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Russia-S'pore Inter-Governmental Commission marks milestone in relations

By Saifulbahri Ismail | Posted: 27 September 2010 2149 hrs

SINGAPORE : Senior Minister Goh Chok Tong said the inaugural Russia-Singapore Inter-Governmental Commission (IGC) launched on Monday marks another important milestone in bilateral relations.

The commission aims to facilitate trade and investment by fostering greater high-level dialogue.

The idea for the commission was mooted during Russian President Dmitry Medvedev's visit to Singapore last November.

The first IGC meeting was co-chaired by Russia's Deputy Chairman and Chief of Staff, Sergey Sobyenin and SM Goh at the Istana.

They explored opportunities for broad-based cooperation in a wide range of fields, including economics, trade and investment, science and technology, and education.

The commission also identified projects and discussed the framework for their collaboration.

Mr Goh said: "The IGC is important because it signals a commitment by both countries to enhance bilateral ties, and to facilitate business and investment.

"Singapore is primarily interested in getting Russian companies to use Singapore as a platform to explore the region to seize opportunities over here. And of course, Singapore is also interested in seizing opportunities in the emerging large economy of Russia - to invest over there."

Singapore also wants to learn about nuclear energy from Russia.

"Deputy Chairman (Sergey Sobyenin) offered his assistance in getting Singapore to understand this subject better and we've been invited to their country, where they are doing research, and we'll... take our people there," said Mr Goh.

The next commission meeting will be held in Moscow next year.



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Mr Sergey Sobyenin (L) and SM Goh Chok Tong



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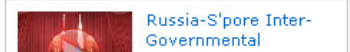
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In Singapore, the Russian leader also met Minister Mentor Lee Kuan Yew, where they reaffirmed the positive bilateral relations and discussed international issues.

Mr Sobyenin will meet Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, and Health Minister Khaw Boon Wan on Tuesday.