Russia's cooperation with Singapore, a prosperous island city-state in Southeast Asia with a population of nearly 6 million people, neighbouring Indonesia and Malaysia and having one of the highest GDPs in the world, has been actively developing since 2009, when Russian President Dmitry Medvedev paid his first official visit to Singapore in the history of the Russian-Singaporean relations.

In 2018, the two countries celebrated the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations, and in 2019, the 10th anniversary of the establishment of the Russia-Singapore Business Council (RSBC). Since then, there has been a significant increase of the trade turnover and business cooperation between the two countries, especially in the IT sphere. Cooperation in the fields of culture and education is growing at a fast pace, e.g., the Russian Film Week in Singapore, one of the brightest annual cultural events, debuted in 2019 with a full house.

At the moment, space technologies are of a particular interest in the interaction between Russia and Singapore. In December 2021, the RSMC organised an online conference at the Science Centre in Singapore between Singaporean students and Russian cosmonauts. The conference was addressed by Anton Shkaplerov, a test cosmonaut aboard the international space station.

Singapore's foreign policy aims at maintaining friendly relations with all countries in the world, especially with its
regional neighbours. Even back in the 1960s, Singapore established effective trade and political ties with Australia and New Zealand, which are the major players in Oceania, the largest and most significant region from the geostrategic point of view. This has allowed Singapore to build mutually beneficial relations with 12 independent small island states and 13 dependent territories, to which it supplies petroleum products, one of its key exports (Oceania imports 90% of its fuel from Singapore).

Singapore develops most dynamic relationships in Oceania with four of the largest island nations: Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, and Fiji, which are located in the Melanesian subregion and have a combined total of 90% of the South Pacific's natural resources. These states formed a trade and economic union in 1986, which was finally named the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) in 2007, and with which Singapore has been actively engaged.

The information visit to Singapore of foreign ministers from the 11 (i.e. almost all) independent small island states of Oceania in 2012 was a historic milestone. After reviewing the technical, agricultural, and other developments presented to the delegates, the participating Fiji Foreign Minister said that the MSG member states, "have a lot to learn from Singapore."

Fiji and the Republic of Singapore established the diplomatic relations in 1971. The relationship was less official than friendly, dating back to the personal encounter between Lee Kuan Yew, the future builder of Singapore's economic miracle, and Prime Minister and future "father of the nation" of independent Fiji, Ratu Kamisese Mara, in the 1960s. In 1986, Lee Kuan Yew visited Fiji and addressed K. Mara during an official reception, stating that "the close ties between Fiji and Singapore will grow as cooperation between ASEAN and the South Pacific expands." No doubt his words were prophetic.

On the occasion of Lee Kuan Yew's passing in 2015, Fiji's Prime Minister Frank Bainimarama (also dubbed 'father of the nation') credited Singapore's founder with "transforming Singapore into a country that is now the envy of the world."

In 2016, amid growing cooperation between Fiji and Singapore, Fiji Airways launched regular direct flights between the two countries. The flight time is just over 10 hours (8,500 km).

Fiji is trying to emulate Singapore in all fields, such as agriculture, medicine, finance, housing and urban development, and even nation-building: both Singapore and Fiji's population is ethnically mixed and its chief concern is to prevent possible conflicts between different ethnic and social groups. Singapore was the world's best model of managing ethnic relations by avoiding the ethnic enclaves that could form among its people. One of the Fijian leaders said that Fiji would like to fully emulate Singapore's experience. The country has managed to take steady steps in this direction with the adoption of a new constitution in 2013.

Thus, Singapore has long been a role model and a reliable partner for Fiji, a country of almost 1 million people, which since the 2010s has focused its interests on developing trade and political relations with all countries in the world, including Russia.

Relations between Fiji and the Russian Federation were considerably strengthened in 2012, when Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov visited the island state for the first time in its history. As a result of the meeting between Frank Bainimarama and Sergei Lavrov, agreements were reached on student exchange, which a year later, in July 2013, after a visit to Moscow by Frank Bainimarama, where he met with Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev, formed the basis of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Far Eastern Federal University and the National University of Fiji. A visa-free regime was introduced following the signing of the Agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the Republic of Fiji on the Mutual Waiver of Visa Requirements for Citizens of the Russian Federation and Citizens of the Republic of Fiji. An intergovernmental agreement on military-technical cooperation was also concluded, under the terms of which Russia delivered 20 containers of small arms and small arms ammunition to equip the Fijian motorised infantry battalion of the UN Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF), stationed in the Golan Heights. In 2014. Moscow and Suva celebrated the 40th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations with cultural and educational events.

"Russia, just like China and the US, is a Pacific state that wants to play a constructive role in the region in general, and certainly here in Fiji. I will be the first head of Fiji to visit Russia," said Frank Bainimarama in an exclusive interview with ITAR-TASS First Deputy General Director Mikhail Gusman, specifically for ITAR-TASS, Rossiyskaya Gazeta and Rossiya-24 TV channel shortly before his 2013 trip to Moscow.
It should be noted that Russia's ties with Singapore and Fiji are now facilitated by the possibilities of remote communication, as well as accelerated air travel between the three states and the absence of visa regimes, making Oceania an increasingly accessible region these days. Russia's engagement with Fiji opens up opportunities for economic and cultural dialogue with the other three above-mentioned MSG Melanesian states. In particular, one of Fiji's neighbouring MSG states, the Solomon Islands, is interested in cooperating with the Russian Federation, including the space and digital technology sectors, for which Russian President Vladimir Putin issued Decree No. 660, dated 18.11.2021, On the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations with the Solomon Islands'.

Thus, the experience of the Russian Federation in many areas can be useful to the countries of Oceania, which, as practice shows, are always open to mutually beneficial cooperation.

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