the National University Heart Centre, Singapore (NUHCS) to meet the growing needs for cardiac and cancer treatment.

NUH raised the bar in local patient care and safety standards by achieving the Joint Commission International accreditation in 2004. The hospital has since been re-certified three times, also becoming the first hospital to be accredited under Academic Medical Centre (AMC) Standards for medical education and human subjects research in 2013.

Today, patient safety and good clinical outcomes remain the focus of the hospital as it continues to play a key role in the training of doctors, nurses and allied health professionals, and in translational research which paves the way for new cures and treatment, offering patients hope and a new lease of life.

The NUH is a tertiary referral centre with a comprehensive range of medical, surgical and dental specialties. It offers both adult and paediatric services, including separate Accident & Emergency departments for both groups of patients. The Hospital also provides organ transplant programmes for adults (in kidney, liver and pancreas) and is the only public hospital in Singapore to offer a paediatric kidney and liver transplant programme.

### Members of the NUHS Group



[www.nuh.com.sg](http://www.nuh.com.sg)



[www.ncis.com.sg](http://www.ncis.com.sg)



[www.nuhcs.com.sg](http://www.nuhcs.com.sg)



**Patient Liaison Centre (iPLC)**  
**24-Hour Helpline: (65) 6779 2777**  
**Email: [iplc@nuhs.edu.sg](mailto:iplc@nuhs.edu.sg)**