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UZBEKISTAN

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CENTRAL ASIA ON THE
verge of a new era

CENTRAL ASIA ON THE VERGE OF A NEW ERA



BY
Shavkat Mirziyoyev,
President of the Republic
of Uzbekistan

Central Asia is entering a new, historically significant stage of its development. Today we are shifting to a real unity. For the first time in many years an atmosphere of trust, good neighborliness and mutual respect is being formed in the region, becoming a foundation for joint movement forward.

This process is not spontaneous, but is the result of targeted work and the political will of countries' leaders who have recognized their shared destiny and the potential for joint development. At the same time, its successful progress is evidence of the widespread demand for regional cooperation, supported by the people of Central Asia.

We see that the conditions have been created at the state level to advance our cooperation to a new stage of regional consolidation. We face a strategic task of translating the agreements reached into concrete results and benefits for citizens and businesses. Central Asia must become a unified space of opportunity, where decisions are made not for the sake of documents, but to ensure sustainable development and improve the daily lives of people in the region.

A vivid symbol of the current changes is Consultative meetings of the Heads of state of Central Asia, which transformed into an effective mechanism of regional cooperation and trust-based dialogue in a relatively short historic period. They became the main platform for developing shared approaches to strategic issues, concerning the present and future of Central Asia.

The upcoming summit in Tashkent will mark a new significant milestone in the Central Asian process – our joint creation of a stable, interconnected and prospering Central Asia.

The Tashkent meeting of the heads of state, as a result of the journey we have started, should confirm the commitment of our countries to the spirit of mutual understanding and partnership, and become a turning point in deepening regional cooperation.

The major transformation of the world order, threats to the fragmentation of the global economy and worsening problems of the climate change, food and energy security, have exacerbated our aspiration to consolidation.

All this requires even more unity and coordinated actions from the countries of Central Asia. This is why the strengthening of our cooperation today isn't just a political goal, but a strategic necessity. Central Asia became a zone of stability and creation, an example of how wide regional interconnectedness serves as a strong foundation for sustainable development and security.

A turning point in the history of regional cooperation was 2017, when the Consultative meetings format was initiated. For the first time in many years, the region's leaders began a systematic and regular

dialogue without external mediation. This became a symbol of a new political mindset – trusting, open, and based on a recognition of common interests. It was thanks to the dialogue within the Consultative meetings that a number of long-standing contradictions were resolved and a transition from mistrust to genuine cooperation was achieved.

One of the most important achievements of the new stage of regional cooperation is the final settlement of border issues. What recently seemed impossible has now become a reality. The borders that once divided us have become bridges of friendship and cooperation. The signing of the Treaty on the Junction of the Borders of the three states and the Khujand Declaration between Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan in March 2025 is of historic significance. This event can rightfully be called epoch-making.

For the first time in the history of the region's independence, the entire perimeter of mutual borders was legally formalized, settling an issue that had been a source of tension for decades.

The Fergana Peace Forum, held in October, was a clear demonstration of our countries' mutual commitment to strengthening peace and harmony in the Fergana Valley and a reflection of the development processes taking place in Central Asia.

The water and energy sphere, which used to be a reason of sharp disagreements and conflicts, is also witnessing principal positive changes. The vivid confirmation of brotherly cooperation is an agreement between Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan on joint implementation of the project for Kambarata hydropower plant-1, which is opening a new page in joint usage of the region's water and energy resources.

An example of a rational compromise is an agreement between Tashkent and Bishkek on the joint use of Chashma spring.

Cooperation on the construction of Yavan and Fandarya hydropower plant on the Zarafshan river with participation of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan is advancing, agreements are reached between Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kazakhstan on the coordinated operations of the Bakhri Tochik reservoir in the vegetation period.

An agreement on the rational use of the Amudarya river's water resources was reached with Turkmenistan under an intergovernmental agreement. This will improve joint water resource management while reducing the risk of environmental problems.

All of this fosters a new spirit of partnership based on trust, mutual benefit, and a fair approach to shared resources. Such projects create new opportunities to support economic activity and strengthen the region's energy security.

At the same time, significant changes are taking place in border procedures and humanitarian contacts.

Since September 2023, citizens of Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan have been able to move freely across the border using ID cards, marking an important step toward establishing a free movement zone. Similar agreements are being developed with Kazakhstan and Tajikistan. Ties between regions are expanding, cross-border trade is growing, and humanitarian and cultural contacts are strengthening.

Equally significant are steps towards institutionalizing cooperation. The fifth Consultative meeting, held in Dushanbe in 2023, was crucial in this context.

It was decided to establish the Council of National Coordinators as a permanent mechanism for preparing and implementing agreements between heads of state. The launch of this mechanism made the format more systematic and ensured continuity in the implementation of joint initiatives. Inter-parliamentary dialogue and regular meetings at the level of Security Council Secretaries were also established.

The further strengthening of the legal and contractual framework was facilitated by the signing, following the Cholpon-Ata meeting of leaders in 2022, of the Treaty on friendship, good neighborliness and cooperation for the development of Central Asia in the XXI century, which enshrined the principles of sovereign equality, mutual support and shared responsibility for the future of the region. In 2025, Tajikistan joined this document, marking an important step toward strengthening regional unity. We welcome this decision and expect that in the near future, all countries of the region will complete the signing of the Treaty, which will finally consolidate the spirit of mutual trust, good-neighborliness and strategic partnership in Central Asia.

In 2022 the heads of state also approved a Concept on cooperation of Central Asia states in the framework of multilateral formats, setting a framework for coordination between the countries of the region in international platforms, including “Central Asia plus” formats.

An important program document became a Concept for the development of regional cooperation “Central Asia – 2040”, adopted in 2024 at the summit in Astana. It defined long-term cooperation priorities aimed at ensuring regional security and development of our countries.

By building such an architecture of multifaceted cooperation, we have unlocked tremendous sources of growth.

A new economic reality of the region is being formed through the efforts of the states. In the past eight years the aggregate GDP of the Central Asian countries increased by almost two and a half times, reaching \$520 billion, and the volume of external trade increased more than two times – up to \$253 billion. At the same time the mutual trade between the countries of the region doubled, reaching about \$11 billion, and the mutual investments increased by 5,6 times. Talking about the context of our country, then the trade turnover of

Uzbekistan with the region’s states increased by three times – from \$2,4 billion in 2016 to \$7,2 billion in 2024, and the number of joint enterprises exceeded 1800.

In industry, Central Asia is demonstrating steady growth of approximately 6% per year, twice the global average. This success is due to the development of new forms of industrial cooperation – the establishment of joint investment funds (including Uzbek-Kyrgyz, Uzbek-Tajik, and Kazakh-Kyrgyz) and the implementation of projects in the automotive, electrical engineering, textile, and agricultural sectors. The Action Plan for the development of industrial cooperation for 2025–2027, approved by the countries of the region, is becoming an important tool for cooperation. Border trade zones and international industrial cooperation centers are actively developing, facilitating the growth of small and medium-sized businesses.

In the humanitarian sphere, strong contacts are being developed between the people. A Dialogue of the women-leaders of Central Asia and a Platform of the region’s youth were established, since 2022 Forum of the rectors and scientists are being held, mutual Years of culture, exhibitions, concerts and sports events became regular.

Most importantly, our brotherly peoples are feeling all the positive changes taking place in their daily lives. The opening of new border checkpoints and the launch of air, rail and bus routes have significantly increased mutual travel and expanded cultural and humanitarian ties. The share of intraregional tourism in the total tourism flows of the region’s countries has exceeded 80%.

What only recently seemed like a dream – freedom of movement, mutual respect, a sense of closeness and trust – is now becoming a reality.

What can be called a new regional identity for Central Asia is gradually emerging. It is based on the recognition of existing differences and, at the same time, on a profound awareness of the historical affinities, common culture, and interdependence of the destinies of our people. A sense of belonging to a unified regional space is emerging, where proximity is not a challenge but an opportunity, where the success of one becomes a shared achievement.

It is precisely this new spirit of trust, mutual understanding, and a shared future that today serves as the main pillar for further strengthening regional consolidation – the launch of the Central Asian process of jointly building a sustainably interconnected and prosperous Central Asia.

Moreover, it’s necessary to note that each state of Central Asia is greatly contributing to ensuring stability and prosperity of our region, directing efforts at developing economy, strengthening trust and expanding regional cooperation.

Kazakhstan is actively developing transport corridors, modernizing border checkpoints, removing trade barriers and implementing projects for cultural and humanitarian exchange. Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are consistently cooperating on the issues related to glaciers melting, implementing projects on modernizing energy systems and developing transport interconnectedness. Turkmenistan puts forward important initiatives on strengthening peace and trust, expanding transport and transit potential of the region, adopting UN program on the Aral Sea basin and climate technologies.

Our practical steps, responsibility for the future and commitment to the principles of good neighborliness, friendship and mutual benefit convincingly proved: New Central Asia is choosing a path of peace, sustainable development and creative partnership. Figuratively speaking, we are not building walls – we are building bridges.

Thanks to progress in regional consolidation, Central Asia has now established itself as an independent and responsible participant in international relations, with a clear vision of its interests and development paths.

The "Central Asia Plus" cooperation formats reflect the region's increased international legal status and recognition of its role as an important center of sustainability and development.

If before the cooperation with external partners was predominantly built on a bilateral basis, today leading states and world associations are developing relations with Central Asia as a cohesive regional partner.

This brings the region's cooperation with other players to a new level: when Central Asia speaks to external partners as a single actor in international relations, its voice becomes louder and more confident. Our position becomes stronger, enabling us to more effectively attract investment and strengthen cooperation with other countries in all areas.

Our openness, predictability and commitment to dialogue have become the foundation for a new perception of Central Asia on the international stage.

Currently there are over ten "Central Asia plus" formats, connecting Central Asia to the leading countries and blocs of the world. Only this year summits "Central Asia – European Union", "Central Asia – China", "Central Asia – Russia", "Central Asia – U.S." were held, confirming the growing dynamics and strategic meaning of the region in global politics.

More and more "Central Asia Plus" dialogues are reaching the head of state level, demonstrating their growing practical significance and political weight.

Working groups and secretariats are being established in a number of formats to develop specific projects in energy, transport, the green economy, and digitalization.

Strengthening regional resilience is impossible without addressing issues related to Afghanistan. This country is not a periphery, but a natural part of our shared region. The sustainability of peace and stability throughout Central Asia depends largely on the reconstruction and development of Afghanistan.

The long-suffering people of Afghanistan continue to live in a deep humanitarian crisis. In this regard, countries in the region recognize the need for Afghanistan's consistent engagement in regional and international processes, which will contribute to the country's development and strengthen stability in our vast region.

Of key importance is the construction of the Trans-Afghan Railway, which is intended to become a link between Central and South Asia. The implementation of this project will create new opportunities for trade, investment, and transport connectivity, and will serve as the foundation for Afghanistan's economic revival.

Alongside this, efforts continue to provide humanitarian and educational support to the Afghan people, develop energy cooperation, and train specialists for key economic sectors.

Afghanistan must become a part of the common space of peace and security, cooperation and development, which reflects the interests of all countries of the region and facilitates the formation of a stable belt of security along the southern borders of Central Asia.

As noted above, today Central Asia is entering a new phase of its dynamic development. We are transitioning from solving bilateral issues to the joint development of solutions to key regional challenges – climate change, energy transition, ensuring water and food security, developing digital technologies. New horizons of cooperation are opening before our countries, based on shared responsibility, mutual trust and agreed vision of the future.

In this regard, a collective answer is required to a fundamental question: how will Central Asia develop in the nearest decades?

The population of Central Asia is already over 80 million people, and according to UN estimates will exceed 100 million by 2050. Central Asia is also one of the youngest regions in the world, where average age of the population is only 29 years.

We are facing a task to transform this demographic resource to a powerful factor of progress and innovation, create conditions for developing talents and opportunities of our youth.

It is important to emphasize our countries' balanced approach, which is that cooperation must develop on a solid foundation of sovereignty, equality, and non-interference in internal affairs. No one should impose foreign models on the countries of the region or create supranational structures.

Cooperation in Central Asia must remain voluntary, pragmatic, and focused on tangible results that benefit the people of our countries.

At this stage, we are faced with key challenges, the solution to which will determine the sustainability and dynamic development of the region.

First, it is necessary to continue deepening of regional cooperation – strengthen the existing mechanisms giving them sustainability and practical content. Ultimately, it's impossible to ensure systemic cooperation development and quality implementation of the joint decisions without effective regional institutions.

Second, in the sphere of security our objective is to form a common potential of countering challenges and threats. We should continue regular meetings of the Security Council secretaries, heads of special services, defense and law-enforcement bodies. The principle of the “indivisibility of security” must remain fundamental. At the same time, regional cooperation should harmoniously integrate with existing international mechanisms, while building its own capacity to strengthen stability and counter a wide range of security threats to the countries and the region as a whole.

Third, in the economic sphere it's significant to develop intra-regional trade, simplify procedures for crossing borders and create favorable conditions for mutual investments. It is necessary to actively promote industrial cooperation, form regional and inter-regional supply chains, develop cross-border trade zones, expand the network of transport and economic corridors, promote joint projects in the sphere of transport, energy, agriculture and digital economy.

Special attention must be paid to the ecological dimension of cooperation – adapting to climate change, joint efforts on preserving transboundary water resources and biological diversity, transitioning to green energy and low-carbon technologies.

Central Asia is able and must become the region of sustainable ecological development and an example of responsible attitude to the environment.

Fourth, priority area is humanitarian cooperation. The main objective is human capital development, strengthening of educational, scientific and cultural ties. Forming a common information space, improving the quality of education, healthcare and overall development of the social sphere, including tourism and joint youth programs – all this directly f

acilitates the strengthening of mutual understanding among the nations. Particular importance is attached to the formation of a regional identity based on shared values, cultural affinity, and a common pursuit of prosperity.

Fifth, development of consolidated approaches of Central Asian countries in external politics remains an important area. In the context of increasing geopolitical turbulence and intensifying competition among global centers of power, coordinating the positions of the region's states on the international stage becomes a key factor in ensuring stability and protecting common interests. On this basis, it is necessary to continue developing the “Central Asia Plus” formats, which have proven effective in establishing pragmatic ties with key partners.

At this stage, the strategic objective is to develop regional coordination and develop agreed-upon priorities and positions on cooperation with external partners in the "Central Asia Plus" format and other international forums. Only this way can we fill our interactions with leading countries and global associations with concrete projects that promote economic and technological growth and the sustainability of our countries and the entire region.

For Uzbekistan, developing regional cooperation is not a tactical choice, but a conscious strategic approach stemming from an understanding of our shared responsibility for the future of Central Asia.

We are convinced that in an era of global uncertainty, good-neighborliness, cohesion, and mutual support are Central Asia's most valuable assets. Shared security challenges and development objectives, which individual countries might struggle to address alone, can be successfully tackled through joint efforts. Strengthening trust and partnership serves the interests of millions of people whose future is bound to peace, stability, and the development of our common homeland – Central Asia.

Today, we are laying a solid foundation for a New Central Asia – a strong, stable, and prosperous region.

The processes unfolding in our region reflect a conscious and irreversible choice. This path demands not only joint efforts but also a readiness to assume responsibility for our shared future.

By joining our strengths and opportunities, we are addressing common challenges, and offering the international community our time and life-tested model of peaceful and constructive cooperation – a model grounded in trust, good-neighborliness and mutual support.

Now, more than ever, it is crucial to preserve this historic momentum, strengthening what will make Central Asia a unified space of peace, well-being and prosperity for all nations and people living in our vast region.



THE PRESIDENT OF UZBEKISTAN CALLS FOR FURTHER EXPANSION OF PARTNERSHIP WITHIN THE “C5+1” FRAMEWORK

The event, chaired by the President of the United States Donald Trump, was also attended by President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, President of Kyrgyzstan Sadyr Japarov, President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon, and President of Turkmenistan Serdar Berdimuhamedov.

The President of Uzbekistan expressed appreciation to the President of the United States for organizing the “C5+1” summit, which over the past 10 years since its establishment has become an effective mechanism for developing regional trade, transport and energy connections. It was emphasized that the current summit marks a new stage in the development of strategic dialogue between Central Asia and the United States.

To further expand cooperation within the “C5+1” framework, the Head of our state proposed a number of initiatives.

Primarily, it was suggested to establish a permanently functioning Secretariat, which would be hosted on a rotational basis among the participating countries.

The importance of creating a ministerial-level Coordinating council on investment and trade was highlighted to ensure a systematic dialogue between government institutions, companies and financial institutions. The launch of the “Central Asian Investment Partnership” Fund was also noted to be relevant.

The President of Uzbekistan also expressed readiness for active collaboration with the United States in implementing major transport, communication and energy projects connecting Central Asia with the South Caucasus and Europe.

It was proposed to establish a Special Committee to effectively coordinate efforts in the field of exploration, extraction, and deep processing of critical minerals, as well as the promotion of finished products in global supply chains.

In order to modernize agriculture in the region with the introduction of American technologies, the creation of a Regional partnership for agricultural technology innovation was initiated.

To strengthen humanitarian ties, the President of Uzbekistan advocated for the organization of a joint exhibition of the cultural heritage of Central Asian countries in leading American museums.

The Head of our state proposed to hold the next summit in the city of



*On November 6, President of
the Republic of Uzbekistan
Shavkat Mirziyoyev,
participated in the summit of
Central Asia and the United
States leaders in the “C5+1”
format, held at the White
House – the official residence of
the President of the United
States in Washington, D.C.*

Samarkand. Other leaders also spoke at the event. Following the summit, a number of multilateral documents were adopted.

High-level meetings in

WASHINGTON

focus on economic,
political, and
strategic

cooperation

**New stage of
partnership marked
by the signing of
strategic documents**



**A defining meeting
shaping the future
of Uzbekistan–U.S.
relations**

The high-level engagements in Washington demonstrated Uzbekistan's evolving role on the global stage and its commitment to building broader international partnerships.

During the visit, the President held meetings with senior U.S. government officials, lawmakers, and representatives of major American institutions. Discussions focused on expanding cooperation in key areas, including trade and investment, renewable energy, digital technologies, security cooperation, education, and cultural exchange. Both sides reaffirmed their shared commitment to regional stability, economic connectivity, and long-term development across Central and South Asia.

ks also emphasized Uzbekistan's ambitious reform agenda and ongoing efforts to modernize its economy, improve governance, and create a more attractive environment for foreign investors. U.S. officials welcomed these reforms and expressed readiness to support initiatives aimed at economic diversification, private-sector development, and sustainable growth.

In addition to political meetings, the visit included interactions with American business leaders and think tanks. Uzbek and U.S. companies explored opportunities for joint ventures in sectors such as agriculture, energy, tourism, logistics, and technology. The discussions highlighted Uzbekistan's growing potential as a regional hub for trade, investment, and innovation.

Cultural diplomacy also played a notable role in the visit. Delegations underscored the importance of people-to-people contacts, academic partnerships, and exchange programs to strengthen mutual understanding between the two nations. Uzbekistan's rich history, heritage, and reform-driven development model were showcased to American audiences, reinforcing the country's rising global profile.

The President's visit to the United States marks a defining moment in Uzbekistan-USA relations, opening new avenues for collaboration and reinforcing shared priorities. As both nations continue to deepen dialogue and expand cooperation, the visit sets the foundation for a stronger, more dynamic partnership in the years ahead.



President of Uzbekistan puts forward a number of vital initiatives on further expanding practical cooperation in the framework of UNESCO



On October 30, the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, took part in the opening ceremony of the 43rd session of the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), held in the city of Samarkand.

The Head of State warmly welcomed the participants of the forum to the hospitable Uzbek land — the crossroads of cultures and civilizations. He expressed deep gratitude to President of Serbia Aleksandar Vučić, President of Slovakia Peter Pellegrini, UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay,

heads of foreign governments, representatives of international and regional organizations, and all delegations for their participation in the conference.

At the beginning of his address, the President emphasized that this session is being held outside UNESCO Headquarters in Paris for the first time in the past 40 years.

- Holding of such a representative forum in Samarkand is regarded as a manifestation of the high trust of the member states of the Organization in the large-scale and accelerated reforms being carried out.

in the New Uzbekistan, - stated the Head of State.

The leader of Uzbekistan noted that over its 80 years of activity, UNESCO has become a highly respected global institution that promotes international cooperation in the fields of education, science, culture, and information, as well as the strengthening of trust and solidarity

In this context, the growing role of UNESCO in preserving the national identity of peoples, their cultural heritage, and fostering close dialogue among different religions, was emphasized.

- It is deeply symbolic that our forum is being held in Samarkand – a city that has entered human history as a center of humanistic ideas, invaluable knowledge, and intercivilizational dialogue, - stated the President.

The Head of State recalled the great legacy of Samarkand as a cradle of science, literature, and culture. In particular, he mentioned the observatory of Mirzo Ulugbek, where the famous star table was compiled, that later became the foundation for the discoveries of Copernicus and Kepler. The President invited guests to immerse themselves in the atmosphere of Samarkand – the pearl of the Great Silk Road, a land of peace and friendship among peoples.

It was noted that geopolitical tensions and armed conflicts are causing damage to unique monuments and cultural heritage, the widening gap in access to knowledge and digital technologies exacerbates global inequality.

The leader of Uzbekistan stressed that under such challenging conditions, strengthening solidarity in order to fulfill UNESCO's main objectives takes on special importance. Uzbekistan once again reaffirmed its commitment to the noble goals of the Organization and its readiness to serve as a bridge between East and West, North and South, providing an open platform for constructive cooperation.

Today, our country is implementing a five-year cooperation program with UNESCO till 2027. Within its framework, large-scale events were held to commemorate the anniversaries of great thinkers and figures such as Abu Rayhan Beruniy, Ahmad Fergani, Amir Temur, Ali Kushchi, Kamoliddin Behzod, as well as significant dates of scientific institutions such as the Mamun Academy of Khorezm, and literary monuments including the epic Alpomish.



To the World Heritage cities of Khiva, Bukhara, Shakhrisabz and Samarkand, new sites have been added along the Zarafshan–Karakum Corridor. The natural areas of the Western Tien Shan and the Turan Deserts reflect the region's unique biodiversity.

The President recalled that around twenty elements of Uzbekistan's intangible heritage have been recognized by UNESCO – among them Shashmaqom, Katta Ashula, the Lazgi dance, the art of Askiya, miniature painting, the Navruz holiday, and the traditions of atlas and adras weaving. Under the auspices of the Organization, festivals such as Sharq Taronalari, as well as those dedicated to maqom art, bakhshi, folk crafts, and ethnosport, are held.

Particular attention was given to the resolutions initiated by Uzbekistan, including “The Khiva Process: Promoting International Cooperation in Central Asia,” “The Tashkent Declaration on Early Childhood Care and Education,” and “The Tashkent Declaration on Access to Information”.

UNESCO Chairs and associated schools are operating in the country, while Tashkent and Fergana have been included in the Global network of learning cities. Hundreds of cultural heritage sites have also been restored based on modern technologies and international standards.

The President announced that, within the framework of the Samarkand conference, a number of additional events are taking place: the Biennale of contemporary art in Bukhara,

opening of the Regional Center for the Development of Early Childhood Education in Tashkent, awarding ceremony for the UNESCO–Uzbekistan International Prize named after Abu Rayhan Beruniy, as well as a conference on the application of artificial intelligence in the museum field.

Uzbekistan will also join the Global Convention on the recognition of qualifications concerning higher education.

Next, the leader of our country put forward a number of proposals and initiatives aimed at developing key areas of UNESCO's work.

The development of inclusive education and the use of artificial intelligence technologies were declared an absolute priority. The President proposed the creation of a UNESCO Platform for the Development of Inclusive Education for children with special needs and called for a World Summit on Vocational Education. Uzbekistan is ready to implement the pilot project “Artificial Intelligence – School” and organize an International Forum of Experts on AI Ethics under the auspices of UNESCO.

The leader of Uzbekistan also emphasized the importance of preserving intangible cultural heritage. Interest was expressed in advancing the UNESCO Memory of the World Program, established to protect and ensure access to unique heritage objects, such as oral traditions, manuscripts, archives, valuable historical documents and cultural records.

An initiative was put forward to declare November 19 as International Documentary Heritage Day and to establish an International Institute of Digital Heritage within UNESCO's structure.

The Head of State proposed holding an International Congress on Crafts and Folk Arts in Bukhara in 2027 within the framework of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network.

To promote gender equality and develop women's leadership skills, the President advocated for the establishment of a UNESCO Academy for Women's Leadership and the organization of a Global Forum of Women in Education,

Culture, and Science in Samarkand, with the participation of renowned researchers, artists, educators, and innovators from all continents.

A relevant issue highlighted was the need for effective joint action to address the climate crisis.

The Head of State emphasized the negative impact of climate change on cultural heritage and proposed the establishment of an international initiative, “UNESCO Eco-Capital”, as well as the development of a UNESCO Executive Board resolution on preserving cultural heritage in the context of globalization and climate change. Uzbekistan expressed its readiness to host an international symposium on this topic in Khiva.

Among other priorities, the need to counter the spread of misinformation in the digital space, protect public opinion, and combat discrimination, was emphasized. The President proposed organizing an International festival of children's cultural content and developing a Comprehensive UNESCO strategy for media literacy development.

The Head of State also stressed the importance of strengthening interfaith harmony, combating radicalism and Islamophobia, and promoting Islamic culture and enlightenment worldwide, stating: It is important to widely promote such universal values as tolerance, mutual understanding, and concord”.

He proposed to actively leverage the potential of unique projects in Uzbekistan — the Center of Islamic Civilization and the research centers of Imam Bukhari, Imam Maturidi, Imam Termizi, and Bahauddin Naqshband.

Concluding his address, the President of Uzbekistan expressed confidence that the forum would become an important step in establishing new areas of cooperation, strengthening mutual trust, fostering global partnerships and



“promoting sustainable development. It was noted that the “Spirit of Samarkand” grounded in the enduring traditions and values of UNESCO, will inspire further collaboration for the sake of shared progress. In closing, the leader of our country wished the conference participants a successful and productive session, emphasizing the symbolic significance of holding the forum in Samarkand – a city representing peace, friendship, and mutual understanding among peoples, which underscores Uzbekistan’s high international standing and its contribution to



advancing the dialogue of civilizations, strengthening mutual understanding and preserving humanity’s cultural heritage.

At the conclusion of the opening ceremony, a concert was held, prepared by both domestic and international masters of the arts. The stage featured the finest examples of Uzbek classical music and world musical heritage, performed by a symphony orchestra, a choral ensemble, and a national folk ensemble.



KEY ASPECTS OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT BETWEEN

UZBEKISTAN AND SERBIA



Newsletter Uzbekistan

The development of international tourism has become an important tool not only for economic growth but also for strengthening cultural ties between nations. In this context, cooperation between the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Republic of Serbia in the field of tourism is gaining increasing relevance. Although bilateral relations in this area are still at an early stage, there is a steady growth of interest from both governmental institutions and tourists themselves.

The growing number of Serbian tourists visiting Uzbekistan confirms the rising interest in Central Asia as a travel destination. According to statistical data, the number of tourists visiting Uzbekistan increases by an average of 30% annually. This growth is attributed not only to higher awareness but also to liberalization measures—particularly the introduction of a visa-free regime for Serbian citizens in 2019. Both countries possess rich cultural and historical heritage, making them attractive to a wide range of tourists. Serbia boasts a well-developed tourism infrastructure, with cities such as

Belgrade, Novi Sad, Niš, Kragujevac, and Subotica, as well as the natural region of Zlatibor, holding particular appeal. Belgrade is known as a cultural and nightlife hub, Novi Sad is famous for its festivals, and Niš is one of the oldest cities in Europe. Meanwhile, Uzbekistan offers a unique immersion into the atmosphere of the Great Silk Road, with cities like Samarkand, Bukhara, and Khiva preserving architectural masterpieces of the Islamic world.

Tourism is also a significant contributor to Serbia's economy: in 2018, tourism revenues reached USD 1.941 billion, and in 2019 — USD 2 billion. In 2017, the tourism sector accounted for 7.7% of the country's GDP and employed over 32,000 people. These figures highlight Serbia's high potential as a tourism partner.

Special attention can be given to the development of educational tourism. In recent years, there has been a growing number of students and young Special attention can be given to the development of educational tourism. In recent years, there has been a growing number of

students and young professionals interested in academic exchange opportunities between universities in the two countries. This direction could become an additional driver for youth tourism and a means of strengthening intercultural dialogue.

Furthermore, the promotion of eco-tourism and sustainable tourism is becoming increasingly relevant. Uzbekistan offers unique desert and mountain landscapes, while Serbia is home to national parks and ecological trails. Joint projects in this area could attract tourists interested in nature, ethnography, and traditional lifestyles.

The development of tourism between Uzbekistan and Serbia opens wide horizons for economic and cultural cooperation. Given the mutual desire to strengthen ties and the progress already achieved, this area clearly holds great promise. In the coming years, tourism cooperation could become one of the most vivid examples of mutually beneficial partnership between the two friendly nations.

Uzbekistan and Qatar set course for strengthening tourism ties

In recent years, Uzbekistan and Qatar have been deepening their cooperation in the field of tourism, transforming mutual interest into tangible joint projects. Tourism has become more than an economic sector — it serves as a bridge between cultures, offering the peoples of both countries an opportunity to discover each other's rich history, spiritual traditions, and modern identity.

The foundation of this partnership lies in the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the two governments in 2010. This document marked the first step toward a structured dialogue, and the following years have shown both sides' readiness to enrich their cooperation with concrete initiatives.

Step by step, collaboration in the tourism field has taken on a more sustainable character, reaching a qualitatively new level in 2025. One of the key decisions was the introduction of a visa-free regime for Qatari citizens for stays of up to thirty days. This milestone has expanded tourism exchange and clearly demonstrated Uzbekistan's openness to visitors from the Persian Gulf.

Active cooperation in the field of tourism is maintained at a high level. In recent years, Uzbekistan has repeatedly showcased its potential at international venues in Doha, taking part in exhibitions, forums, and presentations. The country's national stands attract great interest from tourism professionals and the general public alike. They highlight everything Uzbekistan is renowned for — its ancient cities, UNESCO World Heritage sites, traditional crafts, cuisine, and the warm hospitality of its Eastern culture.

In 2025, a highlight of the bilateral calendar was the Uzbekistan–Qatar International Tourism Forum, held in Doha during the summer. The forum became an important platform for exchanging experience, building partnerships, and discussing joint projects in the tourism sector.

Representatives of tourism companies, airlines, and the hospitality industry from both countries discussed opportunities to promote travel routes, organize familiarization tours, and develop infrastructure. As a result, agreements were reached on several joint initiatives aimed at increasing tourist flows and enhancing Uzbekistan's visibility in the Qatari market.



Alongside business cooperation, image-building and cultural projects are also thriving. At the initiative of the Tourism Committee and the Embassy of Uzbekistan in Qatar, a large-scale media campaign was launched in Doha in 2025: videos about Uzbekistan were displayed on giant LED screens along the city's main streets.

Alongside business cooperation, image-building and cultural projects are also thriving. At the initiative of the Tourism Committee and the Embassy of Uzbekistan in Qatar, a large-scale media campaign was launched in Doha in 2025: videos about Uzbekistan were displayed on giant LED screens along the city's main streets.

The footage featured the majestic domes of Samarkand and Bukhara, mountain landscapes, vibrant bazaars, and modern Tashkent. This visual campaign became part of a broader strategy to promote the country's image and strengthen cultural ties between the two nations.

Uzbekistan's participation in major international exhibitions in Qatar continues to attract considerable attention. The national stands traditionally highlight tourism routes as well as initiatives in pilgrimage, gastronomic, and eco-tourism, alongside cultural heritage projects. Visitors note the country's unique combination of authenticity and modernity, which makes Uzbekistan stand out as a dynamic destination, one that can both surprise and inspire.

The Qatari audience increasingly views Uzbekistan as a new and appealing destination for travelers. This growing interest is

reinforced by ongoing efforts to promote the country through Arab media and digital platforms.

Cultural exchange also plays a vital role. The organization of thematic exhibitions, gastronomic festivals, and Uzbek Culture Weeks in Doha provides a strong foundation for humanitarian cooperation. These initiatives showcase Uzbekistan's tourism potential and foster mutual understanding and respect between the peoples of both nations.

A new model of cooperation is gradually emerging, in which tourism serves not merely as an economic driver but as a key instrument of people-to-people diplomacy. Through travel, joint projects, and exchanges of expertise, Uzbekistan and Qatar continue to discover each other's traditions, contemporary life, and future potential.

The growing tourism partnership between the two countries reflects a broader trend of Uzbekistan strengthening its ties with the countries of the Persian Gulf. Shared values of hospitality, a deep respect for cultural heritage, and a commitment to building bridges between Central Asia and the Arab world provide a solid foundation for long-term collaboration.

Uzbekistan and Qatar are not just developing tourism — they are creating a space of trust, exchange, and inspiration. This dialogue of cultures, which began with diplomatic agreements, is evolving into a living story of connection between people, traditions, and ideas, uniting the two nations and opening new horizons for future cooperation.

LEADERS OF CENTRAL ASIAN COUNTRIES AND AZERBAIJAN VISIT THE CENTER FOR ISLAMIC CIVILIZATION

*These sections provide a broad
overview of the rich scientific
and spiritual heritage of our
great ancestors – Imam Bukhari,
Imam Termez, Abu Mansur
Maturidi, Bahauddin
Naqshbandi*



central ASIA Azerbaijan

The Presidents of the Central Asian countries and Azerbaijan, who arrived in Uzbekistan to participate in the seventh Consultative Meeting of the Heads of State of the region, visited the Center for Islamic Civilization in the city of Tashkent.

Established at the initiative of our President, the Center became the first in our country's history, that brings together unique artifacts, scientific, educational, and research aspects dedicated to saving and popularization of the rich heritage of Islamic civilization.

The majestic complex harmoniously blends national architectural traditions with modern artistic solutions. Four monumental portals rise 34 meters high, a central dome, reaching 65 meters, crowns the structure.



The presidents of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, Kyrgyzstan Sadyr Japarov, and Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon, accompanied by President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, visited the Holy Quran Hall, where one of the greatest spiritual relics of the Islamic world, the Mushaf Usman, is kept. This unique copy, one of the oldest manuscripts of the Quran, has exceptional historical and cultural significance and is a testament to the deep spiritual traditions that have shaped the civilizational identity of the peoples of our region.

The presidents also got acquainted with the sections "Pre-Islamic Civilizations," "The Age of the First Renaissance," "The Age of the Second Renaissance," and "New Uzbekistan – New Renaissance."

These sections provide a broad overview of the rich scientific and spiritual heritage of our great ancestors – Imam Bukhari, Imam Termez, Abu Mansur Maturidi, Bahauddin Naqshbandi, and other outstanding thinkers. The exhibitions

also contain manuscripts relating to the Samanid, Karakhanid, Khorezm Shah, Timurid, and other dynasties, as well as their translations into Old Uzbek.

The leaders emphasized the importance of strengthening cultural and civilizational ties between the countries of the region, promoting educational projects, and forming common humanitarian values.

Uzbekistan's large-scale efforts to preserve and promote its rich common heritage were highly appreciated. Confidence was expressed that the Center will serve as a modern research hub, opening new horizons for scientific, educational, and cultural cooperation among the countries of the region.



DISCOVER
UZBEKISTAN

A PLACE WHERE
EVERY BITE TELLS
A STORY





Uzbekistan is a paradise for anyone who loves rich flavors, hearty meals, and the warmth of traditional hospitality. As the culinary heart of Central Asia, Uzbekistan offers dishes that reflect centuries of Silk Road history and the vibrant spirit of its people. From the world-famous Plov, cooked with fragrant rice, tender meat, and sweet carrots, to the delicate Manti dumplings and hand-

pulled Lagman noodles, every dish tells a story of culture and tradition.

Visitors can savor perfectly grilled Shashlik, enjoy crispy Samsa baked in clay ovens, or warm their hearts with a bowl of Shurpa, a comforting lamb and vegetable soup. Rich stews like Dimlama, festive treats like Sumalak, and sweet delights such as Navat make Uzbek

cuisine both diverse and unforgettable.

In Uzbekistan, food is more than a meal — it is a celebration of life, friendship, and heritage. Whether in a bustling bazaar or a traditional chaikhana (teahouse), every bite offers a taste of the country's soul. For travelers seeking authentic flavors and unforgettable experiences, Uzbekistan truly is a haven for food lovers.

UZBEKISTAN

BEST CULTURAL TOURISM
DESTINATION



Uzbekistan wins the
**Best Cultural Tourism
Destination**

award at the Global Tourism
Forum in Brussels.

Silk Road history
*world-famous
hospitality*

A milestone for
*Uzbekistan
tourism.*



UZBEKISTAN HONORED AS THE “BEST CULTURAL TOURISM DESTINATION” AT THE GLOBAL TOURISM FORUM IN BRUSSELS

Uzbekistan has achieved another remarkable milestone on the world stage, being recognized as the “Best Cultural Tourism Destination” at the prestigious Global Tourism Forum, held in Brussels, the capital of the Kingdom of Belgium. The award marks a significant acknowledgement of Uzbekistan’s growing reputation as one of the world’s most culturally rich, historically vibrant, and tourist-friendly nations.

A high-level delegation led by Mr. Umid Shadiev, Chairman of the Tourism Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan, participated in the forum, representing the country among leading global tourism experts, policymakers, industry leaders, and media organizations. The event served as a platform for Uzbekistan to showcase its unique cultural heritage, Silk Road history, architectural masterpieces, and ongoing reforms aimed at transforming the country into a dynamic and accessible tourism hub.

During the forum, Uzbekistan’s presentation highlighted its diverse tourism offerings—from the ancient cities of Samarkand, Bukhara, and Khiva to vibrant handicrafts, world-famous hospitality, and modern infrastructure designed to welcome travelers from across the globe. The country’s successful visa reforms, improved air connectivity, sustainable tourism initiatives, and digitalization efforts were also noted as key factors contributing to its rising global profile.

Accepting the award on behalf of Uzbekistan, Chairman Umid Shadiev emphasized the nation’s commitment to preserving its rich heritage while fostering innovation and tourism development. He underscored the importance of international collaboration and the government’s continued efforts to support cultural tourism as a driver of economic growth and people-to-people connections. The recognition in Brussels is a testament to Uzbekistan’s strategic vision under its national tourism development program. With investments in infrastructure, restoration of historical sites, promotion campaigns, and strengthened international partnerships, Uzbekistan is rapidly emerging as a premier destination for travelers seeking authenticity, culture, and history.

This achievement not only enhances Uzbekistan’s international standing but also opens new opportunities for cooperation with global tourism stakeholders. As the country continues to modernize its tourism landscape, the award serves as a proud milestone—and an inspiration to further elevate Uzbekistan as one of the world’s most captivating cultural destinations.



A TRANSFORMATIONAL VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF TOURISM IN UZBEKISTAN

By Newsletter Uzbekistan

In a landmark move that sets a bold new direction for the nation's tourism sector, **President Shavkat Mirziyoyev** has issued a comprehensive and forward-looking Presidential Decree aimed at strengthening Uzbekistan's global position as one of the most dynamic tourism destinations in the world. This decree introduces a series of systemic reforms that will modernize the sector, enhance visitor experience, and significantly expand the country's international presence.

A New Era of Tourism Development

The decree outlines the strategic transformation of tourism as a key pillar of Uzbekistan's economy. By 2030, the country aims to:

- Double the tourism sector's share in GDP from 3.5% to 7%
- Increase the number of foreign visitors from 10 million to 20 million annually
- Boost tourism service exports to over USD 6 billion
- Establish a globally recognizable modern Uzbekistan tourism brand

These ambitious targets reflect the government's confidence in the tourism industry as a driver of economic growth, cultural diplomacy, and global engagement.

Strengthening Institutional Leadership

One of the major highlights of the decree is the enhancement of the Tourism Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan as an independent executive authority. The Committee is now entrusted with greater autonomy, responsibility, and capacity to lead reforms, implement marketing strategies, and coordinate international outreach.

The decree also establishes:

- A Deputy Chairman for Global Promotion
- New foreign representative offices in key international markets
- Stronger coordination with the newly formed National PR Center

These developments signal Uzbekistan's commitment to increasing its global footprint and establishing stronger tourism partnerships worldwide.

Modern Infrastructure and Digital Transformation

Recognizing the importance of modern travel conveniences, the decree introduces a groundbreaking initiative — the Unified National Tourism Digital Platform. Set to launch by mid-2026, this platform will integrate:

- Online transport booking
- Unified ticketing for cultural and historical sites
- Digital guides and AI-powered travel planning
- Automatic eSIM activation and temporary registration for foreign tourists

This digital ecosystem positions Uzbekistan at the forefront of smart tourism, ensuring a seamless experience for travelers from the moment they arrive.

Reviving Heritage, Culture, and Creativity

Uzbekistan's rich cultural and historical legacy remains central to the reform agenda. Major projects announced in the decree include:

- "The Samarkand Heritage Route" – a 6.6 km pathway linking key historical sites
 - Transformation of Ichan-Kala (Khiva) into the world's first "immersive smart museum-city"
 - Recognition of Tashkent as the global capital of mosaics and submission of modernist monuments for UNESCO status
- These initiatives will significantly enhance Uzbekistan's cultural appeal, attracting both heritage enthusiasts and global travelers seeking immersive experiences.

Strong Incentives for Tourism Investment

The decree introduces substantial economic incentives to encourage private-sector participation:

- Customs exemptions for imported tourism vehicles and hotel equipment
- Subsidies for tourism startups and eco-friendly certifications
- VAT refunds for MICE tourism and high-traffic events
- Rebates for international film companies showcasing Uzbekistan's heritage

Such measures aim to stimulate investment, boost hospitality standards, and position Uzbekistan as a preferred destination for cultural, business, and adventure tourism.

Deep Commitment to Skills and Talent Development

To ensure a skilled workforce capable of meeting future demands, the decree establishes advanced training and retraining programs at the International Tourism Academy in Samarkand, under the umbrella of UNWTO. This reflects the government's long-term commitment to building a world-class human resource base.

A Vision Rooted in Leadership and Progress

The tourism roadmap introduced by the Presidential Decree stands as a testament to Uzbekistan's unwavering commitment to sustainable tourism growth, creative innovation, and global integration. With its blend of cultural richness, modern infrastructure, and progressive policies, Uzbekistan is poised to become a leading tourism hub in Central Asia—welcoming millions with its unique charm, hospitality, and history.

As the reforms take shape, Newsletter Uzbekistan will continue to highlight the country's achievements, opportunities, and the powerful new connections being forged across the world.



Uzbekistan-2025: A Year of Transformation, Triumphs & Timeless Connections

As we arrive at the close of 2025, we reflect on a year that has been nothing short of transformative for Uzbekistan. A year defined by bold reforms, strengthened international relationships, and a renewed pride in our rich cultural heritage. This has been a year where Uzbekistan didn't just move forward — it leaped into a new era of confidence, creativity, and global engagement.

A Year of Achievements and Milestones

Throughout 2025, Uzbekistan advanced major reforms across governance, tourism, education, digitalization, and economic development. The Government's continued commitment—under the leadership of **President Shavkat Mirziyoyev**—to openness, innovation, and strategic cooperation enabled Uzbekistan to achieve unprecedented momentum. From revitalizing ancient Silk Road cities to welcoming global investors and delegations, Uzbekistan has firmly positioned itself as a rising star of Central Asia.

Tourism Flourished in 2025

This year witnessed a historic increase in tourism movement, with millions visiting iconic destinations such as Samarkand, Bukhara, Khiva, Tashkent, Termez, and Kokand. New direct flights, visa relaxations, international exhibitions, and world-class festivals — including events on Islamic civilization, handicrafts, and global heritage — brought Uzbekistan to the center of global cultural tourism.

For Pakistan, 2025 was especially significant, with new tourism partnerships, spiritual tourism routes, and academic exchanges deepening our brotherly ties. The appointment of new cultural representatives, joint delegations, and cross-border collaborations made this year a foundation for lasting cooperation.

Editor's Note

People, Partnerships & Progress

Uzbekistan in 2025 was not only about numbers and reforms — it was about people. It was about building trust, bridging cultures, and strengthening friendships. Whether through business forums, educational missions, artisan networks, or cultural festivals, thousands of people from around the world became part of Uzbekistan's story this year. And for Pakistan in particular, 2025 marked an extraordinary chapter in Uzbekistan–Pakistan relations — a year of new commitments, shared dreams, and mutual respect.

Celebrating Cultural Identity

This year, Uzbekistan proudly showcased its heritage:

- The legacy of Imam Bukhari, Imam Termezi, and Naqshband
- The art of gold embroidery, wood carving, ceramics, and ikat
- The architectural beauty of Registan, Kalon Minaret, and Khiva's walls
- The timeless warmth of Uzbek hospitality

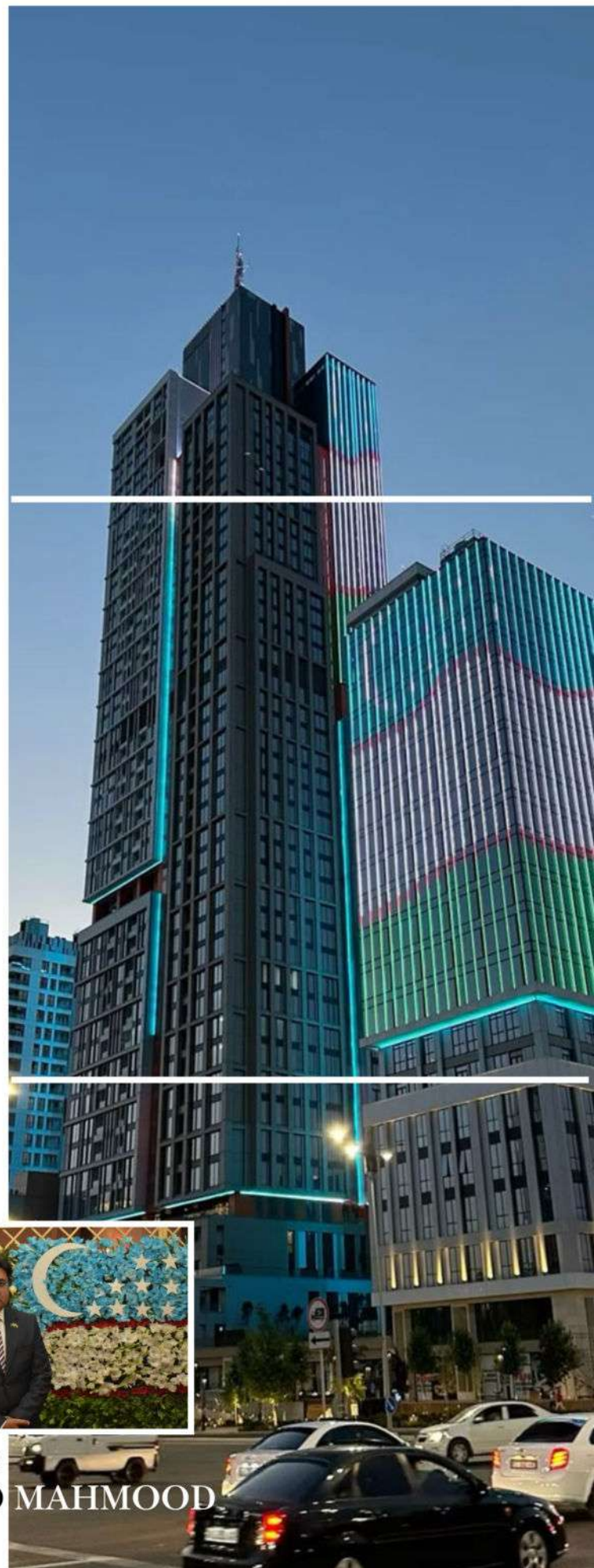
The world was reminded that Uzbekistan is not only a country — it is a living museum of history, craftsmanship, and spiritual light.

Looking Toward 2026

As we close this memorable year, we step into 2026 with hope, renewed energy, and a clear vision. Uzbekistan is entering a decade of growth — with tourism innovation, digital advancement, environmental stewardship, artisan revival, and regional connectivity shaping the years ahead.

For our readers, partners, and friends, this is a call to continue building bridges, promoting exchange, and becoming ambassadors of our shared heritage.

May the coming year bring peace, prosperity, and endless opportunities for Uzbekistan and all who love it. Thank you for being part of this remarkable journey. Happy New Year 2026!



**EDITOR
HAMID MAHMOOD**



The Delegation of Uzbekistan Participated in the Inter – Parliamentary, Speakers conference (ISC) in Islamabad

The Delegation of Uzbekistan Participated in the First Session of the Conference of Parliamentary Speakers in Islamabad. On 11–12 November, a major international gathering was held in Pakistan's capital under the theme "Peace, Security, and Development," bringing together parliamentary delegations from 38 countries.

Uzbekistan was represented by a delegation led by the First Deputy Chairman of the Senate of the Oliy Majlis, Sodiq Safoyev. Speakers at the opening session included: Prime Minister of Pakistan Shabbaz Sharif, Chairman of the Senate Yusuf Raza Gilani, Secretary-General of the Conference Nath Dakal, and Ambassador of the Conference of Parliamentary Speakers Misbah Khar. The speakers emphasized a key idea: peace is the foundation of development, dialogue is the best path to resolving global challenges, and parliamentary diplomacy is becoming an essential instrument for strengthening ties between nations. The Uzbek delegation presented the initiatives of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev aimed at:

- strengthening regional cooperation,
- seeking solutions to global challenges,
- creating new transport corridors,
- and expanding the potential of parliamentary diplomacy.

Within the framework of the forum, several bilateral meetings were held to discuss the intensification of inter-parliamentary cooperation. In addition, a separate meeting took place with the leadership of the Pakistan Diplomatic Service Academy to discuss expanding academic exchanges between the diplomatic academies of the two countries.

The Conference of Parliamentary Speakers was established on 11 April 2025 in Seoul and has already become an important platform for uniting the voices of the Global North and the Global South.



On 23 November, the Embassy of Uzbekistan in Pakistan proudly showcased our country at the major annual charity festival “Charity Bazaar”, organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan. The aim of the festival was to strengthen cultural and humanitarian cooperation, promote the rich history and heritage of participating nations, and enhance tourism linkages.

The Uzbekistan pavilion became a true centre of attention, presenting:

- Traditional Uzbek dishes — plov, manti, samsa, lagman, etc.;
- Uzbek sweets — halva, chak-chak and others;
- Handicrafts and items of traditional applied arts;
- National costumes and musical instruments;
- Live Uzbek music.

The performances of Andijan Polka and Lazgi created a genuine sensation — guests applauded, filmed videos, and even joined in the dancing. More than 15,000 visitors attended the event, including diplomatic missions, ambassadors, international organizations, media, and residents of Islamabad. They highly appreciated the craftsmanship of Uzbek artisans, the uniqueness of our cuisine, and the richness of our cultural heritage.

Distinguished Guest: **The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan, H.E. Ishaq Dar**, emphasized that Uzbekistan and Pakistan are bound by deep historical and cultural roots. He noted that such festivals bring nations closer, inspire the younger generation, and thanked the Embassy of Uzbekistan for its outstanding cultural presentation.

The Uzbekistan pavilion was also visited by ambassadors of Turkey, China, Malaysia, Tunisia, Azerbaijan, Vietnam, Turkmenistan, Czechia, Indonesia, Palestine, Syria, Japan, the Philippines, Morocco, Yemen, the UAE, and many others. All praised the distinctiveness of Uzbek traditions, the refinement of our handicrafts, and the exceptional taste of Uzbek cuisine. During the “Parade of Nations”, children of embassy staff performed the Andijan Polka, receiving warm applause from the audience. Uzbekistan’s participation in “Charity Bazaar” served as an important step in promoting our cultural heritage in Pakistan, strengthening cultural diplomacy, and increasing awareness of Uzbekistan’s rich history and vast tourism potential.

Bridging Cultures: Tourism Potential of Uzbekistan

Organised by Uzbekistan Tourist Information center Pakistan

A special ceremony titled “Bridging Cultures: Tourism Potential of Uzbekistan” was held in Islamabad, bringing together diplomats, tourism leaders, academics, media representatives, and industry partners to strengthen cultural and tourism cooperation between Uzbekistan and Pakistan. The event also celebrated the appointment of Mr. Hamid Mahmood Chaudhry as the Tourism Brand Ambassador of Uzbekistan in Pakistan.

The ceremony featured keynote remarks from H.E. the Ambassador of Uzbekistan, along with contributions from leading voices including Mr. Aftab Ur Rehman Rana, Managing Director of PTDC, and Mr. Aga Iqbal Haroon, Senior Journalist and Editor of DND News.

Ambassador Underscores Shared Heritage and Spiritual Bonds

In his address, the Ambassador highlighted Uzbekistan’s timeless contributions to Islamic civilization, emphasizing the cultural, spiritual, and scholarly links shared with Pakistan.

He spoke passionately about the heritage of Samarkand, Bukhara, Khiva, Kokand, and Termez—cities that have served as centers of Islamic learning for centuries.

He reminded the audience that Uzbekistan is home to distinguished scholars such as Imam al-Bukhari, Imam at-Termizi, Bahouddin Naqshband, Al-Biruni, Ibn Sina, and Al-Khwarizmi, whose intellectual legacy deeply influenced South Asia and the Muslim world.

“Every Ziyarat journey from Pakistan to Uzbekistan,” he noted, “is a journey of the heart, a reconnection with our shared spiritual history.”

Chief Guest Aftab Ur Rehman Rana Applauds Uzbekistan’s Tourism Revival

Chief Guest **Mr. Aftab Ur Rehman Rana**, Managing Director of PTDC, praised Uzbekistan’s commitment to cultural and spiritual tourism.

He stated:

“Uzbekistan and Pakistan share a civilizational bond that predates modern borders. Enhancing Ziyarat, heritage tourism, and student exchanges will strengthen our relationship and open new pathways for collaboration.”



Mr. Rana commended Uzbekistan's hospitality, tourism reforms, and UNESCO recognition, adding that Pakistan looks forward to developing joint tourism initiatives.

Aga Iqrar Haroon Highlights Media's Role in Promoting People-to-People Linkages

Senior journalist **Aga Iqrar Haroon**, Editor of DND News and an expert on Central Asian affairs, also shared his reflections during the ceremony.

He remarked:

"Uzbekistan is not just a travel destination—it is an emotional homeland for millions across Pakistan. Our shared Sufi traditions, linguistic connections, and overlapping histories make Uzbekistan a natural partner. The media must play a stronger role in telling these stories and showcasing Uzbekistan's true image."

He emphasized the importance of accurate storytelling, cultural documentation, and responsible journalism in promoting the growing tourism partnership.

"The more Pakistanis learn about Uzbekistan, the more they feel connected to it," he added, praising the efforts of the Embassy and the newly appointed Brand Ambassador.

Brand Ambassador Hamid Mahmood Chaudhry Expresses Vision for Cultural Connectivity

Speaking at the ceremony, Mr. Hamid Mahmood Chaudhry shared his gratitude and outlined his mission as Uzbekistan's Tourism Brand Ambassador in Pakistan.

He said:

"It is an honor to represent Uzbekistan—a land of faith, culture, and history. I will work to bring our nations closer through Ziyarat tours, educational exchanges, business tourism, and cultural diplomacy."

He reaffirmed his commitment to supporting tourism stakeholders and promoting Uzbekistan as the top destination for Pakistani travelers seeking spirituality, heritage, and hospitality.

Uzbekistan to Host the 43rd UNESCO General Conference 2025

The Ambassador proudly announced that **Samarkand will host the 43rd UNESCO General Conference from October 30 to November 13, 2025**—the first time in more than 40 years that the conference will be held outside Paris.

This milestone showcases Uzbekistan's global recognition in heritage preservation, intercultural dialogue, and cultural diplomacy.

Expanding Uzbekistan Airways Connectivity to Pakistan

Major improvements in travel connections were also highlighted:

- From **October 28, 2025**, Uzbekistan Airways will **double its flights** between Tashkent and Islamabad (Tuesdays & Saturdays).
- Twice-weekly flights between **Tashkent and Lahore** will continue (Wednesdays & Fridays).
- Affordable fares starting from **USD 220** one-way and **USD 400** return.

"These air routes," the Ambassador said, "are bridges of friendship, linking families, cultures, and futures."

Strengthening Academic, Cultural, and Linguistic Diplomacy

The ceremony emphasized the importance of:

- Academic tourism
- Joint research
- Language and heritage studies
- Cultural storytelling
- University partnerships
- Intellectual collaboration

With more than **4,000 shared words** between Uzbek and Urdu, the Ambassador highlighted the deep linguistic and cultural connections that symbolize shared civilizational roots.

Conclusion: A New Chapter in Uzbekistan–Pakistan Friendship

The event concluded on a high note, celebrating the growing partnership between Uzbekistan and Pakistan. Heartfelt thanks were extended to PTDC, tourism companies, journalists, scholars, and media representatives.

With closing words:

"Uzbekistan–Pakistan dosti zindabad! Long live the friendship between Uzbekistan and Pakistan!"

A New Chapter in Uzbekistan–Pakistan Tourism and Cultural Cooperation





Uzbekistan Pavilion Shines at Lok Mela Festival in Islamabad

The vibrant cultural landscape of Islamabad came alive as Uzbekistan proudly showcased its heritage, craftsmanship, and hospitality at the Lok Mela, one of Pakistan's most celebrated cultural festivals. The Uzbekistan Pavilion emerged as one of the most visited and admired attractions of the event, offering Pakistani audiences a captivating window into the heart of Central Asia.

Beautifully decorated with traditional Uzbek artwork, textiles, and motifs reflecting Samarkand, Bukhara, Khiva, and Kokand, the pavilion stood as a living exhibition of Uzbekistan's rich Silk Road legacy. Visitors were welcomed into a world of color, rhythm, and centuries-old craftsmanship—an experience that highlighted the deep cultural bonds between Pakistan and Uzbekistan.



A Celebration of Culture, Craft, and Friendship

The Uzbekistan Pavilion featured master artisans representing embroidery, ceramics, miniature art, traditional jewelry, wood carving, and handmade carpets. Their live demonstrations drew crowds who eagerly observed the intricate techniques passed down through generations.

Visitors were particularly fascinated by Suzani embroidery, Bukhara carpets, Khiva ceramics, and traditional silk ikat fabric, all of which showcased the unmatched skill of Uzbek artisans. Many Pakistani

families purchased handmade items as souvenirs, reflecting growing admiration for Uzbek craftsmanship.

Strengthening People-to-People Connections

The Uzbekistan Pavilion played an important role in advancing cultural diplomacy and strengthening people-to-people ties between the two brotherly nations. Pakistani visitors—especially students, families, cultural researchers, and tourism enthusiasts—were eager to learn about Uzbekistan’s history, its preserved Islamic heritage, and its famous travel destinations.

Informational materials were provided on iconic cities such as **Samarkand, Bukhara, Khiva, and Tashkent**, along with details about **Ziyarat tourism**, highlighting Uzbekistan’s spiritual landmarks including the shrines of **Imam Al-Bukhari, Imam At-Termizi, and Bahouddin Naqshband**.

The pavilion also promoted Uzbekistan’s visa reforms, modern tourism infrastructure, and expanding air connectivity, making travel more convenient for Pakistani tourists.

Promoting Tourism and Cultural Exchange

Throughout the festival, representatives from the Uzbekistan Tourism Committee and cultural organizations engaged with visitors, tourism companies, and media to promote Uzbekistan as a top destination for cultural, historical, and spiritual tourism.

The pavilion also spotlighted the role of Uzbekistan’s Tourism Brand Ambassador in Pakistan, Mr. Hamid Mahmood Chaudhry, in deepening cultural cooperation, building tourism partnerships, and encouraging academic and heritage exchange programs between the countries.



The enthusiastic response from Pakistani visitors underscored the growing interest in exploring Uzbekistan’s ancient cities, Sufi heritage routes, bazaars, mountain landscapes, and traditional cuisine.

A Symbol of Uzbekistan–Pakistan Friendship

The participation of Uzbekistan at the Lok Virsa Festival symbolizes the timeless friendship between the people of Pakistan and Uzbekistan—rooted in shared history, culture, faith, and Silk Road heritage.

The pavilion not only promoted Uzbekistan’s tourism potential but also served as a cultural bridge connecting two nations with centuries of intertwined heritage.

As the festival concluded, the Uzbekistan Pavilion stood out as a true highlight—leaving lasting impressions and inspiring thousands of Pakistanis to discover the beauty, spirituality, and cultural richness of Uzbekistan.



IMAM AL- BUKHARI

**A Journey to the
Heart of Islamic
Scholarship**

by Hamid Mahmood
Brand Ambassador
Uzbekistan tourism for Pakistan

In the spirit of Ziyarat Tourism in Uzbekistan



Uzbekistan holds a special place in the spiritual map of the Muslim world, and among its greatest treasures is the blessed resting place of **Imam Muhammad ibn Ismail Al-Bukhari**, one of the most celebrated scholars in Islamic history. For pilgrims embarking on a **Ziyarat tour**, visiting the mausoleum of Imam Al-Bukhari near Samarkand is not merely travel—it is an emotional and intellectual journey into the roots of Islamic knowledge.

Born in 810 CE in Bukhara, Imam Al-Bukhari devoted his life to the preservation of the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). His monumental work, **“Sahih Al-Bukhari,”** is regarded as the most authentic collection of Hadith in the Sunni Muslim tradition. With exceptional memory, extraordinary discipline, and deep piety, he traveled across the Islamic world—from Baghdad and Damascus to Hijaz and Egypt—to gather and verify hadith with unmatched precision. His legacy forms a cornerstone of Islamic scholarship to this day.

Today, Uzbekistan preserves this heritage with utmost respect. **The Imam Al-Bukhari Memorial Complex**, renovated with exquisite Islamic architecture, serene gardens, and a sense of sacred tranquility, stands as a symbol of devotion and knowledge. Pilgrims walking through its marble pathways feel the weight of history and the peaceful spirituality that defines the site. The complex includes a mosque, museum, library, and conference hall, allowing visitors to immerse themselves in the scholar's life, manuscripts, and contributions.

For Ziyarat travelers, this visit becomes a time of reflection. Standing before the tomb of Imam Al-Bukhari is a reminder of the importance of authenticity, integrity, and dedication in one's faith. It connects visitors to the scholars who shaped Islamic civilization and inspires a renewed commitment to learning.

Uzbekistan, with its rich Sufi traditions and centuries-old centers of knowledge, offers a profound spiritual experience. A journey to the resting place of Imam Al-Bukhari is more than heritage tourism—it is a pilgrimage of the heart, a connection to the golden age of Islamic thought, and a celebration of a scholar whose work continues to illuminate Muslim lives across the world.

As Ziyarat tourism grows, Uzbekistan stands ready to welcome pilgrims from Pakistan and beyond, offering hospitality, history, and the opportunity to walk in the footsteps of giants of Islamic knowledge.





UZBEKISTAN'S TOURISM VISION - 2030: OPPORTUNITIES FOR PAKISTANI SCHOLARS AND STUDENTS

BY SHAKEEL AHMED KHAN

In the evolving global landscape of tourism, Uzbekistan has emerged as a dynamic and forward-looking destination. With the adoption of the national strategy titled “**Uzbekistan – 2030**”, the country has laid out an ambitious roadmap that embraces its rich cultural heritage, scenic landscapes, and emerging educational and tourism infrastructure. For Pakistani scholars and students, Uzbekistan’s tourism vision offers not only travel and cultural experiences but meaningful educational partnerships, research opportunities, and career pathways.

A Strategic Vision for 2030

The “Uzbekistan – 2030” strategy calls for major advances in the tourism sector: boosting foreign tourist arrivals, enhancing

domestic travel, creating large tourist clusters, and developing tourism service exports. Specific goals include increasing export of tourism services to USD 5 billion and medical and educational tourism to USD 1.5 billion annually. Complementary reports detail the country’s aim to host 25 million international visitors and 50 million domestic travellers by 2030. Infrastructure investments, visa-regime simplifications, and tourism product diversification are key enablers.

Why Pakistan Comes into This Picture

As neighbouring countries with shared historical, cultural, religious and linguistic threads, Pakistan and Uzbekistan are natural partners. For Pakistani students and academics, Uzbekistan offers:

- **Educational & Research Collaboration:** Uzbekistan is strengthening its higher-education offerings in tourism, heritage, hospitality management, and cultural studies. The network of educational institutions cooperating internationally is expanding. Pakistani universities and scholars can seek joint research projects, exchange programmes, and contribute to the tourism-heritage corpus of Central Asia.
- **Language and Area Studies:** With Uzbekistan's rich Silk Road heritage, Sufi traditions, Islamic architecture and Central Asian studies gaining prominence, Pakistani students of history, Islamic studies, cultural anthropology and tourism management can find valuable primary research ground.
- **Career and Internship Pathways:** As Uzbekistan builds up its tourism clusters, hospitality infrastructure and service export ambitions, there will be demand for trained personnel. Pakistani graduates in hospitality, tourism management, languages (Russian, Uzbek, English) and cultural communications may find internships or employment opportunities.
- **Joint Student Mobility & Scholarships:** As Uzbekistan positions itself as a hub for educational and cultural tourism, Pakistani students can benefit from inbound possibilities for short-term study tours, summer schools, internships in cultural-heritage centres and tourism institutions.

Key Areas Open for Engagement

1. **Heritage & Cultural Tourism Research:** Uzbekistan has set out to study over 30 elements of intangible cultural heritage, host international festivals, and restore historic sites under its heritage-cluster initiative. Pakistani scholars specializing in heritage conservation, museology, art history and archaeology will find rich terrain.
2. **Hospitality & Tourism Management:** With a rapidly growing number of hotels, hostels, guesthouses and family accommodation (for example, 452 new family guest houses in 2023 alone) Uzbekistan is scaling human-resource capacity for tourism services. This creates potential for Pakistani diploma/degree holders to study or intern in this emerging marketplace.
3. **Language and Cultural Exchange:** As Uzbekistan expands inbound tourism and educational tourism, there is rising demand for guides, cultural-communication professionals and multi-lingual staff. Pakistani students proficient in English, Urdu, Uzbek, Russian may perform a bridging role.
4. **Regional Tourism Development & Sustainability:** Many regions in Uzbekistan – mountainous zones, ski resorts (e.g., Amirsoy Mountain Resort) and rural clusters – are being developed for all-season tourism. Pakistani students of geography, sustainable tourism, adventure tourism, and rural development may engage in case-studies, field-research, or gain internships in these emerging zones.

Strategic Steps for Pakistani Scholars & Students

Identify partner institutions in Uzbekistan: Reach out to universities, tourism-colleges and cultural-heritage institutes in Uzbekistan to explore joint programmes or mobility opportunities. **Build competencies:** Acquire skills in tourism management, heritage studies, languages (Russian/Uzbek), digital-tourism platforms and cultural mediation.

Apply for scholarships/study tours: Monitor announcements from Uzbek-Pak bilateral education forums, cultural-tourism exchanges or multilateral grants focusing on Central Asia.

Undertake collaborative research: Propose comparative studies between Pakistan and Uzbekistan (for example: Silk Road routes in Pakistan vs. Uzbekistan, heritage-tourism models, community-based tourism in rural zones).

Engage with tourism industry: Internships in Uzbek hotels, guest-houses, cultural-centres or tourism start-ups will build cross-border experience.

Concluding Thoughts

For Pakistan's academic and student community, Uzbekistan's Tourism Vision 2030 is not simply about travel—it is about **education, research, cultural diplomacy and career readiness**. As Uzbekistan opens itself to the world with a more accessible and modern tourism ecosystem, Pakistani scholars and students are uniquely placed to step in, collaborate, learn and grow. By forging educational links, building social-cultural bridges and gaining hands-on experience in one of Central Asia's most promising tourism markets, the next decade may well become a defining chapter for cross-border academic and youth engagement between Pakistan and Uzbekistan.

In the spirit of our shared heritage—Silk Road, Sufi traditions, hospitality—let us seize the possibilities that Uzbekistan's vision provides and create a future of mutual growth, learning and lasting partnership.

Shakeel Ahmed Khan



is a Pakistani educationist who promotes student development and academic cooperation, especially between Pakistan and Uzbekistan. His work highlights the value of global learning and cultural exchange.

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