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Shavkat Mirziyoyev

**New Uzbekistan:
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SCO spirit in Uzbekistan



As the chair of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), Uzbekistan is all set to host the annual Summit 2022 of the SCO Heads of State Council on September 15-16 in Samarkand. In the upcoming conference, transit trade and commercial cooperation among the members will be discussed. The member states will also talk about establishing industrial zones and in this regard, the first industrial zone of SCO countries will be established in Samarkand region, Uzbekistan. For the first time, discussions on the promotion of digital transformation and poverty reduction in the SCO space will be available to the member countries to benefit from the experiences of one another. The eradication of poverty and economic development will be the main focus of this conference, which will provide an opportunity for mutual cooperation and dialogue to the member states. The Uzbek Ambassador in Pakistan H.E. Mr. Oybek Usmanov, in his recent interview said that Pakistan and Uzbekistan have a very important role to play in providing trade and economic integration to the SCO member states, which will usher in a new era of economic integration. The Ambassador further said that the SCO has important member states in terms of geo-economic and geopolitical position, including developed countries, which can play an important role in the development of global and regional economies through this organizational platform. The holding of the SCO Summit in Samarkand is indeed a landmark achievement for Uzbekistan and people of the Uzbekistan when the leaders of the member states will be visiting this great country. Uzbekistan is touching new heights of development during the tenure of the incumbent President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, who ever since becoming the head of the state, has introduced a number of reforms with a view to empowering people of Uzbekistan. Economically, Uzbekistan is very well poised and over past few years the infrastructural and socioeconomic development in Uzbekistan has been phenomenal.

The SCO summit will take place in the historical and touristic city of Samarkand. Having been to this wonderful city, I can say on authority that this city has a lot to offer to the tourists, particularly those who are interested in religious tourism. The city is noted as a centre of Islamic scholarly study and the birthplace of the Timurid Renaissance. In the 14th century, Timur (Tamerlane) made it the capital of his empire. The Bibi-Khanym Mosque remains one of the city's most notable landmarks. Samarkand's Registan Square was the city's ancient centre and is bounded by three monumental religious buildings. The city has carefully preserved the traditions of ancient crafts: embroidery, gold work, silk weaving, copper engraving, ceramics, wood caning, and wood painting. UNESCO added the city to its World Heritage List as Samarkand – Crossroads of Cultures.

Imam Al-Bukhari Research Center is also located in Samarkand. The Center was formally opened in January 2019 and was equipped with all latest scientific and technical facilities that are required for in-depth research and enrichment of knowledge. Various facilities are offered at the Center with essential briefing about Imam Al-Bukhari and his contribution towards making Islam well-understood not only in the Muslim world but in the Western world also.

The security situation in Uzbekistan is meticulous. It is because of fool proof security that foreigners come to this country without any hesitation and fear. During past few years number of tourists coming to Uzbekistan has multiplied. The Uzbek Government led by President Shavkat Mirziyoyev has already taken a number of measures to ensure security of tourists besides development and improvement of the touristic places.

Both Pakistan and Uzbekistan enjoy excellent relations. The trade and economic volume between the two countries has also increased manifold while both sides are making earnest efforts to further solidify bilateral relations. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif will attend the SCO Summit along with a high-level delegation. It will be a great opportunity for both sides to interact closely and explore more avenues of cooperation. Besides, the Pakistani Prime Minister will have a chance to meet with other prominent leaders as well. In a nutshell, we hope that the SCO Summit will prove a complete success.

Ansar

Chief Editor's Profile: Ansar Mahmood Bhatti is a career journalist. He started off as District Correspondent of Daily The Muslim in 1988 from Gujrat. Later he moved to Islamabad and joined Pakistan Observer as Sub-Editor / Op-ed Writer, in 1993. In 1995 he again moved to The Muslim as Sub-Editor and he left The Muslim in 1997 to join THE Nation as City Editor and Diplomatic Correspondent, where he remained till 2002. His association with the The News spans over three years from 2002 to 2005 as columnist. In 2005 Mr. Bhatti switched over to Khabrain Group as Columnist / Special Correspondent. In 2010 he was made Resident Editor of The Post, a sister publication of daily Khabrain. In 2010, he launched his own publication Centreline. He has authored two books on European Union. He also served in Pakistan Telecommunication Company (PTCL) as Media Advisor/ Director Communication. He launched Diplomatic News Agency (DNA) in 2012. In May 2020 he launched Pakistan's First & only Diplomatic Newspaper Daily Islamabad POST.

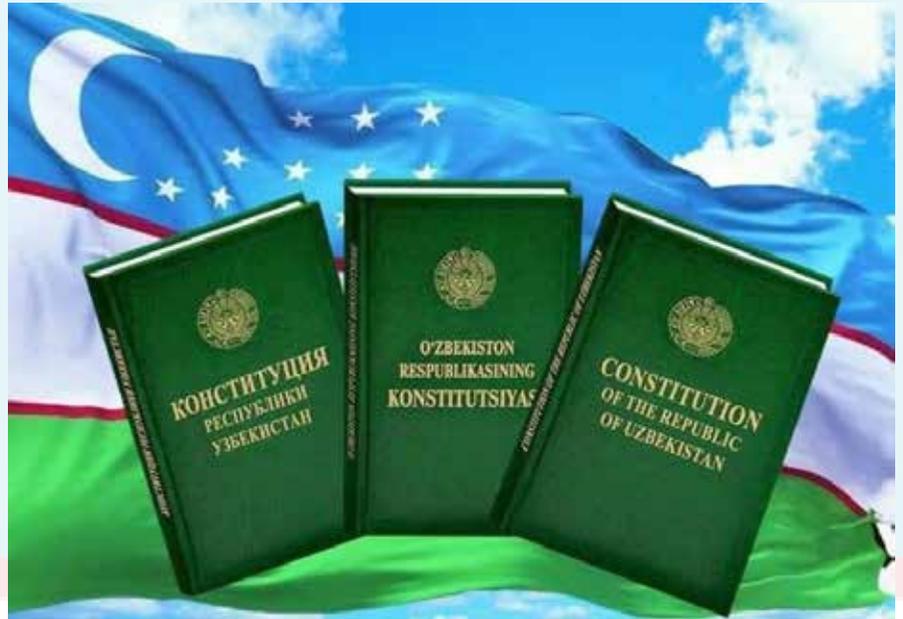


Shavkat Mirziyoyev:

The main objective of the Constitutional Reform is to ensure in practice the honor and dignity of the human and the interests of the people

Speech by the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev at the meeting with the members of the Constitutional Commission of the Oliy Majlis on June 20, 2022,

‘ Over the past short period of time, of course, the political, legal, socio-economic, spiritual and cultural image of our society has changed dramatically ,



IN a short time, the Constitutional Commission has accomplished an enormous work of improving the country's Basic Law. Today we have gathered to exchange views and discuss priorities in this direction in the course of an open dialogue. Undoubtedly, the work of the Constitutional Commission will serve to further strengthen the legal foundations of our ongoing democratic reforms. Directly observing this process, I was convinced that our citizens did not stay away from the transformations we began at the new stage, showing initiative, putting forward many proposals and actively supporting our reforms. We will definitely pay attention to every proposal we receive and we will take it into account in improving the Basic Law. Our goal is for every compatriot to be able to proudly say, this is my Constitution.

Now let me state my vision on the key issues of improving the main document of our society and state. I believe that their detailed discussion will contribute to the achievement of our goal.

We are embarking upon a new and extremely responsible stage in improving the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan. To date, the Commission has received 48,492 proposals from the citizens, which clearly confirms the objective, vital need to put a constitutional reform on the agenda.

The proposals summarized by the Constitutional Commission have been thoroughly and comprehensively discussed and are now at the stage of being submitted to the Legislative Chamber. Now there will also be discussions in accordance with the law

and regulations. I would like to take this opportunity to draw your attention to the most important aspects of this process. First of all, we must precisely formulate the answer to one question. Why is constitutional reform necessary now?

According to some fellow countrymen, individual scientists, our Constitution meets modern democratic requirements and does not need to be changed.

In fact, the Constitution of the country is fully consistent with international standards and requirements and foreign best practices. It is certain.

As a member of the commission, who participated in drafting the current Basic Law in 1992, I am convinced that the Constitution of Uzbekistan serves as a solid legal foundation for all our achievements over the years of independence. All of us know this well and highly appreciate it.

Furthermore, we must deeply reflect on the vital requirement that today's rapid development puts before us. The current turbulent time, the complicated situation around us require an even more responsible attitude towards the fate of our state, adoption of urgent strategic decisions. Over the past short period of time, of course, the political, legal, socio-economic, spiritual and cultural image of our society has changed dramatically. The worldview of our compatriots six years ago and today is completely different.

Committed to the idea of building a democratic rule of law and just civil society enshrined in the Constitution, we have carried out extensive work and gained a lot of experience in this direc-

tion. Humanity has entered the era of science and technology. The processes of transformation and competition are sharply intensifying in the world. Today, more than ever, the nations are seriously thinking about their future. In this regard, the questions naturally arise. What is the place of a human being, his honor and dignity in the life of the state and society in the current decisive period and in the future? What political, legal, socio-economic, spiritual and moral principles, values and interests will be a priority for us? Most important, it is how will the constitutional reform affect the lives of ordinary people, ensuring the well-being of the population, the development of society and the state?

It is the call of the times to reflect the answers to these questions in the carefully developed legal norms of the Constitution.

As it is well-known, the Article 12 of the Basic Law claims that no ideology shall be proclaimed as state ideology. This is an extremely important and very correct constitutional norm. After all, the ideology of any political party, no matter how respectful and influential it is, expresses the interests of only a certain social group. A truly people's ideology, the cherished dreams and aspirations of the nation should be most fully reflected in its main document – the Constitution.

The updated Constitution is designed to serve as a solid legal basis and a reliable guarantor of the implementation of long-term development strategies for our state, the prosperous life of the country and the people. In a word, the essence and substance of the Constitu-

tion should be filled with the idea “In the name of the honor and dignity of a person” and be based on the main principle of our current reforms “Human-Society - State”, which are designed to become a fundamental value in our daily life. That is, the honor and dignity of a person should henceforth be at the forefront of transformations in all spheres. Based on these requirements, I would like to draw your attention to the following priority areas.

The first direction is a person, his life, freedom, honor and dignity, inalienable rights and interests.

At the focus of all the reforms we are implementing is the noble idea of exalting the honor and dignity of human. Both in our sacred religion and in the rich scientific and spiritual heritage of our great ancestors, a human is regarded as the crown of the universe and an incomparable miracle. The Holy Quran says that among all beings created by the Almighty, a human is the dearest and revered of His creation. The great poet and thinker Alisher Navoi wrote that a fair solution to the problems that concern a person, respect for his honor and dignity are the key to the happiness of the people and the prosperity of the country. Indeed, society and the state will develop steadily and harmoniously only where decent conditions are created for the education and upbringing of a person, his prosperous life. Therefore, at present, the world focuses on human rights and freedoms, ratings and standards related to this topic. A person should not be a means, but the main meaning and purpose of the existence of the state and society, the highest value.

In the New Uzbekistan that we are

building, the honor and dignity of a person, the interests of the people are above everything.

Therefore, a true elevation of his honor and dignity is a constitutional duty and a priority task of state authorities. These principles should be clearly reflected and find their fundamental legal solution in the updated Constitution. A historical experience shows that the dignity of a person is manifested primarily in his natural right to life. Life is one of the greatest and most sacred values. As you know, we first gradually reduced the list of crimes, which could lead to death penalty, and then completely abolished such punishment. Despite this, some citizens are making proposals to restore this measure, to include it in the criminal law. At the same time, in the most countries of the world, where the ideals of democracy and humanism are raised to the level of the highest value, the death penalty has been abolished. After all, the right to life is a natural right of every person, which was granted to him not by the state, but by the Almighty.

If you support me, I propose to include in our Constitution one more important norm: “The death penalty is prohibited in the Republic of Uzbekistan.”

By doing this, we will demonstrate to the entire world community that we will never step back on such a serious issue and remain committed to the ideals of humanism. I would like to draw your attention to another important issue. Analysis of many appeals received by the People’s Reception Offices of the President shows that when a person is detained by law enforcement agencies, he is not explained his rights and the reasons for detention.

As a result, in the first minutes of detention, the rights of the detainee are jeopardised.

In order to prevent such cases, it is necessary to apply the “Miranda Warning”, reflected in the Constitutions and laws of many states, as well as in international human rights instruments. That is, when detaining a person, he must be explained his rights and the reason for detention in a language accessible to him. I believe that it is a high time to enshrine this norm in our Constitution. In addition, it is necessary to develop the “Habeas Corpus” institute. A person may not be held in custody for more than forty-eight hours pending a court decision. If the court does not make a decision on the arrest of a person or restriction of his freedom in another form within the prescribed period, then this person should immediately be released. Such an important norm should be reflected in our Basic Law. These provisions are fully consistent with a fundamental constitutional principle that an individual, his or her life, freedom, honor, dignity and other inalienable rights are of a supreme value. As you may recall, at the solemn meeting dedicated to the 25th anniversary of the adoption of the Constitution, I spoke specifically about the issue of citizens not being hired or not being appointed to high positions because of convicted close relatives. Due to this unacceptable approach, a number of young people, qualified specialists became a guilt-free, suffering because of the misdeeds of their close relatives.

Why should a whole family be responsible for one crime? Why should children be responsible for the deeds of father, or brother for brother? From now on, we shall completely reject such an unjust “system”. Wasn’t there enough political repressions during the totalitarian regime, especially in the 1930s of the last century?

Therefore, we must explicitly inscribe in our Constitution a provision on that the person’s criminal record and the legal consequences arising from it may not serve as grounds for restricting the rights of his or her relatives. It should also be reflected in our Basic Law that all persons deprived of their liberty shall be treated humanely, with honor and dignity. It is also necessary to re-educate those who are serving sentences, to take all measures for their return to a normal life.

One more question. Many are well aware that in ancient Roman law there





are so-called golden rules. For example, such as “no one pushes you to the impossible” or “the law does not require the impossible”. Unfortunately, in our national legislation, there are sometimes impracticable or difficult-to-enforce rules. In fact, laws should not put excessive demands on a person. The excessive demands are, first of all, the extra costs, which, in the end, pave way for corruption. For example, a citizen has a three-month debt of 3 million soums on a mortgage loan. In accordance with applicable law, the bank sues the debtor. However, the claim is filed not for 3 million soums, that is, not for a real debt, but for the entire unpaid part of the loan, let us say, for 250 million soums. After considering the application, the court rules to collect more than 10 million soums of state duty from a debtor and cancel the contract. Just think about how a citizen who could not pay 3 million will pay 10 million soums of a state duty? To prevent such absurd situations, I propose to introduce a new rule into the Constitution. That is, the measures of legal influence in relation to a person when considering cases of administrative, civil, economic, criminal liability and others must be sufficient to achieve a legitimate goal, and, if possible, should alleviate the fate of the person. Another issue that has bothered me for many

years is registration, the so called “propiska”. Our citizens while entering Tashkent could not pass the checkpoints on the roads without a passport, birth certificate. Coming to our capital for a visit, to enjoy it or to work, people have always been worried. Why? Since, the current Constitution does not fully address the rules regarding the free movement of citizens. Along with this, there is no such practice that restricts the rights of citizens in any democratic country. In order to eliminate such a situation that discriminates against people, their rights, we have eliminated checkpoints on the roads, canceled the “propiska”. For a systematic solution of these problems, every citizen of Uzbekistan should have the right to free movement around the country, free choice of place of residence. Every citizen needs guarantees of the right to freely enter and leave the country. I propose that these important norms be firmly enshrined in the Constitution. The inviolability of private life and related guarantees must also be secured in the Constitution. Only then we shall be able to guarantee a peaceful and secured life for our citizens, their trust in the state and the laws, and a free movement. **The second direction – I propose to consolidate the principle of “Uzbekistan is a welfare state” in the Basic Law.** The concept of “human dignity” is

inseparably linked with the concept of a “welfare state”, which is based on the noble goal of human rights observance and legitimate interests, serving people. It is well-known that the welfare state creates decent living conditions for everyone based on the principles of social equality and justice. This is a model of a state implementing an effective policy to reduce social differences and support those in need. **First**, a welfare state implies the definition of a minimum level of provision of housing and consumer goods necessary for life for those in need. It establishes wages capable of ensuring a decent life for a citizen and his family, as well as measures to reduce poverty, ensure employment, and safe working conditions. At the same time, the main objectives of a welfare state are protection from unemployment, guaranteed quality education, qualified medical care, equal opportunities for all, comprehensive support for families, children, women, the elderly, and persons with disabilities. Along with this, in a welfare state, it is important to provide the necessary resources for life – a potable water, natural gas, electricity, transport and others, as well as the prohibition of forced labor. In a word, in a welfare state, no one will be left without attention and will not be left alone with their problems. Speaking about the interests of a person in

a welfare state, first of all, we mean providing him with necessary housing. The birth of a person, the formation of his personality, the upbringing of children, the development of national customs and historical traditions, weddings take place in the house, in the family. When a child is born, our compatriots with good intentions plant trees in the yard, dreaming that this house, this garden will serve their descendants for many years. During a recent sociological survey conducted by the non-governmental center “*Ijtimoiy fikr*”, the majority of fellow countrymen expressed the opinion that the availability of a permanent housing is the main condition for creating a family.

About 500 thousand houses and apartments have been built and commissioned in our country over the past five years. For the first time, a system of allocating subsidies to women and young people and families in need has been established. In 2022-2026, modern houses and apartments with a total area of over 19 million square meters will be built in cities instead of obsolete housing under an umbrella of renovation programs. Thanks to this, more than 275 thousand families will be able to celebrate a housewarming.

The Constitution should enshrine the state’s obligations to protect citizens’ rights to housing, guarantee its inviolability, as well as provide housing for all segments of the population, especially those in need. There is another problem, popularly known as “demolition”. For its complete eradication, it is necessary to consolidate constitutional guarantees for housing. That is, no one can be deprived of housing without a court ruling. If a building is subject to demolition, compensation corresponding to the cost of a building must be paid before its demolition. The Constitution should firmly fix the norm that penetration into housing or other property belonging to a person without his permission, inspection and search are allowed only in accordance with the procedure and cases established by law. There is another important point. As the centuries-old experience of development shows, it is impossible to build a strong welfare state without private property and its reliable guarantees. Therefore, in our Basic law we must solidify the constitutional guarantees necessary to ensure the protection of private property. Every entrepreneur, regardless of the scale of his activ-



ity, should truly feel that he is always under the protection of the state, the Constitution, laws and the President. It is necessary to establish, as in developed countries, such a procedure in which no one can deprive the owner of his property without a court ruling, his consent and a fair compensation payment. Along with this, I believe it is a high time to define as a constitutional norm the question of an inadmissibility of revising and canceling the results of denationalization and privatization. We must remove all barriers to the development of entrepreneurship – the main driver of our economy. To this end, it is necessary to enshrine in the Constitution the rule that the state creates all conditions for a free movement of goods, services, labor and financial resources, the development of domestic and foreign trade in the country. This is a requirement of the times and the reforms we have begun. I also propose to clearly define in the Basic Law the right of entrepreneurs to carry out any activity not prohibited by law, independently choose the direction of their activity and receive unlimited profit from it.

In order to develop private property, the state must ensure a favorable business and investment climate, conditions for the development of entrepreneurship, protection of fair competition, and prevention of monopolization in an economic activity. In addition, I believe that it should be clearly stated in the Basic Law that land can also be privately owned. It would also be appropriate to reflect in the Constitution the rule that agricultural and forestry lands belong to a state and are allocated to business entities on the basis of lease

agreements. **Second**, for every person, the family is an important and sacred value. A healthy and strong family is the backbone of a state and the main unit in society. We honor the family as a hearth that ensures the continuation of life, preserves national identity and culture, traditions and customs, forms a harmoniously developed generation. Such noble qualities as respect for the elders, care for the younger ones, humanism, kindness and mercy, love and devotion to Homeland, are laid first of all at the family.

In the current age of globalization, the need to create decent conditions for a comprehensive protection, support and strengthening of an institution of family is increasing. In order to develop the constitutional basis of an institution of a family, I propose to enshrine in the Basic Law the rule that “the family is formed on the basis of a voluntary consent and equality of women and men”, is a natural and main unit in society, remains under special protection of society and the state. Therefore, the state must create the necessary social and economic conditions for the full development of a family, provide benefits and social guarantees to large families in accordance with law. Then the economic and spiritual foundations of a family shall become even stronger.

Third, a very important direction of our policy is the upbringing of children, who are the meaning of life for our people, their future. Currently, the young people under the age of 30 are about 60 percent of the country’s population. This is our greatest wealth and human resource. We consider a family, the pre-school, school and higher education, as well as scientific and cultural institutions, the most important units, strong

pillars of the Third Renaissance. Consequently, an urgent issue is to enshrine in the Constitution a comprehensive support for the rights and freedoms, as well as the legitimate interests of the youth, young men and young women – the creators of the New Uzbekistan.

In the Basic Law, as one of the priority areas, it is necessary to reflect the interests of the child, enshrine the norm on the creation of all conditions for his comprehensive physical, mental and cultural development.

At the same time, as a separate norm, we must enshrine the need for constant state support for a gifted youth, regardless of their financial situation. It is well-known that for over the last years we have been paying a profound attention to popularizing sports among the population, especially the youth, and promoting a healthy lifestyle. In order to consolidate our policy in this direction at the constitutional level, I propose to include the following provision in the Basic Law: “The state creates the necessary conditions for the development of physical culture and sports, spiritual and moral education of children and the youth”. Further enhancement of responsibility for the fate of the younger generation will also serve as the inclusion in the Constitution of a norm that parents are entitled and obliged to take care of the upbringing, education, health, comprehensive and harmonious development of children until they reach the age of puberty.

Fourth, our national idea derives from the humanistic qualities of our people,

“ I think that all the changes and additions being introduced to the Constitution will further unite our single state, consisting of 14 territorial entities, and the united people of Uzbekistan on the path to great goals, regardless of the nationality, religion and language of its citizens ”

including generosity, unselfish assistance to those in need, and the creation of equal conditions for persons with disabilities.

Currently, there are about 1 million people with disabilities living in the country. In recent years, the state policy to support them and create equal conditions for them has been raised to a completely new level. In particular, the parliament adopted the Law “On the Rights of Persons with Disabilities”, ratified the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and created a solid legal framework for the sphere. On this basis, the rights of persons with disabilities to an equal access to opportunities available in society, including movement, health services, education, sports, employment, rehabilitation and participation in public and political life are ensured. Now, on the basis of the principle “persons with disabilities are full members of society”, their constitutional rights and guaran-

tees are our human duty. I propose, in particular, the inclusion of the following provisions: “Any separation of persons with disabilities, restriction of their rights, avoidance of creating conditions for their access to facilities and services shall be prohibited. For the realization of their rights and freedoms, as well as legitimate interests, the state shall create the necessary conditions and equal opportunities. For children who need of a special attention, an inclusive education shall be organized at educational institutions.”

Fifth, an important goal of the constitutional reform is to ensure reliable protection of human rights to work and decent living conditions, protection from unemployment, and poverty reduction.

The first positive results are yielded by the “iron”, “female” and “youth” notebooks introduced in the country in a short period of time in order to prevent social problems, the system of work in the context of *makhallas* (the local residential community areas) and families. However, in order to carry out this work regularly and systematically, making the process irreversible, the strong constitutional guarantees are needed. In addition, I propose to enshrine in our Basic Law the right of everyone to work in favorable conditions, decent wages, introduce a rule that the minimum wage should be sufficient for the life of a person and his family. Since the ancient times, our people have been characterized by such qualities as respect and care for women who give life to a new generation and raise children. The Basic Law should establish a prohibition against refusal to hire, dismissal from work and reduction of the wage of a woman because of her pregnancy or the presence of a small child.

Everyone knows that in recent years a forced and child labor has been





completely eradicated in our country. Recently, in recognition of this achievement, the international coalition Cotton Campaign and world famous brands lifted the earlier issued boycott on cotton and textile products of Uzbekistan. In order to prevent this from happening again, to improve the effectiveness of the current system of human rights protection, it is necessary to enshrine in the Constitution the norms on the prevention of child labor. In recent years, we have radically changed the attitude towards our compatriots abroad. We have developed additional measures to support and socially protect fellow citizens who study, work and earn income in other countries, as well as members of their families living in our country. In particular, the ties with compatriots abroad and their families are expanding through the Vatandoshlar Public Foundation. In order to have a consistent continuation of this activity, it is necessary to create the constitutional foundations for the state's concern for compatriots. A provision should be introduced into the Constitution that the state takes care of its citizens living and working abroad, maintaining and developing ties with them.

Sixth, a human health is the greatest wealth of society. As life shows, only a healthy people, a healthy nation is capable of great achievements. For us, a human health is an important component of ensuring high life expectancy, preserving the gene pool of the nation and the sustainability of the national strategy. In this regard, in my opinion, the general norm "Everyone has the right to a qualified medical care" is insufficiently enshrined in the Constitu-

tion. I consider it necessary to expand this article and supplement it with directly applicable provisions. The pandemic that swept around the world two years ago taught us a lot. More than 25,000 requests received during the meeting with medical workers in March this year revealed many problems in the field. I propose to analyze them in order to further strengthen the constitutional guarantees for the protection of human health. The next question is that we are all well aware of the importance of ecology, a favorable and safe environment in human development and ensuring a prosperous life. A global climate change, the worsening situation associated with the drying up of the Aral Sea, make the issue of environmental security increasingly urgent. Therefore, environmental legal norms should be reflected in the Constitution. Undoubtedly, such constitutional changes will serve to radically strengthen the environmental rights and obligations of citizens in our society, particularly to increase the accountability of officials for an environmental protection and the development of an ecological awareness of the population. This, in turn, shall contribute to the further strengthening of work as a part of the "Yashil Makon" nationwide project being implemented in the country. Summarizing the above-mentioned, I note that it is necessary to stipulate in the Constitution that men and women, families and children, young and old, persons with disabilities, all our compatriots, regardless of whether in or outside the country, are in the sphere of constant attention of the state. We attach a priority attention to the development of education, science and

human capital. Indeed, in the current era of increasing competition, only an educated nation, an enlightened society and a state can achieve progress. Our ancestors in their life adhered to a holy hadith "Search the knowledge from the cradle to the last hour". Our land has nurtured such great thinkers and scientists as Bukhari, Termezi, Khorezmi, Beruni, Farghoni, Navoi and their followers. If we would like to bring up a new harmoniously developed generation, worthy of great ancestors, we should enshrine at the constitutional level the priority of developing the spheres of preschool, school, higher education and science. The Basic Law should also contain provisions on the creation by the state of the necessary conditions for the development of preschool, school and higher education systems of various forms of ownership, including private educational institutions. In the recent years, we have been according a particular attention to enhance the status of teachers and mentors in the society, increase their salaries and comprehensive support from the state.

The great mission of teachers and mentors is to pass knowledge, traditions and customs, our culture from generation to generation. In this regard, the high status of teachers should also be reflected in our Constitution. I think it would be fair if we enshrine in the Constitution the provision on the inadmissibility of interference in the professional activities of teachers, obstructing the performance of their official duties.

The third direction – the development of a free and fair civil society.

For our people, society begins, first of

all, with a *makhalla*. A *makhalla* is the cradle of kindness and education, for centuries carefully preserving national traditions and the rich spirituality of our people, the abode of friendship and good neighborliness. Speaking about a , we mean a unique social structure that educates a person based on humanism and tolerance, serving as a reliable bridge between the people and the state.

Over the past period, more than 50 regulatory legal acts have been adopted aimed at the development of *makhalla*. In each region, a new system of work is being implemented on the principle of “A well-maintained and safe *makhalla*”. Currently, the transformation of a *makhalla* into a truly popular structure, where citizens can freely express their opinions and suggestions, find effective solutions to existing problems, is of an urgent importance. ***If a makhalla is well-maintained, the whole country is well-maintained. If a makhalla changes, the whole society will be transformed.*** As you know, in order to promote the status and influence of citizens’ assemblies in society, the Ministry for the Support of the *Makhalla* and the Older Generation was established. However, sometimes we have to hear erroneous opinions that this ministry was created to manage *makhallas*. In order to clarify this issue, I propose to consolidate the status of a *makhalla* and the tasks of the relevant state bodies in the Basic Law. At the same time, it is necessary to establish separately that the *makhallas* are not part of the system of state authorities and are authorized to independently resolve issues of local significance. To do this, it is necessary to consolidate the obligation of state bodies to provide *makhallas* with comprehensive support in their activities. There are over 9,200 non-governmental non-profit organizations operating in our country that perform important tasks to protect the rights and legitimate interests of individuals and legal entities, democratic values, in the field of social life, culture and education. In recent years, a consistent work has been carried out to support non-governmental non-profit organizations and other civil society institutions, to improve the legal framework governing relations in the sphere. In order to bring these measures to a qualitatively new level, as well as to determine the prospects for the development of a fair civil society in the country for the near and medium term, a relevant concept for 2021-2025 has

“ **The pandemic that swept around the world two years ago taught us a lot. More than 25,000 requests received during the meeting with medical workers in March this year revealed many problems in the field** ”

been approved.

I believe it is a high time to clearly stipulate in the Basic Law the role and status of civil society institutions – *makhallas*, political parties, movements, mass media, trade unions, foundations and other public associations. **The fourth direction – the construction of a humane democratic rule of law state in Uzbekistan.** The rule of law is a progressive idea and a great discovery of humanity, which has become the result of hard work for thousands of years.

Only in a state governed by the rule of law it is possible to fully ensure the right to life and freedom, human honor and dignity, and the creation of a truly people’s system of government. In

a state governed by the rule of law, everyone is equal and responsible before laws adopted on the basis of democratic principles, and no one can be above the law. In this regard, I propose to consolidate the provision “**Uzbekistan is a state governed by the rule of law**” in our Constitution. We have put a task before ourselves to build a democratic state that lives by the concerns of the people. This means that a state, its bodies and officials work for the people, serve them. The public control shall be established over a state power. I propose to introduce the norms into the Constitution that ensure openness, transparency and accountability of the activities of state bodies, their mobility and compactness. The Basic Law





requires strengthening the provision of democracy, the mechanisms of checks and balances in the branches of government. Above all, we must introduce into the Constitution the relevant provisions on expanding the authority of the Oliy Majlis on forming a government and ensure its effective operation. I specifically suggest introducing the Senate's approval process for the decree appointing the head of the Anti-corruption agency. Along with this, the parliament should have the authority to debate the government's yearly national report on fighting corruption. It is also necessary to continue work on enhancing the constitutional foundations of parliamentary supervision by the Oliy Majlis. I suggest delegating the Oliy Majlis part of the President's authority. For instance, it would be advisable to provide the Senate the authority to appoint and remove the Chairman of the Accounting Chamber. As a result, the Accounting Chamber shall become an important instrument of the parliamentary oversight of the formation and implementation of the State budget. The separation of powers of *khokims* (governors) and *Kengashes* (Councils) on the ground is a crucial issue in restructuring the system of state authority and governance. As you know, I have put forward this

proposal before. As a result of the reforms we have implemented, the authority of local *Kengashes* and citizens' self-government bodies has increased. Proceeding from this, I believe that it is a high time to remove from the Constitution the norms that *Khokims* simultaneously head the *Kengashes* of People's Deputies. The implementation of this reform will lead to the introduction at the local level of the principle of separation of powers between the branches of government, to an increase in the efficiency of local *Kengashes*, and the responsibility of *khokims* to people's representatives. This will serve to better ensure the interests of the population in the regions, to strengthen the supervision of *Kengashes* and the public over the activities of *khokimiyats* (governors' offices). We shall continue to expand the authorities of representative bodies. In order to expand the participation of citizens in the management of state affairs, I consider it appropriate to reform the institution of a right of legislative initiative. In particular, I propose to introduce into the Constitution a provision on the institution of making legislative proposals. As a part of this institution, citizens in the amount of at least 100 thousand people will have the opportunity to sub-

mit their legislative proposals to the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis. Thus, the people will now acquire the right to initiate as a direct subject of lawmaking. I believe that the time has come to accord the Senate of the Oliy Majlis, the Ombudsman and the Central Election Commission the power to make legislative proposals. At the same time, the initiatives will be introduced not as a draft law, but in the form of proposals. Along with the expansion of the spheres of constitutional responsibility, the powers of executive authorities, it is also necessary to strengthen public and parliamentary oversight. In this regard, I suggest expanding the powers of the government. In particular, the Constitution should define the responsibility of the Cabinet of Ministers and *Khokimiyats* in the field of ecology, implementation of youth policy, supporting, strengthening and protecting the family, social protection of persons with disabilities, development of public transport system, creating the necessary conditions for population's leisure, supporting the civil society institutions. The peaceful, free and prosperous life of citizens should become the main measure of the activity of the government and local executive bodies. There is another important point. In New

Uzbekistan we are confidently following the chosen path – from the Action Strategy to the Development Strategy, and all employees of the judiciary and law enforcement agencies should be deeply aware of this.

In the course of the reforms, the transformation of the judicial and legal system from an accusatory, punitive system into a system of bodies protecting the rights, freedoms and legitimate interests of a person is of a decisive importance.

Our main task is to create such a system of fair and independent courts, the prosecutor's office, law enforcement agencies, the National Guard as well as a strong advocacy, protecting public order and human rights, which, as in the developed countries, will in fact ensure the rule of law. Taking today's opportunity, we should also exchange views on the mechanism of direct enforcement of the norms of the Constitution. The Basic Law has the supreme legal effect and direct action, fundamental human rights and freedoms are inalienable and inviolable, and are given to everyone from birth.

All this requires further improvement of the activities of the Constitutional Court, which defends the Basic Law. This court, different from others, subordinates itself only to the Constitution and ensures the principle of

its supremacy. Along with this, the Constitutional Court attaches a special attention to the observance of the constitutional principle of the supremacy of human rights and freedoms in the acts issued by the legislative and executive authorities, as well as the norms of the Constitution. In this regard, it is necessary to drastically change the work of the Constitutional Court, specify its jurisdiction and enhance accountability.

It is also appropriate to stipulate as among the authorities of the Constitutional Court in the Constitution the consideration of appeals from citizens and legal entities for verification of the law applied by the court against them in a specific case in terms of its compliance with the norms of the Constitution. The achievement of all our noble goals depends on ensuring peace and security in the country, inter-ethnic and interfaith harmony. This is precisely what our domestic and foreign policy pursued by the state is aimed at.

Over the past period, we have strengthened cooperation with many states of the world, including the atmosphere of friendship and good-neighborliness with all countries of the region.

Accordingly, I suggest supplementing the Basic Law with an article on Uzbekistan's peaceful and friendly policy towards all states, primarily the

neighboring ones, building its foreign policy on the principles of respect for human rights and freedoms, and the territorial integrity of states. In the present circumstances, when cardinal changes are taking place in our country and throughout the world, updating and improvement of the conceptual and legal framework of the foreign policy of Uzbekistan is of a particular relevance.

It must be emphasized that the National Security Concept of the Republic of Uzbekistan was approved in 1997 and the Foreign Policy Concept of the Republic of Uzbekistan – in 2012. It is plainly obvious that these important documents no longer correspond to the new conditions of the rapidly changing modern world. In this regard, taking into account the constitutional reform discussed by the general public of the country, I consider it necessary to develop a new edition of the National Security and the Foreign Policy Concepts of the Republic of Uzbekistan. These documents are extremely important, so I also propose that they must be adopted in the form of Constitutional laws. Certainly, today we do not have an opportunity to discuss in detail with you all the important and relevant suggestions received by the Commission from our citizens. I have only focused on a few of them.

The Constitutional commission, com-



pleting the first stage of its work, will soon submit all systematized proposals to the chambers of the Oliy Majlis. There is the second stage of the work ahead. We have to once again comprehensively consider these proposals, discuss together with the people, the general public and accept them. I would like to emphasize that to date we have been implementing all our reforms after discussing them with the people. I think that every amendment and addition to the Constitution must be submitted for a nation-wide discussion. After all, our nation is facing an extremely important, decisive historical choice. Through constitutional reform, in New Uzbekistan we must create a solid legal basis for all our practical affairs aimed at fully ensuring in society the rights, freedoms and legitimate interests of a person, his or her honor and dignity as the highest value, and determine what our tomorrow, our future will be like. In this regard, I deem it expedient, on the basis of the proposal of the Commission, to consider the draft developed by the Parliament during a nationwide discussion and take a decision on it by holding a referendum.

According to the current legislation, the Parliament has a mandate to independently introduce amendments to the Constitution. However, if we implement a constitutional reform based on the opinions and support of our citizens, through a referendum, then I believe it will become a true expression of the will of our people – the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan will be truly a people’s one. **This approach is fully consistent with the principle “The people are the only source and the author of the Constitution”.** And each of our fellow countrymen will be able to proudly say: **“The Constitution of New Uzbekistan is my Constitution”.** I would like to take this opportunity to address our people. Dear compatriots, today we live in a turbulent world, in a troubled time. We are going through a very important period in the development of our country. All the reforms we have begun in order to build a New Uzbekistan are aimed at providing every person with a decent life both today and tomorrow. Our compatriots are ambitious, the people of full of strength and energy, who can

become a backbone of their Homeland and the nation.

All of us must pass through ourselves, our souls and hearts the changes offered to be introduced to the Constitution, and express our objective and sincere views on them. All of us strive to ensure that our dreams and hopes, the aspirations of our families, *makhallas* are reflected in the Basic Law, which is natural and absolutely correct. I think that all the changes and additions being introduced to the Constitu-

“ Thus, we shall create a solid foundation for a future free and prosperous life for our families and children, for all our people. First, we have to review all laws and legislation in general, bring them in line with the new constitutional norms. In accordance with the constitutional reform, it will be necessary to improve the system of state bodies and state governance ”

tion will further unite our single state, consisting of 14 territorial entities, and the united people of Uzbekistan on the path to great goals, regardless of the nationality, religion and language of its citizens. I call on all our dear compatriots to take an even more active part in the process of a constitutional reform. **Thus, we shall create a solid foundation for a future free and prosperous life for our families and children, for all our people.** First, we have to review all laws and legislation in general, bring

them in line with the new constitutional norms. In accordance with the constitutional reform, it will be necessary to improve the system of state bodies and state governance.

Second, the constitutional norms and principles should cover the entire system of education and upbringing – from a kindergarten to a higher educational institution. The upbringing of harmoniously developed youth in the spirit of national and universal values should begin with a large-scale work to explain to compatriots, especially the younger generation, the norms and provisions of the Constitution. We must form in every citizen a culture of constitutional law, constitutional consciousness and respect for the Basic Law.

Third, our most important task is to ensure strict compliance with the new constitutional norms and principles by all state bodies, officials and citizens. The Constitution should be an act of direct action. The state bodies, especially courts, in their activities must directly refer to the Constitution, be guided by its norms. Every citizen in his daily life, the realization and protection of his rights must act basing on the Constitution.

In today’s rapidly changing times, our main task is to create working and living conditions for our compatriots that are in no way inferior to conditions in the developed countries, by building a democratic civil society aimed at ensuring human rights and freedoms. We are on the threshold of great achievements. We need to create a strong economy, take a worthy place in the world and together accomplish an enormous work to create better conditions for our people. **Our main goal is to ensure stability in society and the continuous development of the country. I call on all our people to a unity and solidarity**

in achieving this noble goal. Relying upon the updated Constitution, which will become a vivid manifestation of the high political and legal awareness of our people, all of us together will certainly build a New Uzbekistan. The years and centuries shall pass, but future generations shall never forget those who made a commendable contribution to the implementation of crucial reforms in such difficult conditions. I wish each of us such a high honor and great happiness.

Development Strategy of New Uzbekistan for 2022-2026



This is evidenced by the fact that, in particular, more than 17,000 comments received on the results of public discussions on only three major electronic platforms. At the same time, it should be noted that the system of communication with the people, which began five years ago as part of the Strategy of Action, has played an important role

As an integral continuation of the **Strategy of Actions**, the most critical document directly related to the future of Uzbekistan – the Decree of the President of Uzbekistan, “**On the Development Strategy of New Uzbekistan for 2022-2026**”, was adopted. Uzbekistan derived the Development Strategy for the near future from this foundational document. *First of all*, in contrast to the Action Strategy, the New Uzbekistan Development Strategy aims to achieve 100 goals within the 7 priorities of Uzbekistan's development over the next 5 years and includes 398 measures to be implemented in 2022. Efforts to achieve these goals are also clear. They, in turn, make it much easier to control efficiency and effectiveness. In other words, there is being introduced a system of evaluating the effectiveness of planned reforms in accordance with the level of achievement of development goals. *Secondly*, the participation of the population of our country in the development and



improved to ensure that the implementation of each goal is constantly monitored by the population. *Sixthly*, one can see, that in the first year of implementation of the Development Strategy - 2022, the amount of funds allocated for the tasks set has increased several times. In particular, the fact that the State Program for the implementation of the Development Strategy this year provides for implementation of 398 measures, totaling **55 trillion soums and 11.7 billion US dollars** can be a clear example of this. While for the implementation of the planned state program in 2021 there was allocated **29 trillion 492.7 billion soums and 2 billion 600.4 million US dollars**, and for the implementation of the state program in 2020 - **18 trillion 171.4 billion soums and 10 billion 301.5 million US dollars**. It has to be said, that the full implementation of the goals set out in the Development Strategy requires a strong will and strong discipline, full mobilization of available resources. Of course, each of us must be active, to contribute to the construction of a New Uzbekistan as a united force, a single power.

As the head of our state Shavkat Mirziyoyev said, ***“we will carry out all reforms and all actions together with the society. We must all serve our people as one force, one power.”***

The strategy foresees the implementation of various measures that should create the basis for joining a number of "states with the above-average income." The country has identified target goals in concrete numbers and introduced the mechanisms of reaching those goals. Further economic liberalization, privatization in most spheres, competition, elimination of monopolization, the attraction of more foreign investment, price stabilization, support of the development of "driver spheres of the economy" and decentralization that gives more authority to the regions are among many other priorities identified in the strategy. For instance, a target goal for the country is a 1.6-time increase in the gross domestic product (GDP) per capita in the next five years and the per capita income to reach \$4,000 by 2030 by ensuring stable high growth rates in all sectors of the economy, including energy, industry, machinery, mining, agriculture and others. Another important aim is to ensure

adoption of the Development Strategy has significantly increased compared to the Action Strategy. This made the document more public. This is evidenced by the fact that, in particular, more than 17,000 comments received on the results of public discussions on only three major electronic platforms. At the same time, it should be noted that the system of communication with the people, which began **five years ago** as part of the Strategy of Action, has played an important role. Because it was during the implementation of the activities defined in the Action Strategy that a direct connection between state bodies and the population was established, transparency increased from year to year, which by itself radically changed the attitude of the population towards state bodies, increased its activity, degree of trust and involvement in reforms.

Most importantly, the opportunities for citizens to raise issues with government agencies have expanded even more. *Thirdly*, this policy document sets out the priorities for the country's development trends in the near and medium term. Particular attention is paid to ensuring the succession and continuity of reforms based on the principle **“From the strategy of action - to the strategy of development.”** In particular, the Strategy of Action began with the implementation of major reforms in each area, on the basis of accumulated great experience and opportunities, the reforms will be improved with even greater determination and intensity. At the same time, through the increase of the efficiency ratio and the effectiveness of the reforms will also increase.

Fourthly, the mechanism for imple-

menting the Development Strategy has been improved. In particular, by the Decree of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev **“On the Development Strategy of New Uzbekistan for 2022-2026”** there is approved the composition of the National Commission for Strategy Implementation. It is noteworthy that the commission is composed of government officials and public activists.

In this regard, in addition to the appointment of a clear executor and supervisor of the relevant items, attention should be paid to the accuracy of the funds planned for expenditures. This, on the one hand, increases the efficiency of the planned work, on the other hand, also serves to increase the responsibility of the relevant officials. *Fifthly*, it is also noteworthy that the participation of public oversight in the implementation of each stage of the Development Strategy is being strengthened. Of course, it is of particular note, that a wide range of opportunities is being created for such control.

The digitization of various spheres and industries, as well as the planning of electronic platforms, will help to create a sense of satisfaction of the population with the work of government agencies, while first and foremost to ensure the effectiveness of these organizations in their activities. This transparency and openness also allow for effective public oversight. In addition, the increasing accountability of government agencies at all levels to the **people's representatives** - deputies - will serve to strengthen control over government agencies, to ensure that officials approach their duties responsibly.

Most importantly, electronic platforms will be launched and constantly

macroeconomic stability and gradually reduce the annual inflation rate to 5% by 2023. This year, the state intends to decrease the inflation rate to 9%.

Looking at the proposed industrial policy reforms outlined, one can see that the country will continue ensuring the stability of the national economy and increasing the share of industry in the GDP by increasing the volume of industrial production by 40%. For that, priority areas have been identified, and each consists of its three target numbers. These goals include implementing large investment projects in metallurgy, such as an increase in the production volumes of gold by 26% and silver by 42%, and a two-fold increase in copper and ferrous metal products. Production in the chemical industry will be worth \$2 billion by developing the chemical and gas chemical industries and bringing the level of natural gas processing from 8% to 20%. Additionally, the plan calls for double the production of building materials, growth in the leather and footwear industry by 320% its current size, a 300% increase in pharmaceutical industry products and furniture products growing by 280%.

All of these plans require an uninterrupted supply of electricity to the economy. Therefore, in addition to other planned measures, the active introduction of green technologies in all areas, an increase in energy efficiency by 20%, and a reduction in emissions of harmful gases into the atmosphere by 10% are proposed. For example, by 2026, there is a planned increase in electricity production by an additional 40 billion kW/h, bringing the total to 110 billion kW/h. Furthermore, the government intends to save about 3 billion cubic meters (bcm) of natural gas by bringing the share of renewable energy sources up to 25% of energy production by 2026. In conjunction with this, reducing the emission of harmful gases into the atmosphere in the amount of 8 million tons is also a priority.

The digital economy

Another important goal is the transformation of the digital economy into the core "driver" sphere of the economy. Implementing work aimed at increasing the digital economy's volume by at least 2.5 times is also a goal to strengthen the country's potential in this new sphere. Planned reforms need a constant flow of investments that require an appropriate investment environment and the rule of

law. Accordingly, taking measures to attract the necessary \$120 billion over the next five years, including foreign investment of \$70 billion, is another crucial goal for the government to realize. Moreover, the country is planning to reform its capital markets.

Thus, it is planning to increase financial resources in the economy by bringing the capital market volume from \$200 million to \$7 billion over the next five years. The completion of the transformation of the banking system, bringing the share of banking assets of private banks from 20% to 60% in 2025, in general, is a goal to reform the banking sector and increase the affordability of decent banking services

Export targets

Uzbekistan plans to increase the Republic's exports to \$30 billion by 2026

The government is planning to increase the economic potential of the regions by carrying out decentralization reforms to support the development of the districts further. Keeping in mind that agriculture provides a high percentage of the state's GDP, the annual growth rate of agriculture is expected to be at least 5%, which should lead to the increase of farmers' incomes by at least two-fold. Furthermore, Uzbekistan plans to implement a more differentiated approach in developing districts and communities. As such, depending on the main specializations of communities, be it different types of farming, textile or other, the government is planning to further support those driver areas in that community, addressing the peculiarities of each specific community separately.



to maintain sustainable economic development. Hence, bringing the share of the four private sector in exports to 60% is a priority. Accordingly, by improving the system of providing organizational and financial assistance to exporting enterprises, the country is willing to increase the current number of exporting enterprises from 6,500 to 15,000. Expanding the geography of exports of goods from 115 to 150 countries is also expected. To further support entrepreneurship, the government plans to reduce the tax burden on business entities by 2026 from 27.5% to 25% of GDP and decrease the value-added tax (VAT) from 15% to 12%, as well as reducing profit tax for telecommunications, banking and finance sectors from 20% to 15%.

Acceleration of the processes of Uzbekistan's accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO) is also among the priorities of the Development Strategy of Uzbekistan. In the meantime, the expansion of exports of finished products to European countries within the framework of the GSP + system will remain a priority. In conclusion, Uzbekistan has identified several priorities for economic transformation in its Development Strategy. The realization of all these measures requires high potential and substantial resources. As such, cooperation with its allies and integration into the world community have been prioritized in many of the goals set in the Strategy.

– Eldor Tulyakov, Executive director at the Development Strategy Centre in Uzbekistan

The SCO in the System of Foreign Policy Priorities of New Uzbekistan

The Foreign Minister of Uzbekistan answered the questions of the correspondent of the "Dunyo" Information Agency



ON June 15, 2001 the Shanghai Cooperation Organization - one of the youngest, dynamically developing international organizations was established. Over the past period, it has made a rapid leap from the format of a consultative mechanism to a full-scale interstate association. Uzbekistan stood at the origins of the establishment of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, has made and continues to make a significant contribution to its progressive development. In 2021-2022, our country chairs at this high-profile Organization. The Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs Vladimir Norov spoke about the initiatives of Uzbekistan put forward by President Shavkat Mirziyoyev at the SCO, prospects of cooperation with this organization in an interview to "Dunyo" Information Agency.

- Your Excellency, we are grateful to You for kindly agreeing to answer our questions. Especially since the SCO is not only one of the priority areas of Uzbekistan's international cooperation, but also the Organization in which You have had an

opportunity to serve as a Secretary-General in 2019-2021. Would You mind to tell us what the SCO is today and what role it plays in the international arena?

- First of all, I would like to note that within a relatively short period of time the Shanghai Cooperation Organization has made substantial development and has become an integral part of the global political and economic context. Today, the SCO is the world's largest regional organization. The total area of its member-states exceeds 34 million sq.km. This is more than 60% of the territory of the Eurasian continent. The total population of the SCO states is 3.2 billion people, which is about half of the world's population. The Organization brings together 8 permanent members, 4 observer-states and 9 dialogue partners.

"The SCO's big family" with 21 countries covers three continents - Asia, Europe and Africa. Along with this, the interest of other countries in interacting with the structure in one format or another continues to grow. The SCO's international authority is enhanced by the consistent expansion of the network of its partner organizations - the UN

and its specialized institutions, ASEAN, CIS, CSTO, EAEU, CICA, ECO. The relations are being established with the League of Arab States and a number of other multilateral structures.

At present, the SCO space is a self-sufficient region in terms of having huge reserves of raw materials, manufactured products, skilled labor and human capital, and technological potential.

The total volume of the economies of the SCO member-states is about \$20 trillion, which is 13 times more than since its establishment. The Organization space represents the largest consumer market in the world. Today, the aggregate GDP of the SCO members has reached about of the global figure. By 2030, this figure could increase by 35-40% of global GDP.

The SCO has an enormous transport and transit potential that awaits its practical implementation. In the context of the diversification of global supply chains, the creation of new international rail and road corridors in Eurasia along the East-West and North-South directions is acquiring a strategic dimension. It should be borne in mind that the SCO is a promising platform for strengthening an inter-civilizational dialogue,

cultural and humanitarian cooperation. The relevance of this direction is especially growing against the backdrop of aggravated distrust and antagonistic moods in the world. The participation of countries, each with a rich history and unique cultural heritage, in one Organization contributes to strengthening a mutual understanding and the spirit of cooperation in Eurasia.

- As it is well-known, President Shavkat Mirziyoyev has identified the Central Asian Region as the top foreign policy priority of Uzbekistan. How do you assess the SCO's role in strengthening Central Asian regionalism?

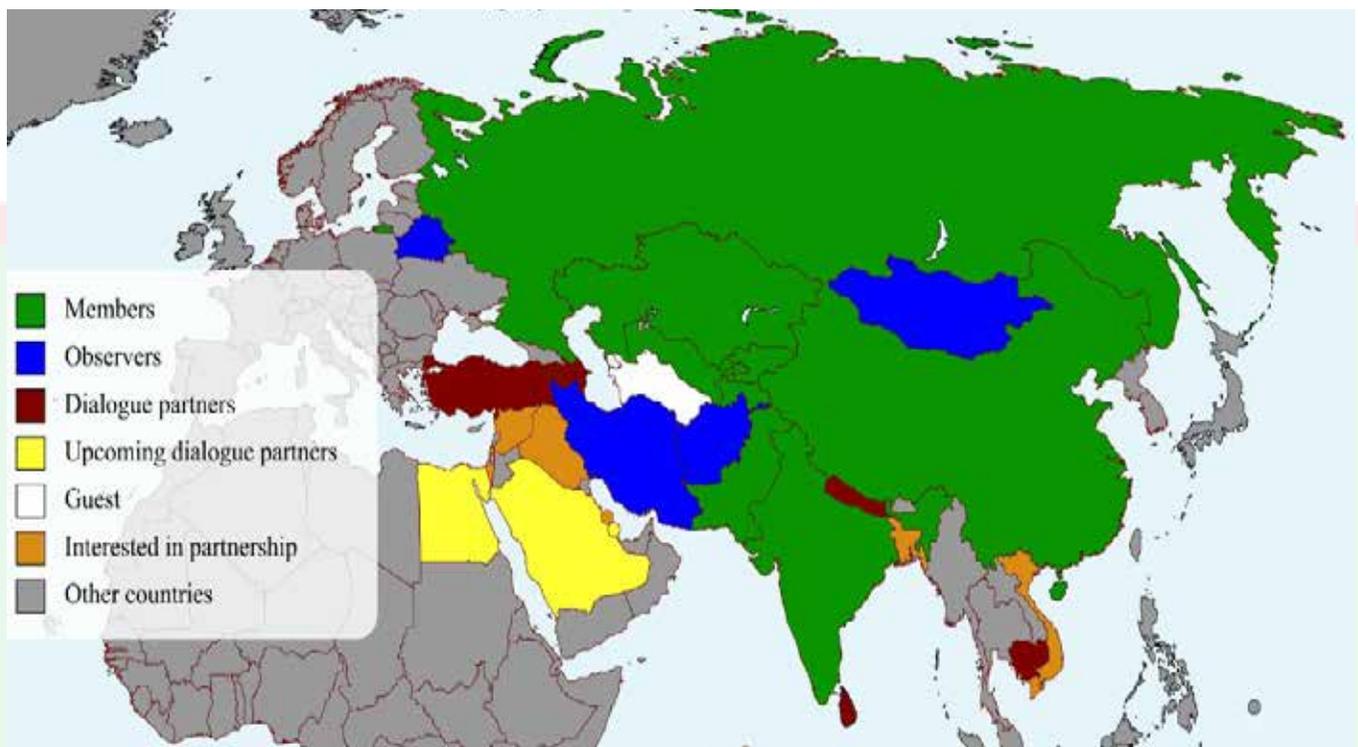
- The SCO was primarily established owing to the new situation in Central Asia after the collapse of the bipolar system in the late 20th century, when the world was entering a new century with complex problems and unpredictable consequences. In the challenging period, the need for institutionalized regional cooperation of the young independent Central Asian states in countering multifaceted new threats and problems was an objective reality. In this sense, the SCO's establishment was a direct outcome of the efforts to ensure stability and security in Central Asia. Consequently, as the most important "added value" from the SCO's formation and activities can be considered its contribution, first of all, to the strengthening stability and the development of

regional cooperation in Central Asia. This is a recognized and time-honored fact. Today, the SCO is making a significant contribution to maintaining peace and stability in the region. Its achievements, primarily in the field of combating the threats of terrorism, extremism and separatism, are indisputable. The world's first multilateral document that defined the concept of "terrorism" - the SCO Convention on Combating Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism of June 15, 2001 was developed within the framework of the SCO. The Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure of the SCO (RATS SCO), headquartered in Tashkent, is carrying out consistent work in this direction. Under the coordination of RATS SCO, the joint effective measures are being taken to eradicate the causes, sources and manifestations of the "forces of the three evils".

The SCO counter-terrorist exercises, including the detection and suppression of the use of the Internet for terrorist, extremist and separatist purposes, as well as the international anti-drug operation "Web" are held on a regular basis. Through the secretaries of Security Councils, Ministers of Defense, Internal Affairs, heads of anti-drug agencies of member states, a regular dialogue is maintained on a wide range of issues relating to the broad security segment. The cooperation has been established to ensure international information security. There is a working group in

this area, and Cooperation Program on International Information Security has been prepared and adopted with the active participation of the Uzbek side. Nevertheless, the SCO's contribution to stability in the region goes beyond that. In practice, the Organization considers security and economic development as interrelated key components. This is the important role of the SCO in maintaining stability and sustainable development in the region. Despite the changes taking place in and around the region, Central Asia remains the geographical nucleus of the SCO after more than 20 years. There is a full understanding among member states that stability and sustainable development in the region remain an imperative and, for that reason, these tasks should continue to be the focus of the Organization's attention.

In the Declaration of the 2021 SCO Anniversary Summit in Dushanbe, the leaders of all member states unanimously expressed their support for the recent efforts of the Central Asian countries to ensure sustainable development and create a space of trust and friendship in the region, endorsed the idea of expanding the active role of the SCO in further strengthening their stability and social and economic development. They further welcome the holding of regular **Consultative Meetings of the Heads of States of the Central Asian Region**, which were initiated by the President of Uzbekistan.





The SCO support for the new Central Asian process since 2017 is undoubtedly very important both for the region itself and for transforming the space of the Organization into a zone of stability, mutually beneficial development and effective cooperation. In this context, it is reasonable to be confident that the term “Central Asian Spirit” has emerged relatively recently in the international political lexicon and strengthens and enriches the doctrinal basis of the SCO – the “Shanghai Spirit”.

It is obvious that the expansion of the membership of the Organization, together with the rapidly changing situation in the region and the world as a whole, makes certain adjustments to the agenda of the SCO. This is an objective process, but it in no way detracts from the role of the Organization in our region. In fact, the connection to the SCO “responsibility zone” of the largest countries of South Asia - India and Pakistan, as well as against the background of the emerging trajectory of expansion to the Middle East for the countries of Central Asia through the SCO opens up new prospects: it is developing into a powerful multilateral platform for joint development and implementation of the mutually beneficial initiatives in the development of multifunctional interconnections on the huge Eurasian space - from transport, infrastructure, energy to “green” economy and digital transformation.

- Please, tell us in this context about the priorities of cooperation between Uzbekistan and the SCO?

- The Shanghai Cooperation Organization occupies a special place in the structure of multilateral diplomacy of Uzbekistan. This is owing to two principal reasons. First, our country, although it did not participate in the so-called “Shanghai Five”, established in the mid-90s to settle border issues between China and a number of post-Soviet

states (Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan) has played a very important role in transforming the dialogue platform into a full-fledged Organization. Second, as one of the six founding states of the SCO, Uzbekistan has participated directly and actively in the development of the basic principles and constituent documents of the Organization, as well as in the establishment and development of its institutional foundations. The member states of this Organization are our country’s closest neighbors and strategic partners. A multidisciplinary cooperation as a part of the SCO serves to strengthen both multilateral regional and interregional cooperation and to develop cooperation with each of these states.

In the system of foreign policy priorities of the New Uzbekistan, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization is more than ever in demand as a multilateral platform for the implementation of an open, pragmatic and broad-based and mutually beneficial cooperation.

Consequently, our country’s current strategy with regard to the SCO is based on such key principles as initiative, constructiveness, pragmatism and openness to cooperation.

Uzbekistan is interested in fully tapping the potential of the Organization in the new conditions of its evolution, first of all, by increasing practical cooperation in promising areas that meet the vital interests of all participating countries. In 2017-2021, President of Uzbekistan put forward at the SCO summits **about 50 important and relevant initiatives**. Most importantly, these proposals are consistently implemented as a part of “road maps”, legal, policy and conceptual documents of the SCO, as well as in the form of new mechanisms of multilateral cooperation.

The formula declared by the President of Uzbekistan at the summit of the Organization in 2020 “SCO is strong only when each of us is strong” fully reveals the essence of the constructive approach of Uzbekistan towards this structure in accordance with the “Shanghai spirit”.

Besides, the President of Uzbekistan has clearly demonstrated a policy of initiative and openness in his keynote speech during last year’s summit in Dushanbe, representing the priorities of the Uzbek Chairmanship at the SCO. These initiatives, both reflecting the key objectives of internal development and interests of our country in the sphere of international cooperation, successfully integrate the goals and objectives of



the SCO at the new stage of its development.

They include further strengthening the potential of the SCO by enhancing multilateral cooperation in the field of interregional trade, industrial cooperation, innovation, the “green” and digital economy.

Moreover, the practical implementation of “Shanghai Spirit” by public diplomacy, tourism, reinforcement of friendship and good neighborliness, new cultural and humanitarian initiatives, enrichment of the SCO agenda by promoting new directions and forms of cooperation in such prospective areas as information and communication technologies, poverty reduction, plant quarantine, enhancing global profile of SCO and expanding its international cooperation are important, as well.

- Could You explain the objectives and initiatives of Uzbekistan’s chairmanship at the Organization in more details?

- Certainly, everything I have mentioned above is not a declarative statement, but it is followed by real actions.

For instance, the Plan of Uzbekistan’s chairmanship involves more than 80 main activities. They cover not only the already established directions of cooperation in the SCO, but also new demanded areas, such as the development of cooperation in interregional trade, industrial cooperation, innovations, poverty reduction, digital transformation and other spheres.

Therefore, the Uzbek side has actually introduced a number of new areas of cooperation as part of the SCO, promoting the enrichment of its agenda according to the current circumstances.

The new approaches and methods of organizing the SCO events have been introduced. They are held not only in Tashkent but also in the regions, which allows to closely familiarize our SCO partners with regional cooperation

potential. In particular, meetings of the Council of SCO National Coordinators were organized in the cities of Nukus, Bukhara and Ferghana. A meeting of transport ministers was held on May 12, 2022 in Khiva, and an international conference on the issues of poverty was held in Bukhara on May 26-27, 2022. Tashkent also hosted the meetings of the SCO Ministers of Industry (July 15), SCO Ministers of Agriculture (July 24-25), SCO Council of Foreign Ministers, SCO Ministers of Interior and Public Security (August 18), Ministers of Defence (August 23-24) and others.

Meanwhile, the meetings and conferences of ministers are accompanied by thematic forums and conferences. The Uzbek Chairmanship has initiated and already implemented such major events as the SCO Public Diplomacy Forum (May 11-12, 2022), Tourism Forum (May 20, 2022), Traditional Medicine Forum (June 7, 2022) and a start-up project competition among young talented people from the member states of the Organization.

Thus, all of these platforms are designed to provide a relevant agenda, reach important agreements and agree on further joint projects, which is vitally important in the conditions of post-pandemic revival of the economy of SCO member states. Hence, the format introduced by the Uzbek side allows to secure practical results and outline new directions for representatives of business communities of our countries. Obviously, the main focus of this chairmanship is to fill the current agenda of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization's activities with significant substance. In order to implement the initiatives



promoted by the President of Uzbekistan, 14 new conceptual documents have been prepared during its chairmanship. These documents focus on substantive and institutional expansion of cooperation spheres in the SCO. A particular attention should be paid to the new documents, such as the Transport Interconnection Strategy, Interregional Trade Development Plan, Infrastructure Development Program, and the establishment of the SCO Goodwill Ambassador Institute.

All of the initiatives put forward by the President of Uzbekistan are logically interlinked and complement each other. For example, the development of internal trade enables the elimination of trade barriers, the convergence of technical regulations and the digitalization of customs procedures. During Uzbek Chairmanship, these and other issues have found their place not only in the agenda of meetings and conferences of ministers. They had been discussed with the business communities of the SCO member states as part of major

topical events such as the SCO Economic Forum, SCO Industrial Innovation Week, Forum of Heads of Regions, Industrial Cooperation Forum, the fruit and vegetable exhibition "Sunny Uzbekistan", and other events.

A truly innovative project is being created in Samarkand Region as part of the Uzbekistan-SCO Industrial Zone. This platform is intended to become an effective mechanism for implementing the Program for Stimulation of Industrial Cooperation between the SCO Business Circles initiated by the President of Uzbekistan, attracting additional investments, technological and innovative solutions for manufacturing the high-value-added products.

Meanwhile, the initiative promoted by Tashkent to strengthen interconnectivity within the SCO is to effectively harness the enormous transport and transit potential in the broad space of the Organization.

In this regard, Uzbekistan intends, together with its partners, to use the potential of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization to accelerate the practical implementation of the system of transport corridors such as Uzbekistan-Kyrgyzstan-China, Termez-Mazari-Sharif-Kabul-Peshawar, Lanzhou-Kashgar-Irkeshtam-Osh-Andijan-Tashkent-Mari and other routes, which acquire a special strategic nature in the current geo-economic conditions.

The SCO Connectivity Strategy proposed by Uzbekistan also contributes to the revival of Afghanistan's unique economic and transit role throughout Eurasia.

There is no doubt that Afghanistan is a key factor in ensuring long-term



security and stability in the region. Unfortunately, due to the well-known events in the world, there has been a slight decline in the international community's attention to Afghanistan. The tragedy of the Afghan people, if the state is left alone with a humanitarian catastrophe, could lead to the new flows of refugees, an increase in the drug threat and a surge in terrorism.

No SCO state is interested in leaving a hotbed of instability in the heart of Eurasia and threats to the security of neighboring countries emanating from the Afghan territory. Today's realities require our Organization to take more concrete actions and to involve Afghanistan in the regional initiatives, including the infrastructure projects.

In this regard, promoting the development of consolidated approaches within the SCO in relation to the post-war development strategy of Afghanistan is naturally listed among the key priorities of our country's chairmanship at the Organization. In short, the key priorities of the SCO chairmanship outlined by the President of Uzbekistan, are in the interests of all parties and, most importantly, are aimed at ensuring stability, sustainable development and strengthening friendship and good-neighborliness throughout the SCO space. - As it is well-known, Uzbekistan, as chairman of the SCO, will host the Summit of the Heads of the Organization's member-states this year. This meeting will take place in Samarkand in September this year. Could You tell us how the preparations for this Summit are going and share your assessment of the role and significance of the upcoming event.

- It is absolutely true that Uzbekistan's chairmanship in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization is approaching the main event – the meeting of the Council of Heads of States in Samarkand, a solid

package of new legal and conceptual documents to bring multifaceted interactions within the Organization to a new qualitative level.

The choice of Samarkand has a deep meaning – this city has been a place of historical meetings and civilizational dialogue since time immemorial, a bridge of cultural and humanitarian mutual enrichment and the development of international trade, strengthening good neighborliness.

Samarkand has acquired a special dimension, acting as a unique platform for convening and promoting the most important international and diplomatic initiatives in the dynamic and proactive diplomacy of the New Uzbekistan. In recent years, the city has hosted a number of major forums, such as the International Conference "Central Asia: One Past and a Common Future, Cooperation for Sustainable Development and Mutual Prosperity" (2017), the Asian Forum on Human Rights (2018), which has later transformed into the Samarkand Forum on Human Rights (2020), and others.

As the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General and the Head of the Regional Center for Preventive Diplomacy in Central Asia Natalia German has noted that the impetus, received from these platforms, is clearly reflected in the "Samarkand spirit" to discuss the topical issues of regional and global development in an atmosphere of good neighborliness, friendship and openness, contributing to the formation of new formats of cooperation in Central Asia – the geographical axis of the SCO space.

The unique heritage of Samarkand and its new creative power do correspond to a SCO value base – the principles of trust, mutual benefit, equality, respect for the diversity of cultures and joint development.

Today, on the eve of the summit, a "pearl" of the Great Silk Road is expe-

riencing a new birth with a large-scale reconstruction and is ready to host the largest political and diplomatic forum of the year in the Eurasian space.

In such a favorable atmosphere at the Samarkand Summit the Heads of States shall discuss the new challenges and tasks facing the SCO in the light of a profound transformation of modern international relations, and shall make a number of important decisions that will have historical significance for the further evolution of the Organization. One of the key issues on the agenda of the summit is the further expansion of the SCO. A Memorandum of commitments of the Islamic Republic of Iran to obtain the status of a SCO member-state is already ready for signing. The document will practically pave the way to a full membership of this large Middle Eastern country in our Organization. In addition, the applications from about 10 more countries for participation at the SCO activities as full members, observers and dialogue partners shall be considered.

The signing of memoranda on the establishment of partnership relations between the SCO and a number of other international and regional organizations, such as the League of Arab States, UNESCO and Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) is also expected at the summit. Against this background, the upcoming summit under the Uzbek chairmanship acquires a special significance by providing a very timely and effective platform for the leaders of the "Shanghai Eight" to discuss a whole range of topical issues on the regional and global agenda. All of this inspires confidence that the Samarkand Summit will adequately mark the SCO's entry into the third decade, opening a new milestone in its evolution.

- Thank you, Mr. Minister, for your time and informative conversation!

- Thank you.



Shavkat Mirziyoyev

President of the Republic of Uzbekistan

To the Participants of the International Conference "Afghanistan: Security and Economic Development"



DISTINGUISHED heads of delegations!

Ladies and Gentlemen!

I am sincerely pleased to welcome all the participants of the Tashkent International Conference "Afghanistan: security and economic development".

I express my special gratitude to the Secretary-General of the United Nations Organization Mr. António Guterres for his support of our initiative to hold this forum. The participation of the representative of the UN Secretary-General Mr. Marcus Potzel at the Conference stands as a testimony of a firm commitment of the United Nations to the goals of consolidating peace and stability in Afghanistan.

The participation of the special envoys from the European Union and the coun-

tries of Europe, China, Russia, United States, the states of Central and South Asia, Middle and Near East, and the Asia-Pacific solidifies the significance of today's meeting. You are immediately involved in decision-making on tackling the problems of Afghanistan and rendering assistance to the Afghan people.

We are pleased to see in our forum the heads of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, Economic Cooperation Organization, as well as the representatives of international financial institutions and leading analytical centers. We welcome the high-profile Afghan delegation led by the acting Minister of Foreign Affairs Amir Khan Muttaqi, which is participating at the forum. We believe that this Conference shall promote a constructive exchange of views in terms of building up the

interactions with the new authorities of Afghanistan based on a comprehensive consideration of interests of the Afghan people and the world community as a whole.

Distinguished participants of the Conference! For over a space of millennia the Uzbek and Afghan people lived side by side with one another. We share the common cultural, spiritual and historical values, one religion and the heritage of great ancestors. It should be underscored that without a stability on the other bank of Amudarya, it is impossible to achieve security and stable development in Uzbekistan and the entire Central Asian region. In this regard, it cannot but arouse concern that the attention is getting reduced in the world to Afghanistan, which is facing deep socio-economic and humanitarian

crisis in its newest history. We are convinced that today the international community won't repeat the mistakes of the 1990s, shall be able to avoid them and this goal should certainly be achieved. The international isolation of Afghanistan shall inevitably lead to further deterioration of the humanitarian situation. Thus, it is important not to allow for this, since the point is about the fate of millions of people.

At the moment, the Interim government of Afghanistan takes the certain steps in terms of peaceful reconstruction of the country, strives to improve the socio-economic situation, establish the friendly relations with neighboring countries and the mutually beneficial cooperation with an international community. We must foster and endorse these efforts.

Meanwhile, forming a broad representation of all layers of the Afghan society in state governance, ensuring basic human rights and freedoms, especially of women and all ethnic-confessional groups remain a fundamental condition for establishing a lasting peace in Afghanistan.

We call on the current government of Afghanistan to show a firm will and take resolute measures to prevent and counteract terrorism in all of its forms and manifestations, break up the ties with all international terrorist organizations.

In conclusion, I would like to express hope that today's Conference shall become an effective platform for productive discussions and development of concerted approaches, which correspond to the interests and aspirations of the people of Afghanistan

Such approach shall lead up to consolidation of trust to an Interim government, open up the real prospects for a stable development of Afghanistan in an atmosphere of friendship, good neighborliness and mutually beneficial cooperation with its nearest surrounding states and the international community.

Dear friends! The Special resolution adopted recently by the UN General Assembly on strengthening connectivity between the Central and South Asia has also confirmed the most important significance of preserving peace in Afghanistan to ensure the international security. All of us, the entire international community, must show solidarity with the Afghan people. We should direct our efforts to creating the real prerequisites for Afghanistan to become a peaceful, stable and prosperous land – free from terrorism, wars and narcotics. Our common priority must become a recovery of Afghanistan's economy. It is such

an approach, which is considered an important condition for achieving a solid peace in this long-suffering country. In particular, this direction includes its integration into inter-regional economic processes, implementation of the infrastructure and socially significant projects. At the moment, Uzbekistan is making a tangible contribution to the international efforts on rendering assistance to the socio-economic and humanitarian recovery of Afghanistan, including through promotion of the large trans-regional infrastructure projects. In conclusion, I would like to express hope that today's Conference shall become an effective platform for productive discussions and development of concerted approaches, which correspond to the interests and aspirations of the people of Afghanistan. I wish success to the work of the Conference and all of its participants.

Tashkent: July 26, 2022

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Importance of post-crisis development of Afghanistan



Speech by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan V. Norov at the opening ceremony of the International Conference on Afghanistan

Distinguished participants of the Conference!
Dear friends!
I express my sincere gratitude for your participation in this important forum, and I want to wish you a pleasant stay in the hospitable Uzbek land as well as successful work. I express our deep appreciation to the Secretary-General of the United Nations Mr. António Guterres for supporting initiative of the President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev to hold an International Conference on Afghanistan and for participating as his representative to Mr. Markus Potzel, Deputy Special Representative for Afghanistan in the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan. I welcome the delegation of the Interim Government of Afghanistan headed by the Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr. Amir Khan Muttaqi. I am confident that this event will contribute to the development of joint approaches of the international community, both on the issues of promoting stability, security, recovery of the national economy of Afghanistan and its integration into regional cooperation processes in the interests of the multinational Afghan people and the whole world. Distinguished guests!
I would like to emphasize the key importance of the post-crisis development of Afghanistan for the entire system of international and regional security. Uzbekistan is interested in the development of Afghanistan as a peaceful, independent and prosperous state. We also maintain a clear position that in the foreseeable future, Afghanistan shall remain an important factor in regional security, directly affecting the national interests of regional countries, primarily the neighboring states.
As the President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev said at the Consultative Meeting of the heads of Central Asian states on July 21 this year in Chalpan At , Kyrgyzstan, “Our most important priority should remain the continuation of close cooperation in promoting long-term peace in Afghanistan and its socio-economic recovery. We are the closest neighbors, and no one else should be interested in stability in this country. It largely depends on us how the international community perceives this problem,” emphasized the President of Uzbekistan. In this regard, the development of joint approaches to solving the socio-economic problems of Afghanistan at this stage of the country’s development should become a top priority for the states of the region and the world

community.

It is necessary to combine our efforts so that the long-sought peace reigns in the long-suffering land of Afghanistan and the conditions for the dynamic post-conflict development are created.

Today it is important to note that despite the lack of managerial experience, financial and economic constraints we can observe the strong desire of the Afghan authorities to improve the situation in the country, to exclude the appearance of various factors that, to one extent or another, can lead to a new wave of destabilization.

We were pleased with the willingness of the Interim Government not to impede the return to the country of political and social circles representatives who left Afghanistan after the August of 2021.

We are confident that these steps will contribute not only to the prompt achievement of national reconciliation, but also to a noticeable decrease in the intensity of the negative attitude towards the new authorities of the country. Along with this, we believe that the prompt implementation by the Interim Government of the basic requirements of the international community, including the creation of an inclusive government based on broad representation, ensuring the rights of women and national minorities, as well as allowing the Afghan girls to receive a full-fledged school education is a guarantee of a peaceful future for all the Afghan people.

Dear friends!

All neighboring states and international partners are concerned about the threat of an escalation of the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan and the risk of economic situation sliding into the abyss of chaos. It is time to move from words to actions - to help to revive the Afghan



economy and to create all the necessary conditions for involving Afghanistan in the regional integration processes.

In order to deliver the humanitarian aid to Afghanistan, we have created a multifunctional transport and logistics hub in the border city of Termez, which is now being actively used by various UN bodies. On July 18, expeditionary work began on the territory of Afghanistan with the participation of specialists from Uzbekistan, Afghanistan and Pakistan to determine the railway route of the trans-Afghan railway "Termez-Mazar-I-Sharif - Kabul - Peshawar" and a feasibility study of the project.

In addition, Uzbek specialists have completed work on the restoration of the international airport in the city of Mazar-I-Sharif this year. We believe it is important to continue jointly with Afghanistan to implement such infrastructure projects as the construction of

the "Termez - Mazar-e-Sharif - Kabul - Peshawar" railroad, the transit potential of which is 20 million tons of cargo annually and the "Surkhan - Pul-e-Khumri" Power Transmission Line.

We invite all the participants of the conference to the presentation of the infrastructure projects on assisting the Afghanistan. We are convinced that the implementation of these projects will not only help the reconstruction of the Afghan economy and make Afghanistan a bridge between Central and South Asia, but also promote the overall process of regional connectivity for the benefit and prosperity of the people of the vast region . We attach an enormous importance to the training of Afghan youth at the Educational Center in Termez, established at the initiative of the President of Uzbekistan.

We are confident that this will accelerate the training of highly qualified specialists for the key sectors of the national economy of Afghanistan, who will be able to make a fair share of contribution to its economic revival. The defrost of Afghanistan's financial assets abroad is a major factor in rebuilding Afghanistan's economy, addressing the acute issues of social nature currently facing the people of this friendly country, as well as implementing the significant infrastructure projects for the benefit of the whole Afghanistan.

In conclusion, I would like to highlight that only through the joint efforts we can achieve a lasting peace and national harmony in this country. There is no other way, and the destiny of the people of Afghanistan and its peaceful, bright future will largely depend on our current coordinated actions.

Thank you for your attention!



TASHKENT, July 26, 2022)

1. On July 26, 2022, the International Conference on Afghanistan on the theme “Afghanistan: Security and Economic Development” was held in Tashkent, which was attended by special representatives of the states, the closest neighbors of Afghanistan, the countries of South, Central Asia, the Middle East, the European Union, the United States, as well as a high-ranking delegation of the Interim Government of Afghanistan. For the first time, a representative international forum on Afghanistan was held, which is not limited to political statements, but is focused on the strengthening of peace, stability and economic reconstruction of the state in the interests of the entire Afghan people, their neighbors and the world community.

2. The Sides expressed respect for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Afghanistan and reaffirmed their commitment to its establishment as a peaceful, indivisible, independent, economically developing state, free from terrorism and drug crime.

3. The participants of the conference expressed a common understanding that today the main priority should be the revival and strengthening of the economy of Afghanistan as an important factor in achieving lasting peace in this country. It is necessary to promote the integration of Afghanistan into interregional economic processes, to promote the implementation of socially significant and infrastructure projects, including the formation of transregional transport, energy and other corridors. Representatives of the Government of Afghanistan and heads of other delegations noted the importance of the initiatives put forward by the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, including the construction of the Termez-Mazari-Sharif-Kabul-Peshawar railway, the laying of the Surkhan-Pul-i-Khumri power transmission line, the creation of the Termez Cargo transport and logistics hub, as well as the transformation of the training center in Termez into an Educational Cluster for training personnel for Afghanistan.

4. The participants supported the opinion of the Leader of Uzbekistan on the need to encourage and support the steps of the Government of Afghanistan on the peaceful arrangement of the country, improving the socio-economic situation, establishing friendly relations with neighboring states and mutually beneficial cooperation with the interna-

Statement by Uzbekistan as the host country of the International Conference on Afghanistan



tional community.

5. The participants paid great attention to the statement of the Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan H.E. Amirkhan Muttaki on the severance of ties between the new authorities of the country and various terrorist groups, primarily the Islamic State. It was noted that the Afghan Government was ensuring security, stability and taking measures to provide public and social services to the population.

6. The importance of the Interim Government of Afghanistan fulfilling the key requirements of the world community to form a government on the basis of broad representation, ensuring women’s rights and access of Afghan girls to receive a full school education was emphasized. That will be a fundamental condition for the completion of the national reconciliation process in Afghanistan. 7. The head of the Afghan delegation told the forum that the Government of Afghanistan takes seriously the concerns expressed by international partners regarding state-building and the realization of human rights and interests, including the rights of women and national minorities. The Afghan side noted that the government of the country pursues a policy of “zero tolerance” in relation to drugs and corruption. 8. Participants took note with satisfaction of the reaffirmation by the

Government of Afghanistan of its previous commitments to prevent the use of the territory of that country against the security interests of other States.

9. Expressing deep concern over the deteriorating socio-economic and humanitarian situation in Afghanistan, the participants expressed confidence in the need to consolidate the efforts of the international community aimed at providing humanitarian and economic assistance to the Afghan people, restoring the national economy of the country as a whole. 10. Delegates noted the consistent efforts of the United Nations and its specialized agencies to provide humanitarian assistance to the Afghan people and called for the continuation of assistance programs.

11. The participants reiterated the importance of unfreezing Afghanistan’s financial assets abroad, which should be directed by the Government of the country to solve socio-economic and humanitarian issues, problems in the fields of health and education, meet the needs and requirements of the entire 35 million Afghan population, and implement significant investment projects. 12. Readiness was expressed to continue close coordination of international efforts and joint work to promote the post-conflict reconstruction of the country and its integration into the world community.

UN General Assembly supports President Shavkat Mirziyoyev's initiative



On July 11, 2022, the UN General Assembly approved a special resolution on strengthening the connectivity between Central and South Asia. The document was presented by Mr. Abdulaziz Kamilov, Special Representative of the President of Uzbekistan on foreign policy matters, who is visiting New York. The initiative to develop this resolution and strengthen the common approaches, main principles and directions of the dialogue between the two regions was put forward during the Tashkent Conference on the topic “Central and South Asia: regional interdependence. Threats and opportunities” held by the head of our state in July 2021. In his speech at the Conference, the President of Uzbekistan emphasized the importance of strengthening dialogue based on the historical closeness of the Central and South Asian regions, mutual trust and consideration of interests. Approximately 600 representatives from 50 countries of the world, including

heads of state and government, foreign ministers, heads of international and regional organizations took part in the Tashkent conference. In his video address to the participants, UN Secretary General António Guterres emphasized that “interconnection plays an important role in trade, economic growth and sustainable development” and “can contribute to the establishment of long-term peace, stability and prosperity in Central and South Asia”. Co-authors of the document include Angola, Azerbaijan, Armenia, China, Cuba, Egypt, Ghana, Iran, Ivory Coast, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Malaysia, Mongolia, Morocco, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Qatar, Russia, Senegal, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Vanuatu, Vietnam and others. In the resolution, strengthening cooperation on the implementation of the Vienna Declaration and its action program for landlocked developing countries for 2014-2024, as well as the importance of

transport and transit corridors for accelerating economic growth and increasing the efficiency of economic relations between Central and South Asian countries and their unique the importance of realization of transport, transit and investment potential has been noted. The document recognized the important role of regional organizations in strengthening regional relations, the role of Afghanistan in establishing relations between Central and South Asia, as well as the importance of Afghanistan's integration into interregional economic processes for its economic development and ensuring lasting peace and stability. The document reflects the rules for establishing close cooperation between the Central and South Asian regions in order to reduce poverty, improve food security, expand transport infrastructure and create new international transport corridors that open convenient, stable and safe routes to seaports.



30th Anniversary of Diplomatic Relations

Uzbekistan and Pakistan: prospects for the development of strategic partnership



ONE of the main priorities of Uzbekistan's foreign policy strategy is to enhance and deepen bilateral cooperation with South Asian countries. In this context, strengthening of friendly relations between Uzbekistan and Pakistan is outlined in the strategy because of historical, geographical, cultural and civilizational closeness of both countries. On May 10, 2022, the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan celebrated the 30th Anniversary of establishing diplomatic relations. Over the past decades, Uzbekistan and Pakistan have made considerable progress in the development of political



dialogue, practical cooperation in trade and economic, cultural and humanitarian spheres, and interaction on regional and international issues.

During the last 5 years, the Uzbek-Pakistani relations have considerably intensified as a result of major changes in regional policies of the two countries. Current relations between Tashkent and Islamabad, based on the principles of good neighborliness, trust and mutual consideration of interests, have been witnessed an upward trend. Uzbekistan and Pakistan established close ties, deepen political mutual trust and give impetus to the interaction between the official circles and business communities of the two countries. In Uzbekistan, the process of profound reform and opening up of the country, launched by President Shavkat Mirziyoyev in 2016 contributed to the transition to a proactive regional policy aimed at fully strengthening good-neighborly relations and cooperation with Central Asian countries.

The resulting positive political atmosphere in the region allowed the President of Uzbekistan to put on the agenda the restoration of historical connectivity and the development of multifaceted cooperation between Central and South Asia.

In its turn, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan has also made significant shifts in regional policy, has noticeably increased the priority of regional economic cooperation and connectivity and intensified interaction with countries of Central Asia within the framework of "Vision Central Asia" policy. This convergence of interests and approaches between the two countries has ensured a significant strengthening of official dialogue and practical cooperation in recent years. Meetings of the Uzbek-Pakistani intergovernmental commission on trade-economic and scientific-technical cooperation are held on a regular basis. Friendship groups operate in the parliaments of the two countries.

Uzbekistan and Pakistan closely cooper-

ate within international institutions, including the UN, OIC, ECO and SCO. Uzbekistan's chairmanship in the Shanghai Organization in 2021-2022 will facilitate further deepening of official contacts and mutually beneficial cooperation.

In July 2021, relations between the Uzbekistan and Pakistan were elevated to the level of strategic partnership, which verified both countries' mutual eagerness to maintain long-term regular comprehensive cooperation. The two countries emphasized the mutual interest of in an active partnership to promote regional connectivity. In addition, the states reached a number of important deals in the fields of transit and trade, simplification of visa procedures for business circles and tourist groups, military training as well as "Cultural Exchanges Program for 2021-2026". An important role in the Uzbek-Pak strategic rapprochement is played by the similarity of the positions of the both states on the vital global and regional issues, which makes it possible to find common ground between the national interests of both countries.

The high-level dialogue and close interaction between the governments and agencies of the two countries provided a significant boost to mutually beneficial cooperation and created the conditions for its deepening in the following key areas.

First, bilateral trade, strengthening of intergovernmental interaction and contacts between business circles have been elevated considerably.

Uzbekistan's trade turnover with Pakistan in 2016-2021 grew from \$35.6 million to \$181.5 million, or more than fivefold. In the last 2 years, the transit of Pakistani goods through our country has also increased fivefold.

Main spheres of trade cooperation between two countries are agro-business, textiles, pharmaceuticals, chemical industry, production of building materials and poultry. The activation of the business community of both countries facilitated

the growth of bilateral trade. Currently more than 150 enterprises with the participation of Pakistani investments are successfully operating in Uzbekistan, 109 of them with 100% Pakistani capital. The cooperation was promoted by the activation of joint cooperation structures. To date, seven meetings of Uzbek-Pakistani inter-governmental commission on trade and economic and scientific-technical cooperation, two meetings of Uzbek-Pakistani joint working group on trade and economic issues have been held. The sides signed an Agreement on Transit Trade (July 2021) and Preferential Trade Agreement (March 2022).

Second, the development of interaction in the transport and logistics sector. Pakistan is a key partner of Uzbekistan in improving regional connectivity, with plans to build the shortest route to transport cargo from Central Asia through Afghanistan to the seaports (Karachi, Qasem and Gwadar) in Pakistan. In this context, the implementation of the “Mazar-i-Sharif-Kabul-Peshawar” railway project will help not only enhance trade, economic and investment cooperation, but also strengthen connectivity between Central and South Asia. A number of international structures, in particular the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the European Investment Bank, the Islamic Development Bank, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and others have expressed their support for putting this project into practice.

The Trans-Afghan transport corridor along this route could cut freight deliveries to seaports from 35 to 3-5 days, which will drastically improve foreign trade conditions of Uzbekistan and Central Asia and open for Pakistan the shortest transport corridor to our region and further to the countries of Eurasia. Moreover, the transportation price of a 20-pound container will be reduced by almost 3 times. It is estimated that in early years when “Mazar-i-Sharif-Kabul-Peshawar” railway is implemented, cargo transportation volume via this route will amount around 10 million tons. Thus, the Trans-Afghan corridor will open a new and shortest path to the larger South Asian markets for Central Asia countries. According to expert assessments, huge opportunities for economic cooperation with South Asia have been appeared owing to high macroeconomic figures and dynamism of this region. Nowadays, the region’s contribution to global growth composes 15%. The figure can be risen to more than 30% by 2040.

South Asia can become a new locomotive of the global economy by maintaining the outpacing growth dynamics. The realization of the trans-Afghan corridor will help diversify Central Asia’s cargo flows. It would also permit the countries of the region to exploit both routes, directing to the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean. On the one hand, Central Asian states already use existing corridors, leading to the ports of Chabahar and Bandar Abbas along with routes to Karachi and Gwadar ports. Tashkent and Islamabad are making efforts to organize road transportation through Afghan territory. In November 2021, the first truck caravan delivered cargo from Uzbekistan to Pakistan in 48 hours. The route can be 80% shorter and 38% cheaper than others, which will make it possible to launch regular multimodal cargo transportation through the Uzbekistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan corridor in the future.



Pakistan’s business and expert circles have also noted a great interest in the development of air cargo and passenger transportation from Pakistan to Uzbekistan and through Uzbek air ports to the CIS countries and Europe. It is proposed to establish air flights between the cities of the two countries, especially to Tashkent and historical centers of the country, which will stimulate contacts between business circles, tourism and strengthening of transport and transit potential of the two countries. **Third, the active development of security partnership.** The sides emphasize their readiness to maintain a regular dialogue and constructive cooperation in this sphere. The Secretary of Uzbekistan’s Security Council V.Makhmudov visited Pakistan in November 2021, and the first meeting of the newly created bilateral joint security commission was

held. The parties cooperate within SCO’s Regional Antiterrorist Structure (RATS) on combating terrorism, separatism and extremism, and illicit drug trafficking. An important part of bilateral dialogue in the field of security and interaction on regional issues will remain the promotion of stabilization in Afghanistan, the involvement of this country in regional trade and economic ties and large infrastructure projects. The serious political transition has been taken place in Afghanistan after the Taliban’s power capture. The political situation in Afghanistan has also led to the transformation of the geopolitical reality in Central and South Asia, which requires a new acknowledgment, an elaboration of appropriate political and diplomatic approaches based on bilateral and multilateral mechanisms of interaction. Taking into a

consideration the Afghanistan’s strategic importance for Central and South Asia’s security and sustainable development as well as for regional connectivity enhancement, it seems important to unite Uzbek-Pakistani efforts in promoting the political stability in Afghanistan. **Fourth, strengthening and increasing cultural and humanitarian ties.** Cultural, spiritual and religious closeness between Uzbekistan and Pakistan is traditionally regarded as an effective source of strengthening friendship, trust, mutual understanding and respect for each other’s interests. Cooperation in this area contributes to the mutual enrichment and culture exchange, the creation of a common cultural and humanitarian space. The interconnected cultural and civilizational heritage of the two countries, the proximity of languages, cultural, religious traditions and spiritual

values constitute a solid foundation for the development of interaction in culture, education, science, tourism, medicine and other fields.

Our forefathers - the great statesmen, scientists and thinkers such as Zahir ad-Din Muhammad Babur and Alisher Navoi, Muhammad Iqbal and Mirza Golib, Abu Rayhan Beruni and Abu Ali ibn Sino - are honored in both Uzbekistan and Pakistan.

Our shared historical and cultural heritage can be used to foster interaction among academics, joint research, cultural diplomacy and stimulate tourist exchange, especially pilgrimage (ziyosat) tourism. Uzbekistan is among the top ten destinations of "pilgrimage tourism" among the member countries of the Islamic Cooperation Organization, and Pakistan is the second country in the world in terms of the Muslim population. In Uzbekistan, favorable conditions have been created for evolving "ziyosat tourism" industry and infrastructure due to the large-scale national reforms carried out in the recent years. Uzbekistan is among the top ten countries in the world in terms of the number of historical holy places. Such great scientists of the Muslim world as Imam al-Bukhari, Imam



at-Termiziy, Imam Maturidi, Baha-ud-Din Naqshband, Mahmud Zamakhshari, Abu Ali Ibn Sino, Beruniy, Al-Farabi and others lived and did researches in our holy land. Holy places of worship associated with their lives and activities play a core role in the development of pilgrimage tourism. The relevant authorities of two countries are working on necessary measures to develop tourism, including the resumption of direct flights and facilitation of visa pro-

cedures. Additionally, an Uzbek Tourism Center was founded in Islamabad in 2019. Consequently, one of the leaders of the "Naqshbandiya" movement was appointed as an Ambassador Ziyosat Tourism of Uzbekistan to Pakistan in 2020.

Another important area of cooperation is education, the intensification of contacts between universities, research institutes, libraries and museums of Uzbekistan and Pakistan. The trend of increasing the interest of Pakistani youth in getting an education in Uzbekistan is noteworthy. Today, more than 1,200 Pakistani students study in Uzbekistan, mostly in medical universities. Both in our country and in the best universities of Pakistan it is possible to train much more students of our countries in demanded specialties in manufacturing and business (modern technology, finance, commercial law, etc.), as well as to study the Uzbek and Urdu language.

In general, dynamism of multifaceted Uzbek-Pakistani cooperation meets the interests of both countries, that is mutually beneficial. The sides should continue to deepen the political dialogue, identify ways to strengthen mutually beneficial cooperation, reach new important agreements on further activation of the Uzbek-Pakistani relations.

The anticipated regular exchanges at the high and supreme levels will contribute to strengthening friendly ties and mutual trust, enhancing strategic partnership, and will also open up new horizons for productive bilateral cooperation.

Daniyar Kurbanov
Director, Center for International Relations Studies

Alisher Kadyrov
Head of Department,
Institute For Strategic And Regional Studies

Foreign trade Uzbekistan - Pakistan

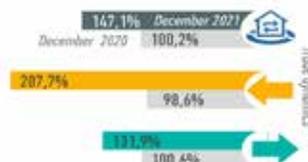
January - December 2021

The share of Uzbekistan in the total trade turnover with the world

0,8%
in export

0,4%
in foreign trade

0,2%
in import



Trade structure (mln. USD)

	import	export
49% Food, drinks, tobacco	26,50	62,93
2% Non-food raw materials (except fuel)	0,02	3,29
0% Fuels, lubricating oils, analogous products	0,00	0,02
12% Chemical substances	20,19	0,71
33% Industrial goods	0,80	59,20
1% Cars and equipment	0,78	0,49
1% Final goods	2,44	0,00
2% Services	0,79	3,33

Based on the data of the State Statistics Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan

CERR

ЭКОНОМИЧЕСКОЕ СОЮЗПЕННЕ

SCO Summit: yet another feather in Uzbekistan's cap



Exclusive interview of
Ambassador of Uzbekistan
Oybek Usmanov to Centreline

Ambassador of Uzbekistan
Oybek Usmanov gave an
exclusive interview to
Centreline, Daily Islamabad
POST and DNA News Agency.
The Ambassador talked
in detail about the SCO
summit, bilateral relations
and regional as well as
international issues. Here are
excerpts from his interview.

Shams Abbasi

SCO's role in regional integration

Ambassador of Uzbekistan to Pakistan, Oybek Arif Usmanov said that the Shanghai Cooperation Organization had a significant role in economic and trade integration between the member countries. He said this year, Uzbekistan took over the chairmanship of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), which had a lot of challenges ahead of it.

As the chair of the Organization, Uzbekistan will host the Annual Summit 2022 of the SCO Heads of State Council on September 15-16 in Samarkand. Economic and trade relations among the SCO members are very important, which will lead to economic and trade integration among these countries, he said. In the upcoming conference, the member states will discuss very important topics related with transit trade and commercial cooperation.

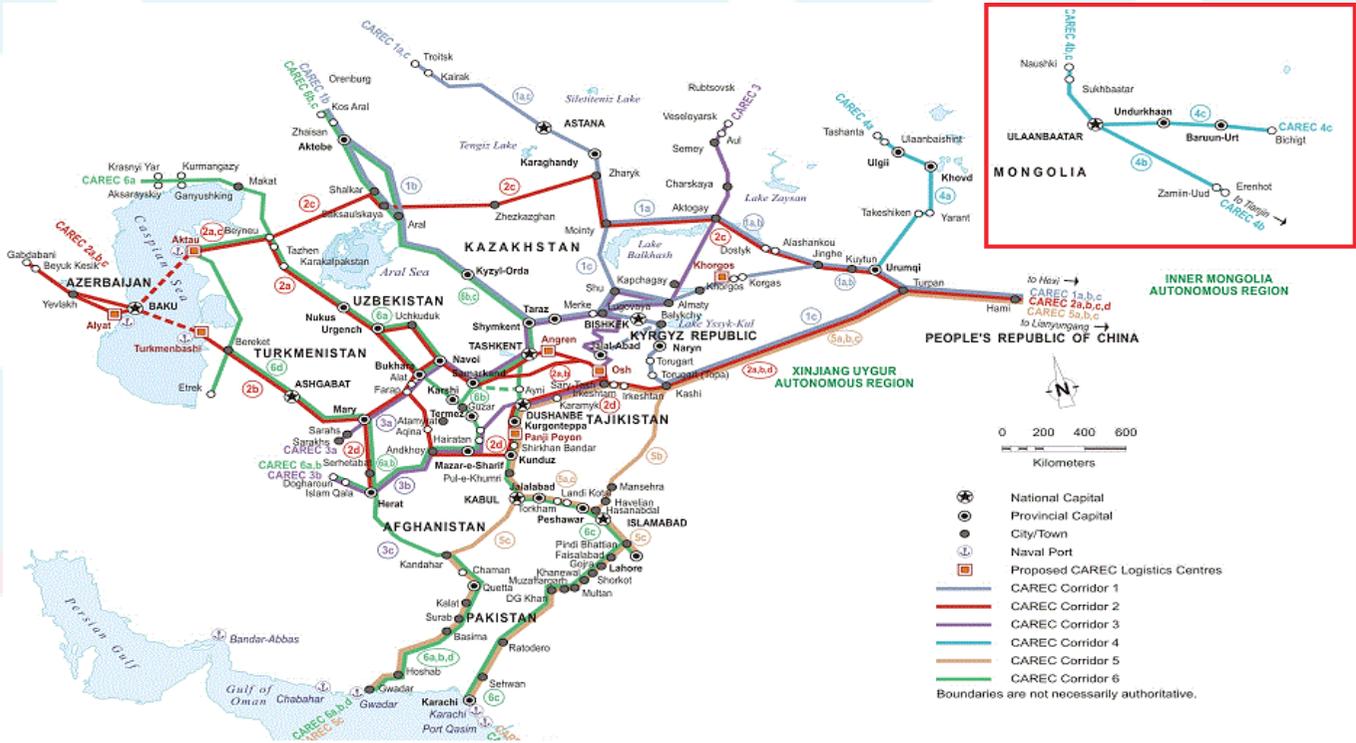
The member countries will also talk about establishing industrial zones and in this regard, the first industrial zone of SCO countries will be established in Samarkand region, Uzbekistan. For the first time, discussions on the promotion of digital transformation and poverty reduction in the SCO space will be available to the member countries to benefit from the experiences of one another. The eradication of poverty and economic development will be the main focus of this conference, which will provide an opportunity for mutual cooperation and dialogue to the member states. The Uzbek Ambassador said that Pakistan and Uzbekistan have a very important role to play in providing trade and economic integration to the SCO member states, which will usher in a new era of economic integration in all member countries. The SCO member countries could play a key role in global and regional economic and trade integration in the current scenario. The SCO has important member states in terms of geo-economic and geopolitical position, including developed countries, which can play an important role in the development of global and regional economies through this organizational platform. Information technology and renewable energy would be the major topics at the SCO Summit this year which would help in reshaping trade and economic relations between the member countries. There will also be sessions on telemedicine at the Summit this year, which has led to the introduction of many facets in the medical field after Covid-19, which could open up new avenues for economic cooperation between the member states. He said that at the same time, member states were likely to sign agreements on renewable energy. According to the Ambassador, the leadership of the SCO countries, including the Central Asian countries, was now fully committed to the economic and trade integration of the member countries and increase in bilateral trade and economic activities. The logistics and transportation sector is of utmost importance in this regard which needs to be strengthened.



Ambassador Usmanov noted that facilities and road and rail links were very important in bilateral and transit trade which would increase economic activities in SCO countries. The implementation of the Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) between Pakistan and Uzbekistan was going on and bilateral trade would develop through it. The negotiations would be held every year to review the PTA between the two countries to make it more productive for both sides. The two countries used to have online discussions in this regard, in which the process of discussion on tariff rationalization continues. He emphasized that at this time mutual trade barriers and customs issues were major issues in both countries and the sides were working on a mechanism for resolving these issues. A transit trade agreement had been signed between Pakistan and Uzbekistan last year in July, which had a very important role in promoting mutual trade. Related to this, the transport and logistics sector was also important in which the governments of the two countries were in negotiations for improvement. Rail and road con-

nectivity was a pivot for regional trade and economic integration in our region. The women empowerment is a major issue which will be discussed by the member countries and future strategy will be worked out on it. The sea routes need to be opened for trade and at present a trade agreement has been signed between Pakistan and Uzbekistan through Karachi and Gwadar ports. In this regard a connectivity terminal will be built in the city of Termez in Uzbekistan, which will connect Pakistan with Central Asian countries including Eurasian and European and maritime markets. The SCO member countries need to be connected to the Iranian ports of Chabahar and Bandar Abbas in order to be commercially and economically connected to the markets of the Middle East and other ASIAN countries. "We need a new economic dimension and paradigm shift to increase our bilateral and transit trade," stressed Ambassador. Similarly, new drivers of economic growth, including technology, information technology and e-commerce, need to be

adopted, he added. There is a strong hope that regional trade and economic relations at the multilateral level will increase. Apart from agreements between Pakistan and Uzbekistan at the national level, consideration is now being given to enhancing bilateral economic and trade relations between the provinces and major cities. In which agreements have been reached between the province of Punjab of Pakistan and the Namangan region of Uzbekistan. Similarly, the sides are working on agreements between the Pakistani cities of Lahore and Peshawar and the Uzbek cities of Samarkand and Termez to increase economic cooperation. Uzbekistan is committed to economic connectivity, development and regional prosperity, which will lead to harmony and peace in the region. It requires a joint strategy and efforts from SCO member states. **Pak-Uzbekistan to increase bilateral trade up to US\$1 billion** Pakistan and Uzbekistan intend to increase the bilateral trade volume up to US\$1 billion in the coming two years. The current bilateral trade between the two



trade facilities to the traders of the three countries. The governments of both the countries are implementing a comprehensive plan for the increase of mutual trade in the two countries and for the promotion of mutual trade in the future. Which This plan includes working on rail and road network for regional economic and trade integration and connecting the countries of the region including China, Central Asia and South Asian countries in terms of trade and promoting economic relations with SCO countries. Ambassador Oybek Arif Usmanov said that road and rail links are very important for the promotion of mutual

trade between the Central Asian states, especially Uzbekistan, China, Pakistan and Afghanistan, and this work has been started. The another important project – China, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan railway line is also realizing between the sides. This railway line should be connected to Termez – Peshawar railway line, which will establish economic and trade relations with the countries of the region, including China, a major economic power. The role of the third party Afghanistan will be very important in any kind of mutual trade agreement between Pakistan and Uzbekistan and enough work has been done in the three countries.

countries is \$180 million, which is expected to reach \$1 billion by the mid-2024. On March 28, 2022, a tripartite transport and logistics conference was held in Uzbekistan in which the transport and communication ministers of Uzbekistan, Pakistan and Afghanistan participated and many problems were resolved through mutual discussions. In this conference, Uzbekistan announced the functioning of International Temez Cargo Center, which will provide benefits and



“Uzbekistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan” railway project is a factor of well-being of the peoples of the region



IN modern conditions, it is of particular importance to combine the efforts of Uzbekistan and Pakistan in order to accelerate the integration of the region into the system of international transport corridors, as well as to connecting the largest international markets through the “Great Silk Road”. The absence of transit railways in Afghanistan hinders the potential development of the country in the export of transport services between the regions of South and Southeast Asia with other regions through Central Asia. According to UN experts, thanks to the effective transport cooperation of Afghanistan with other countries, regional GDP can grow at least twice in 10 years. Speaking about the integration of the countries of the region

into the international transportation system, including by sea, it should be noted that this positive process is hindered by a number of factors. First of all, there is a lack of a unified vision and approaches regarding the development of transport communication, both at the regional and interregional levels, the removal of barriers, the improvement of the transport infrastructure of the states of the region, the formation of promising transport corridors. The Central Asian States attach great importance to the development of regional transport corridors in both the North-South and West-East directions. The existing transport corridors have great potential for development, however, there are shorter ways to form more optimal corridors connecting South and Southeast

Asia with other countries in the region. In this regard, the creation of a new alternative transport corridor in this direction is an urgent task for the countries of our region.

Afghanistan has an important place in the long-term development of regional transport corridors, which can and should become a link between the countries of Central and South Asia.

Today in Afghanistan has railways:
- from the border of Uzbekistan to Mazari-Sharif station – 75 km;
- from the border of Iran to Razonak station – 65 km;
- from the border of Turkmenistan to Akina stations – 6 km and Turgundi station – 6 km.

The **first 75 km** of the railway was built in 2011. Over the entire period of operation, more than **25 million tons** of cargo have been transported along the Haira-



ton – Mazar-i-Sharif route. The following tasks have been carried out over the past period: - in 2018, an interstate Working Group and a project office were established to coordinate the construction of the “Termez – Mazar-i-Sharif – Kabul – Peshawar” railway; - in order to train Afghan specialists-engineers in the operation and maintenance of railways, an **Educational Center was established in Termez** in 2018, which is funded by the Republic of Uzbekistan; - February 16-18, 2021, negotiations were held with representatives of the international financial institutes (World Bank, Asian Development Bank, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, Islamic Development Bank, Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, European Investment Bank) on the construction of the railway. All participants supported the relevance of the route; - July 27 – August 8, 2022, a field expedition was conducted on the territory of Afghanistan along the entire route of the railway; - work is underway to create orthophotoplanes and a digital relief model with the financing of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The deadline for completion

of the development is September 2022. - work is underway to form a preliminary feasibility study of the project. The completion date is the end of 2022. The specialists of Uzbekistan, Afghanistan and Pakistan have already conducted a preliminary study of the “Termez – Kabul – Peshawar” railway construction project, prepared calculations and proposals for the route, which have undeniable advantages when compared with other available options. **First of all**, the new railway will connect **10 settlements** of Uzbekistan, Afghanistan and Pakistan and will become the main transport and logistics highway for the region. **Secondly**, in the direction of the new railway line, projects of high-voltage power transmission lines “Surkhan – Puli-Khumri” and “CASA-1000” are being implemented. Parallel construction and availability of power transmission lines will save significant financial resources during the construction and further operation of the electrified railway. Electric traction in high-altitude areas has huge advantages over diesel traction. **Thirdly**, the length of the proposed railway from Mazar-i-Sharif to Peshawar is estimated

to be 760 km with a gauge of 1,520 mm and a transition to a gauge of 1,676 mm on the Afghan-Pakistani border. According to calculations, it is planned to build **785 km** of power supply lines, **790 km** of communication lines, **33** railway stations, **187 km** of station tracks, **1212** new artificial structures, including **3** tunnels, **336** bridges and overpasses, **107** crossings. The estimated cost of the project will be about **\$4.6 billion**, the expected duration of the project is **5 years**. The planned “Termez–Mazar-i-Sharif–Kabul–Peshawar” railway will be a logical continuation of the “Khairaton – Mazar-i-Sharif” railway, which will form new and shortest transit corridors with access to the Pakistani and Indian railways, as well as to the ports of the Arabian Sea (Gwadar, Karachi/Qasim, Mumbai, etc.). The “Termez–Mazar-i-Sharif–Kabul–Peshawar” railway construction project creates advantages for all countries of the region. By creating a unified railway infrastructure of the CIS countries with the countries of South Asia (Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Bangladesh), this project allows for faster transportation



of goods through the ports of Pakistan without additional costs, connecting the largest markets of Southeast Asia with the markets of the CIS countries, China and Europe. Along with this, dozens of mineral deposits located in the central part of Afghanistan are being involved in economic turnover, more than **5 million** new jobs are being created and new professions, including those related to the operation of railway transport are being formed, up to **15 million residents** of the region will become beneficiaries of the project. In general, the implementation of the Trans-Afghan railway project will reduce the time and cost of cargo transportation **by 30-40 per cent**. Estimated traffic volumes can **grow up to 3 million tons**.

Further transportation will be carried out on the existing highways of South Asia, which significantly increases the efficiency of the project.

The importance and effectiveness of this project can significantly increase if it is implemented synchronously with the "Uzbekistan-Kyrgyzstan-China" railway construction project, which connects China with Uzbekistan and other Central Asian countries in the shortest way (433 km). This will significantly increase the volume of transportation due to cargo from China to the countries of Central and South Asia and back.

In addition, the construction of this railway will provide additional opportunities for our neighbors - Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, as well as the countries of the Caucasus, which are connected by a single railway network. There is a large untapped potential for increasing trade turnover between our countries, and today one of the main factors constraining its growth is the lack of effective transport corridors. First of all, it is expected to determine the sources, types and formats of financing and the customer for the development of the feasibility study project. Next, the development of working documentation and the passage of expertise, after which the construction of the railway will begin. In order to increase the efficiency of the entire transport network of the region, we propose to jointly implement the "Uzbekistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan" railway construction project with the participation of international financial institutions and the business community of all countries. Uzbek railway workers, taking into account their experience in Afghanistan, are ready to build this section quickly and efficiently.

Culture

Bazaar – the great table



BAZAAR is the mirror of any country's life. A nation's wealth is demonstrated in a bazaar. Eastern Bazaar is a center of social life, the focus of an entire people wealth, which demonstrates the authority of the nation. Here is a tale: *A young prince was going to have a journey to faraway countries and asked his mentor: - What should I pay attention to during the journey to know the people and their country deeper? - Wherever you go, pay attention to three aspects of that country, - said the mentor. First, watch the graveyard, then bazaar, then people's mutual attitude and courtesy. When you visit the graveyard, you will know how the people regard their ancestors and own values. Then, if you walk in a bazaar, you will notice their welfare, lifestyle and mood. If you watch mutual courtesy and respect - you will know people's upbringing and mutual caring. In fact, any country can be evaluated by its bazaar's wealth and cleanliness. Upon a walk through the bazaar, a foreign guest will make a conclusion: "Yes, this nation lives well!" It is not a secret that if people in any country are hardworking and industrious, their land is fertile, water is clean and abundant, climate conditions are favorable, there is always the wealth, abundance and welfare. Eastern bazaar is coopting bright colors of gifts of the generous Uzbek land, its gardens, fertile fields, and the abundance of bazaars gives the sense of pride in the soul.*

From curative greens of spring to remarkable gifts of summer and autumn – all these fill the bazaar with unforgettable local color. Foreign tourists admire diversity of fresh and fruits and vegetables of Uzbekistan, skillful manufacture of Uzbek fabrics and products, colorfulness of clothes.

Philosopher Maqsd Shaikhzoda in his poem “Toshkent-noma” hymns a city bazaar:

There is no place like Tashkent with *Its bazaars, which are not closed seven days a week, I could tell you about its delicious bread confectionaries, raisins or about its palov, fruits and koumiss (fermented mare’s milk)?*

The foreigners and guests of Uzbekistan describe the bazaars of Uzbekistan as “a great and luxurious table for the dear guests!”

Best quotes of great thinkers about the Uzbek bazaars

“I appointed traders and heads of caravans in every country and region, so that wherever they go – to Khotan, China, India, Egypt, Syria, Rome, Algeria or France, they would bring delicate fabrics and deserving gifts from there. Let them bring information about living conditions and lifestyle of people living in those countries. Let them understand and know their ruler’s attitude and treatment to his citizens in every country.

... A trader, who is in a bad financial position, shall receive enough gold from the treasury to restore his financial situation. If one of peasants cannot afford to do peasantry any longer, he must be given necessary grains and tools for growing crops.

Amir Temur

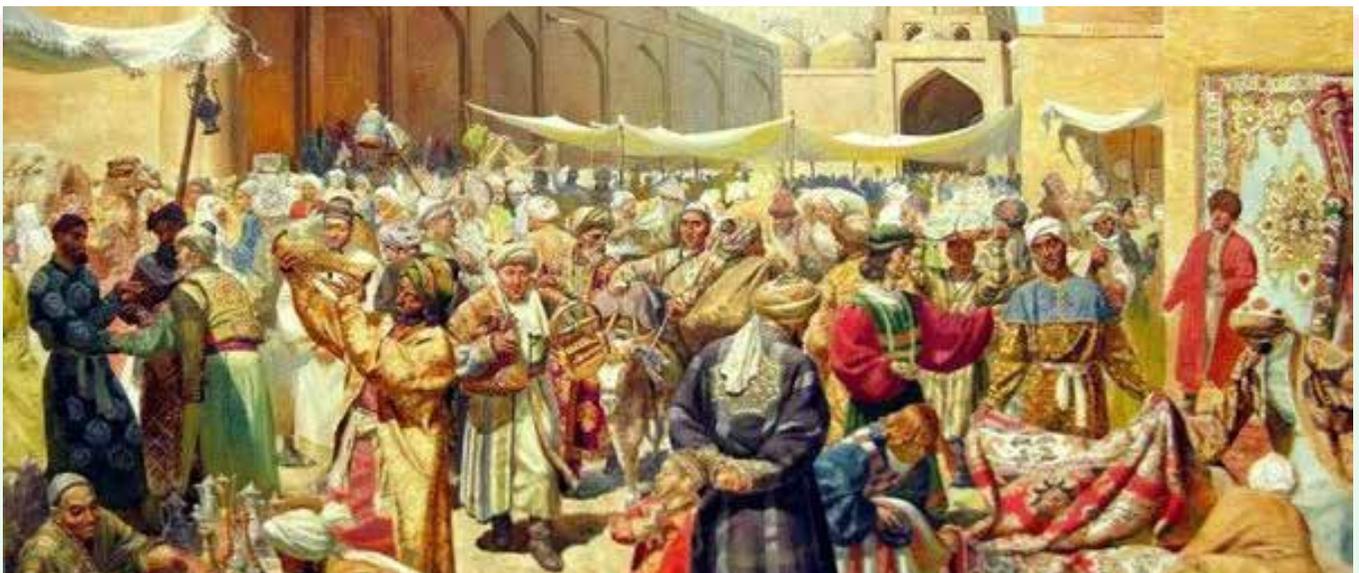
“Rasat toqi (row) is the center of bazaars of Samarkand. There are twice as many streets, bazaars and rows connected to Rasat toqi as gardens and castles. There is no yard, no street without a garden. Even if you climb the castle wall, you won’t be able to see the city (i.e. buildings) because everything is surrounded by gardens. Majority of bazaars are in the row, most of trade also occurs there,



and there are few trading people inside the city. This city is the place where all the roads of Maverannah join and merchants gather. All the wealth and products grown and manufactured in Maverannah, first gather in Samarkand, then disperse to other countries from here.”

Al- Istakhri
10th-century travel-author
and geographer

“...Khorezm has turned into a flourishing beautiful region. I went there in the year of 616 (Gregorian 1219-20). Nowhere else I have seen such a crowded



and thriving country, all the crops were taken care of, villages located in a line, lots of separate yards and gardens, there are castles in the desert as well. In villages it is hard to find a spot not taken care of. There are lots of green trees, especially mulberries, because they (population) are in need of building wood, and mulberry leaves are food for silkworm. You cannot differentiate a person passing a village from a person walking through bazaar... Almost all cities of Khorezm have shops and stores, bazaars rich in goods, villages without their own bazaars are very rare."

Yaqut al-Hamawi
Muslim scholar and writer, traveler, historian and geographer

"The city of Bukhara, being particularly looked after, has seven gates (Bobi Nur, Bobi Fufro, Bob al-Holib, Bob al-Kohandiz, Bob bani Sud, Bob bani Asad, Bob al-Madina), and inside there is Sultan's palace (Shahriston). The main mosque, in the city center, has several yards, all of them clean...



Expensive goods are sold in the city's Bazaars; roads go in three directions from ravot (bazaar)... There is no such crowded and prosperous city on this continent... There the best foods, remarkable bath-houses, wide streets, clean water and handsome buildings are ready for humans..."

Al-Muqaddasi,
10th-century historian

"I bade farewell to Sultan Tormashirin and went to Samarkand. It is one of

the very big and exceptionally beautiful cities. It is located on the coast of Vodiy al-Kassarini (probably Zarafshan river); to irrigate gardens watermills deliver water from the river to the up. Population of the city gathers after evening prayer and goes to the riverside to have a walk and enjoy. There sitting dais and shops are ready for them, fruit and other dishes are traded. Such great palaces and buildings tower above the river shore; they witness that population of Samarkand





possesses great skills. This country is rich in grains, fruit, poultry and various sorts of meat – virtually everything. Sheep have large lards, very big. There are sheep with heavy lard of twenty pounds weight, which can be hardly to be raised. Such large-larded sheep were so plentiful and cheap that at times when the ruler's army gathered in Samarkand, a couple of such sheep cost one ducat. Other goods were also so cheap that one and a half fanega of millet cost half a real. Bread and water are free, and rice is

abundant everywhere. There was surprising plentifulness in Samarkand and surrounding lands as well. Due to this wealth, the city is called Samarkand. This name means Simeskent, that is "rich village". There are suppositions that the name of Samarkand originated with this word. Wealth of a city is not only in abundance and cheapness of food products. There were lots of fabrics like atlas, velvet, sendal and tersenal, cloths made of fur and silk, cosmetics, perfume, herbs and seasonings,

golden and blue dyes and other things. The ruler strived much to augment glory of the city: if he conquered and subordinated a country, he brought people from there and located them in Samarkand and its suburbs. At numerous Samarkand bazaars one can find fresh or cooked meat, tidily baked bread, various fruit are sold. These bazaars and squares are crowded day and night, trade goes on without a break."

Ibn Battuta, prominent Moroccan traveler of the 14th century





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Uzbek cuisines



Cold Dish

Rolled Belly (for 5-6 person)

1 belly (beef or mutton), 2 kg beef (fillet), 4 carrots, 2 garlic cloves, greens, black pepper, salt and spices to taste.

Clean and wash belly from both sides then keep it in salt water with black paper for 30 minutes. Peel the outer layer with the knife. Strew meat with spices. Cut carrots, garlic, greens, add salt and roll the belly. String round rolled belly with the thread and put into a boiler filled with cold water. Boil for 4-5 hours. After boiling, take it out and cool. Cut, put on dishes, decorate with green onion and serve it.

Cold Dish

Cold pumpkin (for 5-6 person)

600 g pumpkin, 100 g sugar, 100 g sour cream, salt to taste.

Clean the pumpkin, cut to pieces and boil them. Boiled pumpkins strew with sugar and pour sour cream over.

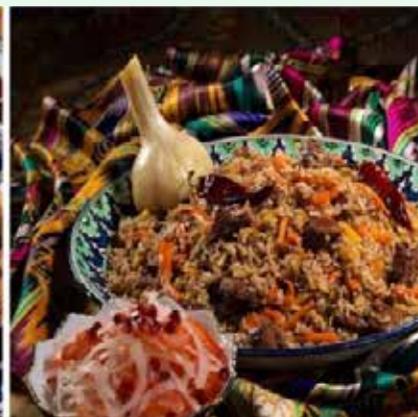


Salad

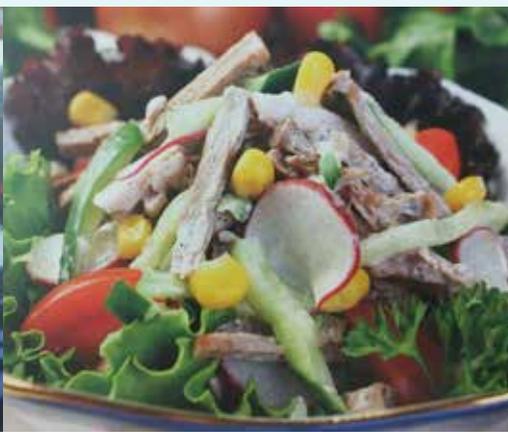
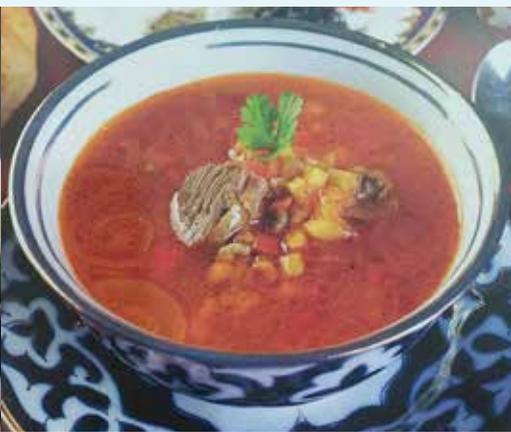
Salad "Tashkent" (for 5-6 person)

250 g cold boiled beef or mutton, 400 g green radish or red radish, 80g onion, 30 g vegetable oil, 250 g cream or mayonnaise, 3 eggs, 30 g greens (dill, coriander)

Put washed, peeled and sliced radish in cold salt water for 0.5-1 minutes. Fry onion in oil till becomes golden. Cool it and mix with sliced meat, radish, cream or mayonnaise, salt, pepper. Put it on a dish in the form of pile. Decorate sides of the salad with boiled and cut to four pieces egg and two thin layers of meat. Decorate surface of the salad with little flowers or radish cut in the form of fir.



“ Cut fat fillet and ribs to pieces, add salt, cumin - to taste and marinate. Put meat into the slightly preheated boiler with fat side down ”



First Course Meal

Salad

Farinaceous Meal

Samarkand moshova

(for 5-6 person)

600 g mutton or beef, 200 g onion, 100 g carrot, 100 g mutton fat, 300 g moong dal, 100 g fat tail, 100 g haricot bean, 100 g wheat flour, 2 l water, 100 ml sour milk, salt and spices - to taste.

Cut meat to 10-15 gr. pieces and fry. Fry sliced onion with fat-tail cracklings before getting yellow. Add cut to blocks carrot and fry 10-15 minutes more. Pour water and bring to a boil. Then add sorted and washed moong dal, haricot beans and boil until it is half done. Add mixture of flour sauteing diluted with water, add salt and boil until it is done. Serve moshova in dishes with sour milk and greens.

Salad "Uzbekistan"

(for 5-6 person)

150 g boiled beef, 150 g boiled turkey, 150 g tomato, 150 g cucumber, 150 g red radish, 150 g boiled corns, 240 ml cream, 60 g greens, salt and black pepper - to taste.

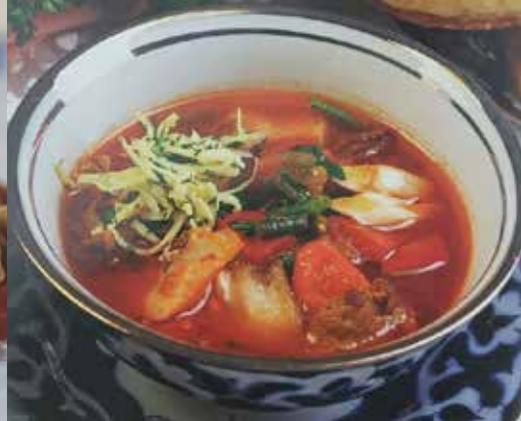
Cut the beef, turkey, tomato, cucumber and radish into sticks. Add salt, black pepper, greens, cream to the boiled corns and mix. Put it on a plate. Decorate the salad with greens and flowers made of radish.

Patyr

1 kg wheat flour, 100 g lamb fat, 12 g east, salt to taste.

Add some yeast in flour, pour melted lamb fat in and water and make dough. Leave the dough for one hour. Then divide it in parts and form balls. Roll out the dough thinner than for cooking of Oby non. Cut sides of bread with sharp knife and make ornament by "chakich" (special equipment). Then spread the bread with melted lamb fat and bake in tandyr.





Farinaceous Meal

Samsa with fat-tail (for 5-6 person)

250 g wheat flour, 100 ml water, 450 g flesh of lamb or beef, 100 g fat-tail, 100 g margarine, 250 g onion, cumin, salt and black pepper to taste. Make stiff dough and leave for 20-30 minutes. Roll out a thin layer, spread with melted fat, roll up and leave for 30-40 minutes. Cut dough to 10-15 pieces and roll out circles from each piece. Edges of it must be rolled out thinner than the middle. Put minced meat in the middle and form triangle samsa, spread with whipped egg. Bake in oven or tandyr at high temperature. For stuffing: mince meat and cut onion mixed with cut to small pieces fat-tail, salt and spices.

Confectionery

Dried apricot with walnuts (for 5-6 person)

500 g dried apricot, 500 g walnuts, 100 g white chocolate. Rinse dried apricots with boiled water and dry. Put half of the walnut on soft dried apricot and decorate with white chocolate.



First Course Meal

Manpar (for 5-6 person)

80 g beef or mutton (flesh), 40 g onion, 120 g wheat flour, 60 g water, 20 ml vegetable oil, 85 g tomato or 20 g tomato-paste, 20 g sweet bell pepper, 10 g garlic, 1 egg, salt and black pepper to taste. Make dough of flour, water and salt, place it for proving. Roll dough into thin logs, flatten and tear off small pieces of dough. Boil it in salted water. Rinse boiled dough with cold water. **For sauce:** Cut meat to blocks and fry it in heated oil. Slice onion to semi-rings, add tomato or tomato-paste and fry it. Then put small cut garlic, bell pepper and fry them for 30 minutes. Add salt and spices to taste. Fry egg in oil. Put boiled dough in kasas, add sauce, garnished with fried egg and strew greens.

Second Course Meal

Meat Skewer – Shashlyk

Shashlyk is a very popular meal in a region stretching from Central Asia to Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean. It is usually made from mutton or beef; alternating pieces of meat and fat are well spiced and marinated. It is served with pickled onions. It can be ordered as an add on to the main national dishes or separately as a side dish. In many cafes, you can also get chicken, chicken wings or assorted shashlyks, prepared just like at barbecues over hot coals. Shashlyk or meat skewers



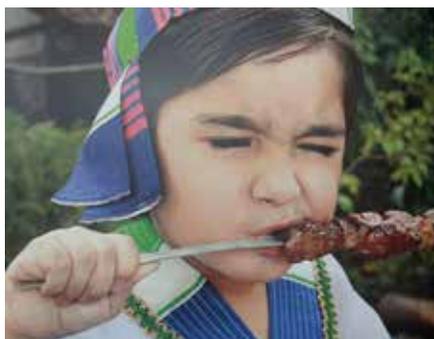


Second Course Meal

Fried sheep ribs

(for 5-6 person)

500 g sheep ribs, 200 ml vegetable oil, 20 g onion, salt and black pepper to taste. Divide sheep ribs into small pieces. Add salt, black pepper to taste and marinate it for 3 hours. Stir-fry sheep ribs in oil. Slice onion to rings. Put sheep ribs with fried potatoes on a plate, decorate it with cut onion and serve up.



Confectionery

Kokand khalva

(for 1 kg)

300 g sugar, 500 g dry milk, 150 g butter, 100 g peanuts, 2 g vanillin.

Boil and cool sugar syrup. Add butter, dry milk, vanillin and mix up. Boil mass on a slow fire until thick consistency and cream color. Low the fire. Put peeled peanuts or other kind of nuts and mix up. Place the mass into special dish greased with oil. Thickness of mass layer in a dish must be about 2-2.5 cm. Put it in cool place for hardening. Cut khalva to rhombus.

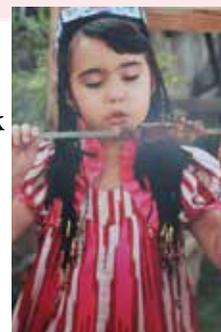
Second Course Meals

Minced kebab of beef

(for 5-6 person)

600 g beef, 150 g fat-tail, 80 g onion, black pepper, cumin, salt to taste.

Mince beef for two times in meat grinder, cut fat-tail to pieces. Add cut fat tail, black pepper, sliced onion, salt and mix up. Prepared stuffing put in a cool place for 2-3 hours. Then form sausages from it and thread on four skewers and cook on live coals. Serve kebab in lyagans with sliced onion sprinkled with vinegar.



Second Course Meal

Qozon kabob - kebab, preparing in kazan

(for 5-6 person)

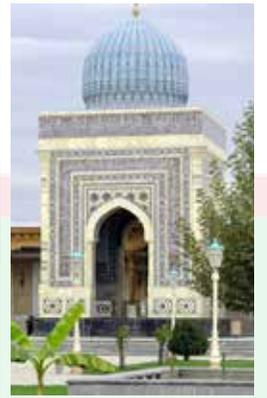
700 g mutton, 500 g potato, salt and cumin to taste. Cut fat fillet and ribs to pieces, add salt, cumin - to taste and marinate. Put meat into the slightly preheated boiler with fat side down. After fat melting turn the meat over. Cut potato to several pieces and put on the meat. Strew salt and cumin. Fry it for 10-15 minutes. Then stew on slow fire for 40-45 minutes. Serve the ready meal in a lyagan (large flat round dish).



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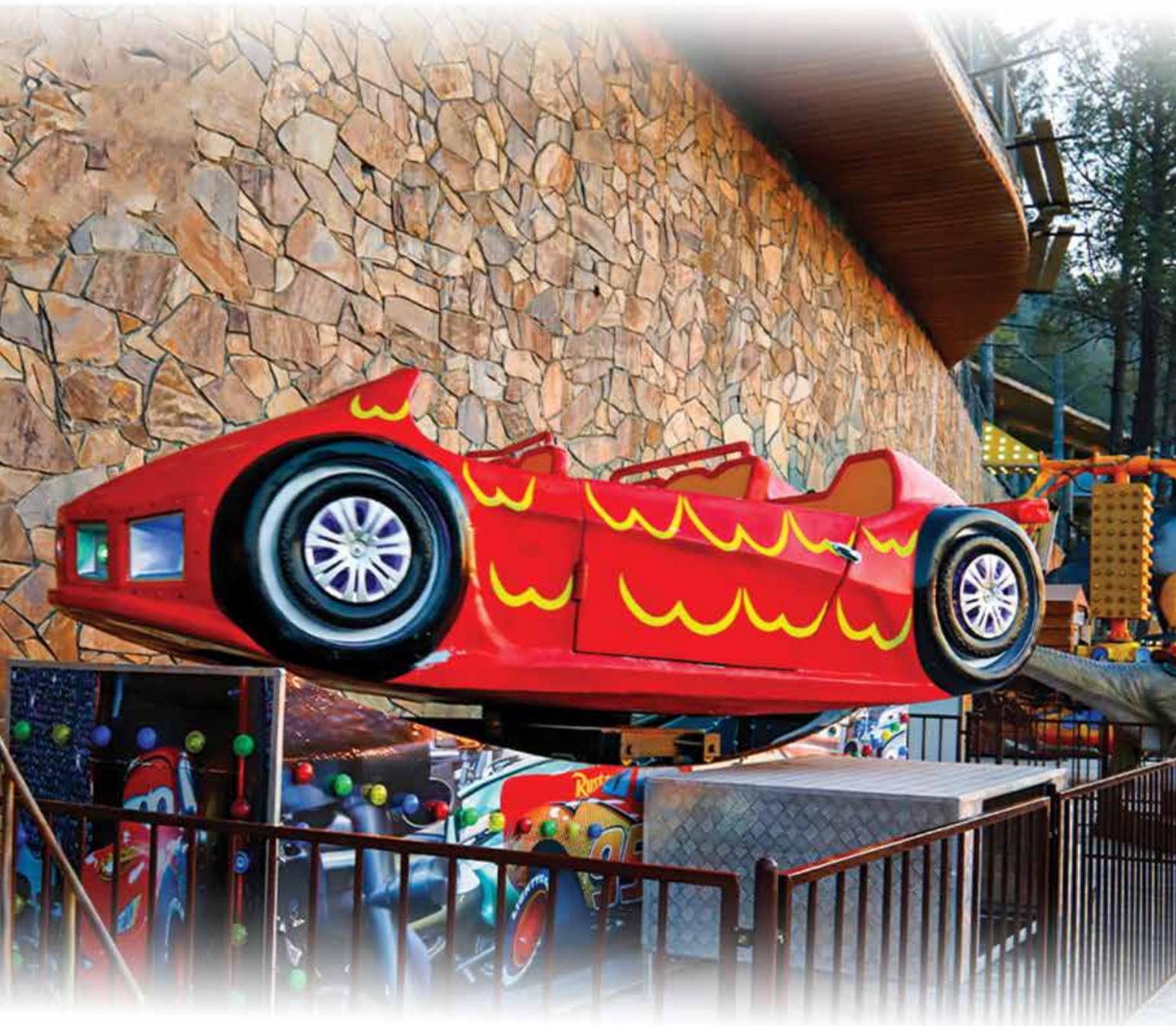
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