

## Enhanced tourism cooperation is a new driver for the development of Uzbekistan-Singapore relations



On 23-25 May, President of the Republic of Singapore Halima Yacoub paid a return state visit to Uzbekistan.

It should be noted that this is the first time the president of Singapore has visited Uzbekistan since the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

Among the important areas of bilateral cooperation discussed by the two presidents during the talks, of particular interest is the cooperation agreement signed between Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Uzbekistan and the National Association of Travel Agents Singapore. Today, our two countries have considerable tourism potential and have mutual interest in fostering tourism exchange.

Singapore is an attractive tourist destination because of its multiculturalism, impressive modern architecture and many natural beauties. In addition, the country occupies one of the leading positions in world rankings on the level of travel safety.

Uzbekistan, in turn, with its rich historical and cultural heritage, unique architecture, picturesque natural landscapes, is of interest to tourists from all over the world. Another area of tourism represented in our country is Ziyorat (pilgrimage) tourism. Uzbekistan, as the cradle of Islamic civilization, replete with numerous holy sites, ancient madrassahs, preserved works of world-famous and renowned theologians and hadith scholars, can attract the Muslim population of Singapore as a pilgrimage destination.

The two sides have already taken steps to strengthen ties in the tourism sector. Thus, in order to promote Uzbekistan as a new tourist destination for Singaporean tourists, a 30-day visa-free regime to Uzbekistan was unilaterally introduced for Singaporean citizens in February 2018.

Also, an Uzbek-Singapore Tourism Development Centre was opened in Singapore in 2019 to provide

reliable and comprehensive information on the tourist attractiveness of our country.

These measures have contributed to more than 3 times increase in the number of Singaporean tourists in recent years. In this regard, the signing of the agreement will give an additional impetus to the development of cooperation in the tourism sector. Its practical implementation will open a window of new opportunities for tourism exchange, intensify business contacts between travel agencies, as well as launch joint projects on training, support for new areas of tourism and promotion of tourist brands of Uzbekistan and Singapore.

We can confidently say that the measures taken by the leaders of the two countries will create new opportunities for the growth of mutual tourism exchanges, increase investment and strengthen cultural and humanitarian ties between the peoples of the two countries.