

# UZBEKISTAN

## JEWEL OF THE SILK ROAD

**ANNIVERSARY GREETINGS:**  
President's Independence Day Address

**SOCIAL POLICY:**  
2012 - The Year of the Family

**INVESTMENT & TRADE:**  
Boosting Investment Potential

**ECONOMY:**  
Uzbekistan Embraces  
the Green Perspective

**TRAVEL & TOURISM:**  
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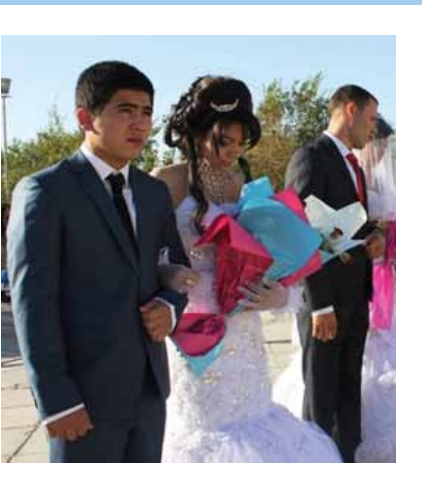
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“Today, no one can deny our achievements highly acknowledged in the international arena, the accomplishments made thanks to addressing the wide-ranging tasks and objectives we had set out for ourselves, namely, to join the ranks of modern, advanced democratic nations, to shape civil society, replenish every sphere of life, modernize and diversify the economy. We are all delighted to witness the mounting capacities, our economic and intellectual prowess, the transforming appearance of our cities and villages.”

**Islam Karimov**

President of the Republic of Uzbekistan

# PRESIDENT'S INDEPENDENCE DAY ADDRESS

**31.08.2012, TASHKENT**

**D**ear compatriots!  
Esteemed guests!  
All of us are widely celebrating today the unforgettably historic date in the life of our country – the twenty-first anniversary of Uzbekistan's independence.

I take a splendid pleasure to sincerely congratulate you – and our entire nation in your face by extension – from the bottom of heart on this genuinely greatest and dearest for all of us holiday, Independence Day, the event our people had dreamt of for centuries.

I am convinced that with the passage of ages and millennia, this grand event – the Independence Day, the day that restored our sense of national self-consciousness, honor and pride, the right to dispose of the destiny of our own country, our sacred religion, values, customs and traditions –

will stay eternal in history and get inscribed with gold letters in the chronicles of our Motherland.

Dear fellows!

Obviously, twenty one years is a rather short period of time when measured in terms of overall human history and the process of formation of states, their emergence on the map of the world. Nonetheless, Uzbekistan has for this brief span of time overcome a path equaling that of centuries, without any doubt.

Having rejected the old, obsolete system, its ideology and approaches, having got rid of any possible dependence on anybody, we have been aptly demonstrating to the world that from yesterday's deprived marginal rim with no rights and ability to feed itself, we have joined the list of independent and sovereign nations developing with swift and sustainable growth rates, those countries who fully rely

on their own power and capacities, those capable of protecting their own frontiers, the peaceful and tranquil life of the people, and who have attained a well-deserved place in the community of nations.

Today, no one can deny our achievements highly acknowledged in the international arena, the accomplishments made thanks to addressing the wide-ranging tasks and objectives we had set out for ourselves, namely, to join the ranks of modern, advanced democratic nations, to shape civil society, replenish every sphere of life, modernize and diversify the economy. We are all delighted to witness the mounting capacities, our economic and intellectual prowess, the transforming appearance of our cities and villages.”

One can cite myriads of admirable figures and facts to underline our achievements.

During the independent development

years, Uzbekistan's economy has grown nearly 3.7 times, per capita real incomes have multiplied sevenfold, and the average pension rates have increased almost ninefold, while salaries have grown eighteen times. In this light, life expectancy has risen by seven years, while we have secured fuel and energy as well as grain independence, along with complete self-supply of meats and dairy and other commodities.

I would be correct to assert that all this is a practical implementation of the principle we had declared in the wake of attaining independence – the maxim that goes “reforms are not for the sake of reforms, but for the sake of people”. The housing fund in the country has grown two-fold for the past years. 98.5% of families have a house or apartment of their own, while 97.5% rural families command their own stead – tangible effects of the targeted nationwide programs we have devised and executed.

Twenty one years ago, only one of every ten households had a car, while now it is every third family who enjoys this privilege. Every third person in Uzbekistan uses the internet – suggestive of the ever growing welfare of the nation, its free and prosperous life.

In this regard, I would cite another example.

In the background of the ongoing global financial and economic crisis that has been drawing immense concern of all the countries and staying as the most acute and intricate issue in the world, Uzbekistan has for the last seven years been among the few nations whose annual economic growth rates have averaged 8-8.5%, displaying the sustainable development and the marvelous potential of our native land.

In the meantime, when considering the big successes and accomplishments as first strides on the way of Uzbekistan's development, we all should thoroughly realize one truth.

Today, only a nation capable of overwhelming the harsh requirements of the rapidly mounting globalization and the intensifying malicious competence in the world markets, a country moving ahead persistently and tenaciously, with one's own longer-run development strategy, can reach its own high goals on the way to progress.

Given these pressing issues, we should first and foremost address such priority tasks as consistent and steadfast continuation with reforms we embarked on to renew and modernize the country, intensify democratic transformation and liberalization process, further uplift the level and quality of living.

In the meantime, we should never forget that we are to cherish our priceless boon –

i.e. the peace and concord, the atmosphere of kindness and compassion, the civic and interethnic harmony in society – as the apple of the eye.

The current turbulent and tough times, the conflicts and confrontations ongoing for many years in the near and far abroad as well as in our region, the mounting tension require persistent vigilance and advergence, readiness to forestall and neutralize any attempts that pose a threat to our security.

Worth noting that the remarkable achievements and frontiers reached owing to the tremendous endeavors during the independent development years that have cardinally transformed the consciousness, outlook and life of the nation, have proved by no means effortless for us to accomplish.

We ought to remember always that our nation, notwithstanding the threats and severe tests it has had to endure, has at all times remained true to the idea of independence all the way through and reached the current bright and prosperous days, primarily thanks to its diligence, courage and perseverance.

One should stress in particular that destructive forces are in abundance today, as well, who try to question the correctness of our chosen path, confuse young people who hardly witnessed thorny days endured by our people, distort the essence and meaning of our independence, take us again to the previous conditions of powerlessness and dependence.

However, these forces must clearly realize that today we are barely those naive people of the 1990s with little political experience.

Nowadays, we are a people tempered in the trials and difficulties of the transition period, with a solid outlook, proactive political, civic and social stance.

Our people, primarily the younger generation formed in the years of independence with its independent thinking, increasing level of self-awareness,

looks to the future with a great confidence and will never – let me repeat – will never turn from its chosen path of development.

Today, keeping pace with the times and the world community, consolidating the bonds of friendship, cooperation and mutually rewarding partnership with all the different foreign countries, we need to keep the focus of our constant attention on further improving the business environment, on the expansion of diverse privileges and incentives to attract foreign investment and introduction of latest technologies and, to this end, build up new, higher level relations with friendly states.

Taking this opportunity, allow me, on my own behalf and on behalf of all our people, to thank the ambassadors of foreign countries and representatives of international organizations, and all the guests who are present at tonight's celebration and share our joy and happiness.

At these thrilling moments, I would like to say to our youth, the force we rely on and hopeful of:

Dear my children: never forget what great ancestors you are posterity of, what unique and unrepeatable spiritual wealth you are heirs to!

Relying on your own abilities and capacities, knowledge and skills, the might of our great Motherland, do seek even higher achievements!

Know that your every triumph is a triumph of all the country, a victory for the entire Uzbekistan!

Dear compatriots!

Hugging you all in the mind's eye, I earnestly congratulate you again on the independence holiday; wish you sound health, happiness and the best of luck, and wellbeing and prosperity to your families.

May the Almighty save our people and our country from all misfortunes and evils!

May the sky above our land be clear!

May our independence be eternal!

### **CONGRATULATORY MESSAGE BY THE PRESIDENT OF SINGAPORE TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN ON THE 21<sup>ST</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF INDEPENDENCE OF UZBEKISTAN**

Your Excellency,

On behalf of the people of Singapore, I am pleased to extend to Your Excellency and your people our heartiest congratulations and warmest wishes on the joyous occasion of the 21st Anniversary of the Day of Independence of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

I am confident that under Your Excellency's able leadership, Uzbekistan will continue to progress and prosper, and I look forward to the further strengthening of relations between our countries in the years ahead.

I wish Your Excellency continued good health and success. Please accept, Your Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

**Tony Tan Keng Yam**  
President of Singapore



# 15th Anniversary of Uzbekistan - Singapore Diplomatic Relations

This year is a milestone year in the successful partnership between Singapore and Uzbekistan, as it is the 15th anniversary of the two republics establishing diplomatic relations with each other. During this time, the two dynamic nations have enjoyed a strong, healthy relationship which looks set to grow even stronger and healthier as the bilateral ties on various levels increase and deepen. Visits at the highest level have enhanced mutual cooperation in multiple areas, including arts, cultural exchanges, exchanges of expertise, along with growth in investment and trade. The foundation laid in last fifteen years will ensure these bilateral relations on so many levels will continue to flourish.

It is in this spirit that the Presidents of the two countries, Uzbekistan's President Islam Karimov and Singapore's President Tony Tan Keng Yam offer their congratulatory messages below. They salute the first 15 years of what should be a very long and mutually beneficial friendship.



“ Your Excellency,

Please, accept my heartfelt congratulations on the occasion of the 15th anniversary of establishment of the diplomatic relations between the Republic of Uzbekistan and Singapore.

Uzbekistan considers Singapore as one of the most developed states in the world with acclaimed high international authority as well as tangible financial, economic and intellectual potential. In short span of time, Uzbekistan has successfully established with Singapore the dynamically developing mutually beneficial and fruitful cooperation in political, trade and investment and humanitarian spheres.

I am convinced that based on the concurrence of the long-term interests Uzbekistan and Singapore will consistently continue the concerted cooperative actions towards expanding the comprehensive partnership on the basis of the principles of mutual respect and trust.

Availing myself of this fine opportunity, I wish You Mr. President, a sound health and further successes, as well as the friendly people of Singapore a wellbeing and prosperity. ”

**Islam Karimov**

President of the Republic of Uzbekistan



“ Your Excellency,

On behalf of the people of Singapore, I would like to offer my warmest congratulations on the 15th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Singapore and Republic of Uzbekistan.

Over the years, our relations have grown from strength to strength with the establishment of bilateral cooperation projects and platforms for people-to-people exchanges. High level interactions have also gathered momentum since Your Excellency's State Visit to Singapore in 2007.

I am confident that the friendly relations between our two countries will continue to deepen in the years to come under your wise leadership.

I wish Your Excellency continued good health and success. Please accept, Excellency, the assurance of my highest consideration. ”

**Tony Tan Keng Yam**

President of Singapore

# Ambassador's Message

“**T**his year we commemorate the 21st Year of Independence of the Republic of Uzbekistan as well as the 15th Anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between Uzbekistan and Singapore – that momentous occasion in the history of our bilateral relations which started well in 1997 and got new breath after the state visit of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, H.E. Mr. Islam Karimov, to Singapore in 2007.

In a short span of time, Uzbekistan has successfully established a dynamically developing, mutually beneficial and fruitful cooperation with Singapore in the political, trade, investment and humanitarian spheres. Over the years, our relations have grown from strength to strength with increasing high-level visits, enhanced mutual political trust, and expanding cooperation in various fields. Regular political consultations and business forums between our countries became effective platforms for further bolstering ties of friendship and strengthening the legal base of multifaceted relations for long-term perspectives.

This year has been a particularly remarkable one in our bilateral relations, deepened by the official visit of H.E. Mr. Masagos Zulkifli Bin Masagos Mohamad, Senior Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and Home Affairs, and holding the Second Round of Political Consultations, which was marked by the signing of agreements on cooperation in the spheres of civil servants' capacity enhancement and environmental protection. Equally significant were the mutual exemption of visa requirements for diplomats and the signing of the relevant inter-governmental agreement.

Continuing our dialogue with Singaporean partners such as IE Singapore, Singapore Business Federation, Singapore Manufacturers' Federation and other commercial chambers, this year marks the sixth year of the Uzbekistan-Singapore Business Forum to be held in Singapore, providing an effective platform where business circles gained important awareness of the business environment and investment opportunities in

both markets, thus creating new business collaborations and fostering closer relationships.

I am convinced, based on the presence of long-term interests, that Uzbekistan and Singapore will consistently continue cooperative actions towards expanding our comprehensive partnership on the basis of the principles of mutual respect and trust.

Social and economic achievements of Uzbekistan in recent years should make our Singaporean partners confident about further expanding the long-term and mutually beneficial cooperation. For the last several years, Uzbekistan has been among the few nations whose annual economic growth rates have averaged between 8 and 8.5 percent, showcasing the country's sustainable development and its marvelous potential. Today, when the economy of Uzbekistan boasts of stable growth despite the ongoing world economic crisis, has attracted an ever-increasing volume of foreign investments, and has in place many new high-tech productions, it's difficult to imagine that only 21 years ago, the country was on the verge of economic crisis inherited from the totalitarian system.

Guided by the principle of “reforms are not for the sake of reforms, but for the sake of people”, Uzbekistan implements a clear and well-thought-out strategy and program of action which first and foremost ensures the welfare and prosperity of the people of Uzbekistan.

Uzbekistan and Singapore cherish common values, and as social prosperity of the nation remains the cornerstone of Singapore's policy, similarly, the year 2012 has been declared as the “Year of Family” in Uzbekistan. This is a logical continuation of the work carried out in the country to support the major units of society. It should be noted that the initiatives for further development of this multi-faceted social institute is not a one-year program – it involves long-term strategy to support family values. ”

**Alisher Kurmanov**

Ambassador of the Republic of Uzbekistan to Singapore

# Congratulations from Singapore's Ambassador to Uzbekistan



## Singapore - Uzbekistan: Building upon the momentum of positive engagement

“**Y**our Excellency,  
I am pleased to extend to Your Excellency my heartiest congratulations and warmest wishes on the joyous occasion of the 21<sup>st</sup> Anniversary of the Day of Independence of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Uzbekistan, like Singapore is a young country which has come a long way since independence. I am confident that Uzbekistan will continue to progress and I look forward to the further strengthening of relations between our countries in the years ahead.

Singapore values its friendly relations with Uzbekistan. Following the State Visit of His Excellency, President Islam Karimov in January 2007, bilateral relations have steadily progressed, supported by the continued exchange of visits and the signing of agreements such as the Visa Abolishment Agreement (VAA). During President Karimov's State Visit, we had also signed an MOU on the Establishment of Bilateral Consultations, the first for Singapore with any Central Asian country. Since then, we have held two rounds of very useful MFA-to-MFA bilateral consultations. This underscores the excellent state of bilateral relations between Singapore and Uzbekistan. We look forward to hosting the next round of consultations in the near future.

Our governments have also worked closely to create a more conducive environment for bilateral trade and investment. There are three bilateral economic agreements — the Agreement on Cooperation (AC), Investment Guarantee Agreement (IGA) and the Avoidance of Double Taxation Agreement (DTA). These agreements, coupled with greater business awareness, will facilitate and encourage bilateral trade and investment. In addition, the Uzbek-Singapore Business Forum is an excellent platform for companies from both sides to explore cooperation opportunities. To date, five Business Forums have been held and we look forward to organizing the next one in the near future.

Furthermore, Singapore and Uzbekistan can benefit from more cultural exchanges as Singaporeans can learn a lot from Uzbekistan, which is a unique country with a rich Islamic heritage.

I would like to once again wish Your Excellency a very happy Independence Day. I look forward to continue working with you to build upon the momentum of positive engagement between Singapore and Uzbekistan and to continue exploring new areas for collaboration. ”

**Zulkifli Baharudin**

Ambassador of Singapore to Uzbekistan



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# Editor's Note



**W**elcome to the 21<sup>st</sup> anniversary commemorative magazine by the Embassy of Uzbekistan in Singapore. In this, our 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, we have focused on the exciting growth that Uzbekistan is experiencing in all spheres of activity. At each step, the country is rediscovering its potential not only in its rich cultural heritage, but its state-of-the-art infrastructure, its natural resources and its natural beauty.

On the old trade route between China and Europe, Uzbekistan combines historic aura with natural splendor. Tourism, hence, is a primary area of focus. In recent years, the travel industry has grown in leaps and bounds. The Old Silk Road with remnants of its fascinating past, the oriental mystique of caravanserais, the timeless cities of Samarkand and Bukhara, beckon travel hungry tourists from across the world. With over a few hundred tourist organizations operating in the country and the extremely popular Tashkent International Tourism Fair in its 18<sup>th</sup> year, it is hardly surprising that opportunities are attractive. This beautiful country can also claim to be the most welcoming. For an Uzbek family, you are a visitor on your first visit, a friend on the second, and family on the third! For Singaporeans, Uzbekistan represents the exotic Orient, and Singapore travel agents have shown great interest in promoting travel to Uzbekistan.

This year has been dedicated to the family, and in this issue we take a look into the important policy changes planned for the improvement of the family. Uzbekistan is charting out a growth path that is spelling out success with vast improvements in the life of the people.

Uzbekistan has truly cashed in on the latecomer's advantage. It has developed industries matching its comparative advantage in a market economy where the state plays an active facilitator's role. Both in the traditional sectors such as textile, machinery and agrochemicals, and the hi-tech ones such as electronics, automotive, petrochemicals. The government has declared Navoi and Angren as special economic zones, which has drawn in huge foreign direct investments. With this issue, we also celebrate Uzbekistan's planned and phased growth model.

With a official GDP real growth of 8.3% in 2011, Uzbekistan is one of the few countries which have held on to its growth curve against the economic downturn that is being faced by other countries. The pulsating economy, the government initiatives and the resource - abundant country makes it the perfect time to do business or travel in Uzbekistan.

Go ahead and get to know about Uzbekistan's potential. We hope that you enjoy reading this edition as much as we enjoyed compiling it!

**Nomita Dhar**  
Editor-in-Chief



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**H.E. Alisher Kurmanov**,  
Ambassador of the Republic of Uzbekistan to Singapore.

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# Fact File:

## UZBEKISTAN

### Uzbekistan: A Quick Fact File

Uzbekistan is a country which is politically stable, with consistent reforms in all fields of public and political life and confidence in tomorrow. It's the land where representatives of more than a hundred ethnic groups and dozens of religions have been living in peace and harmony for thousands of years.

Situated along the Silk Road, Uzbekistan has been the cradle of many ancient civilisations. Trade caravans from the East and the West passed through the cities of Samarkand, Bukhara and Khiva, which became the symbols of Oriental beauty and mystery. Every year, millions of tourists come to this magic land to indulge in the beautiful architecture, rich cultural heritage and pristine nature of the country.

Modern day Uzbekistan is one of the fastest developing countries in the world, successfully withstanding the global economic calamities. For the last five years, average real GDP has grown at the rate of 8.5%. Long-term and balanced state-led structural economic reforms has led to the development of a robust and modern economy. For example, in the last 10 years, the share of industrial goods in the GDP increased from 14.1% to 24.1%. Flagship industries of the country, such as automotives, machinery, agriculture and petrochemicals, construction materials, textile, electronics and consumer goods manufacturing are aggressively growing. The share of the service sector grew from 37% to 50.5%.

Uzbekistan offers the best transport connectivity and infrastructure in the region for passenger and cargo shipment. The state has been largely investing in building new highways and railroads, upgrading domestic and international airports, renewing the fleet of airplanes, trains and public buses. Today there are 12 airports in the country; six of them are international airports with direct flights to more than 50 cities across the world. Navoi International Air Cargo Terminal has been set up and linked to the major logistic hubs of Asia and Europe. Comfortable high-speed trains run from Tashkent to Samarkand and more cities will be connected in the next few years.

### KEY FACTS

Official Name	Republic of Uzbekistan
Political System	Republic
Independence Day	1 September 1991
Location	Central Asia
Territorial Organization	12 provinces, Tashkent City, and Republic of Karakalpakstan
Capital	Tashkent City
Area	Total – 447,400 km <sup>2</sup> Dryland – 425,400 km <sup>2</sup> Water – 22,000 km <sup>2</sup>
Population	29.1 million people (as of 1 January 2012)
Main Cities	Tashkent, Samarkand, Bukhara, Fergana, Namangan, Karshi, etc.
Official Language	Uzbek
Main Airports	Tashkent, Samarkand, Bukhara, Navoi, etc.

### NATIONAL HOLIDAYS

January 1	New Year
January 14	Day of Defenders of Homeland
March 8	Women's Day
March 21	Navruz (Traditional New Year)
May 9	Day of Memory and Honor
September 1	Independence Day
October 1	Teachers' Day
December 8	Constitution Day
Ramadan Hayit (lyd ul Fitr) and Qurbon Hayit (lyd ul Adha) are also national religious holidays. Dates of celebration differ each year depending on the Lunar Calendar.	

# 2012 - The Year of the Family



Uzbekistan's Year of the Family features a wide array of programs and supports to enhance and strengthen this "foundation of any healthy and stable nation." Celebrating 21 years of Independence, this emphasis on family welfare will further improve the well-being of the people. Here we present an overview.

At the initiative of Uzbekistan's President Islam Karimov, 2012 was proclaimed the Year of the Family in the Central Asian republic.

Actually, strong family ties have long been a prime feature of Uzbek society. The initiatives and programs rolled out under the Year of the Family banner merely seek to support, enhance and enable the further deepening and strengthening of this vital national characteristic.

Now, as Uzbekistan celebrates its 21st anniversary of independence, this emphasis on family welfare is set to further improve the overall well-being of the people.

As a healthy family is the very foundation of a strong, healthy and stable nation, state programs have focused on such effective tools as legislative reforms, material and moral support to young families, job creation, civic infrastructure creation and upgrading of medical facilities.

The pro-reform Uzbekistan government is working to develop the nation into a market-driven society equipped with

a strong infrastructure and a skilled population ready for the challenges of the 21st Century. The state program - The Year of the Family - elaborated in close cooperation with government agencies, charitable foundations, non-governmental and community organizations - has become a master plan for new initiatives to further strengthen the role of the family institute in the society. More, the program is not just for this one designated Year: it embodies a long-term strategy aimed at developing the family as a core competent of the society.

In his Independence Day address in 2011 (the country's 20<sup>th</sup>), President Islam Karimov said, "On the way to improving the quality of life of the people, the principal priority for us is to gradually accelerate the pace of democratic renewal, the liberalization and modernization of all spheres of life."

Since its adoption in 1992, the Constitution of Uzbekistan has given full legal support to the family with such features as equal rights for spouses, highlighting parent's and children's obligations, along with government care for orphans.

As part of the nation's Year of the Family program, a draft of new legislative initiatives to further improve different aspects of family life are already in process. The bills will embrace the best traditions and customs of the people and reflect the requirements of today and tomorrow and international experience in family law.

The first is the 'Amendments and Additions to the Family Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan'. Key new provisions include improved methods for facilitating child adoption and raising the minimum marriage age for women to eighteen.

The second special draft bill will set the legal parameters of family entrepreneurship. This law will clearly state the participants in family businesses and the scope and legal basis for all their economic activities. It will also simplify the registration and liquidation procedures for family businesses.

More, at least 107,000 jobs in domestic organizations have been secured for graduates. Training courses for unemployed youngsters as well as large contingents of public workers will be conducted to bolster



The pro-reform Uzbekistan government is working to develop the nation into a market-driven society equipped with a strong infrastructure and a skilled population ready for the challenges of the 21st Century... As part of the nation's Year of the Family program, a raft of new legislative initiatives to further improve different aspects of family life are already in process. The bills will embrace the best traditions and customs of the people and reflect the requirements of today and tomorrow and international experience in family law.



these areas. Individual entrepreneurs who live and operate locally have been granted a three-year fixed tax release to encourage them to create new jobs. Further underscoring the government's commitments to economic growth along with equality, specialists have been advising young women on starting their own business with special seminars on 'Start your Business' to enable younger women in learning the basics of businesses and professions that are currently in demand. The resulting development of small businesses and micro-enterprises should create some 240,000 new jobs for women.

Of course, any policy aimed at strengthening families must address the question of housing. Under the Housing for Young Families program, more housing is being provided even as mortgage interest rates have been kept low enough to facilitate young families purchasing and nesting their own homes. This program is reminiscent of Singapore's own HDB schemes which encourage and support families to become home-owners themselves and thus build strong communities.

In addition to banks providing loans at reduced rates under the Consumer Loans for Young Families program for a period of three years, tax relief on personal income and abatement on property and land tax are provided to further help young families retire their loans expeditiously.

The neediest and most vulnerable members of society are benefiting significantly from the programs in this Year of the Family. For instance, at least 50 percent of donations collected in the Mahalla (urban division) Fund are being used for social support of families in need. Specialized government bodies, working in tandem with charitable and public organizations, will assist lonely elders, the disabled and low-income citizens.

Further, this year has seen more emphasis

on improving medical care for mothers and children. Health Weeks have been organized throughout the year for women of childbearing age. In addition, there is a concerted effort to see that all children are given prophylactic immunization against vaccine-preventable diseases. These programs are similar to the array of health initiatives successfully carried out by the Singapore Government over the years since the Island Republic's own independence.

These projects merely continue a determined effort by the Uzbekistan government and agencies to develop these areas. In fact, an international symposium on the "National model of maternal and child health care in Uzbekistan: Healthy mother – healthy child" was held last November (2011) in Tashkent. Some 300 world-known academics and representatives of healthcare-related international organizations took part in this conclave.

One of those attending this symposium was Margaret Chan, Director-General of the World Health Organization. Dr Chan praised Uzbekistan for how it is paying great attention to health issues, especially maternal and children's health.

As the country moved into its proclaimed Year of the Family, work on 264 model rural medical units got underway, along with 69 specialized family polyclinics which are being opened under the existing urban hospitals. Now, pregnant women in the rural areas are receiving free multivitamins while free diagnosis is being provided to women suffering from cancer. Medical personnel are being retrained and institutes are being re-equipped.

As should be obvious, the broad and thorough nature of these initiatives and programs are calibrated to make this Year of the Family a watershed year that will produce ongoing benefits for Uzbekistan's families and the society as a whole.





# *Boosting Investment Potential*

Investors are moving away from crisis-ridden Europe and yet-to-recover US markets. Uzbekistan with its huge reserve of natural resources, a skilled work force, growing infrastructure and a pro-development government, meets investor's needs to perfection.

Uzbekistan has been continuously working on creating favourable environment for increasing the flow of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). As a result of investor-friendly legislations, tax reductions, creation of SIZs and various other steps taken by the state, the prospects of FDI has greatly improved. As the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Islam Karimov, emphasis in his recent Independence Day address “Uzbekistan needs to focus on further improving the business environment, on the expansion of diverse privileges and incentives to attract foreign investment and introduction of latest technologies and, to this end, build up new, higher level relations with friendly states.”

## **Prudent Policies**

Uzbekistan devised a multi-pronged growth model, which on one hand strived to create a favourable environment to entice foreign investors and on the other hand remodelled the indigenous sectors, so as to make the economy export-oriented instead of import-oriented.

In its bid to attract more FDI into the economy, Uzbekistan employed multiple measures. New legal guarantees were initiated to protect the rights of foreign investors. For example, if laws become less favourable in a period of 10 years, from the time of investment, then foreign investors had the discretion to apply the laws that were in effect at the time of investment or choose those provisions of the new legislations that

suited them, after notifying the authorities. Registration process for foreign investors was simplified to one application, which got approved in three business days. The Uzbekistan government also cut tax rates, to benefit small and private enterprises. Two free industrial zones – Navoi and Angren – were developed, with special privileges and tax benefits conducive to foreign investors.

On top of these, additional measures pronounced by President Islam Karimov, in April 2012, also boosted the chances of foreign investors coming into Uzbekistan. Some of the more prominent measures in the President's decree stated that for investors investing USD5.0 million and

more, the taxpaying rules and regulations, including mandatory contribution fees, will remain unchanged for 10 years, from the date of registration. It also had provision for the State Commission to sell low liquidity facilities to foreign investors through direct contract. These and various other foreign investment policies, taken by the government of Uzbekistan, created a liberal investment environment and foreign investors eagerly accepted these opportunities.

Uzbekistan government also devised steps to change the economic profile of the country. The traditional manufacturer and exporter of raw materials developed into a manufacturer and exporter of high-





tech, value-added goods, through the policies taken. In December, 2010, the President signed a resolution on 'Priorities of Industrial Development in the Republic of Uzbekistan during 2011-2015.' This resolution served as the guiding force in the development of a sustainable, dynamic and balanced growth of Uzbekistan's manufacturing sector. A conscious effort was made to build the export capacity of the country. This was also accompanied by a gradual shift in the composition of its export goods from raw materials to high-tech ready goods with added value. The growth of the manufacturing sector boosted the utilization of domestic raw resources and reduced the country's dependency on imports.

These measures resulted in the first half of 2012 having a GDP growth rate of 8.1%. The manufacturing sector grew by 7.1%, while agricultural production and construction works increased by 7.1% and 8.1%, respectively. High growth rates were evident in other sectors as well; consumer goods production grew by 7.7%, localised merchandise by 25.7%, retail trade by 12.5% and services by 14.0%.

In the President's words, "The achieved high indicators is the confirmation of the correctness of development model chosen by us, the efficiency of new industries set up by us that has become locomotives of our economy." Almost identical sentiments have been expressed by the IMF's Executive Board report, which stated that Uzbekistan's high

growth in recent years have been the result of adherence to prudent macroeconomic policies that have shielded the country from global turbulence.

The creation of the Navoi Free Industrial and Economic Zone (FIEZ) and the Angren Special Industrial Zone (SIZ), designed on a model of public-private partnership, was another judicious step in promoting investment in Uzbekistan. These special zones are exempt from numerous taxes and enjoy special privileges. They are also provided with adequate transport and service infrastructure, labour security systems and comfortable living conditions.

Navoi FIEZ was created in 2008. Priority was given to industries producing electronic and electrical products, precision machinery and OEM parts for automobiles, pharmaceutical industry and medical products, plastic goods and polymers, food processing and packaging. It is now ready with road and rail connection, electricity, natural gas, telecommunication, drinking water, administrative and financial centres, custom office, logistics centre, and much more. Manufacturing of energy saving bulbs, LCD monitors, electric gas meters, ready medicines, generators, compressors and instrument sets for GM Uzbekistan cars, have started. In 2011, Navoi produced goods worth 35.9 billion Soums. The modern residential complex of Hanjin Navoi, over an area of 18,000 square meters, is already complete with facilities and is an attractive

incentive for foreign investors.

The success of Navoi prompted the creation of Angren SIZ. Angren SIZ will create a competitive advantage for Uzbekistan in the international logistics market. Angren will give special emphasis on chemical and petrochemical products, construction materials, pharmaceutical industries and medical products, leather products, food packaging and processing. The SIZ would ensure the efficient and comprehensive use of mineral resources, locally available raw materials, transport, engineering, communications and social infrastructure, further development and widespread use of Angren Logistics Centre, roads and container freight transport system.

## Investor Confidence

All these measure have helped to boost the confidence of the foreign investors in the stability of the economy. It is not surprising that more than USD3.0 billion of foreign investment is acquired every year, accounting for over 26.6% of total investment. In times of international economic downturn, Uzbekistan has restored investor faith, as is apparent with the Uzbekistan-US Business Forum held in August 2012. Over 30 US companies attended the meet and the US Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs, Robert Blake, said, "Uzbekistan has great economic potential and the US companies are interested in investing in the country."

## Navoi FIEZ at a Glance

### Facts

- Covers a territory of 564 ha
- Located in the centre of a multimodal logistic hub
- Located near Navoi International Airport
- Caters to capitals of 11 countries and 40 most dynamic cities, which lie within a radius of 2000 km
- Distance of Navoi from Tashkent, Samarkand and Bukhara is 490 km, 153 km and 110 km, respectively

### Privileges

- For FDI worth 3 to 10 million Euro, the period of exemption is 7 years
- For FDI worth 10 to 30 million Euros, the period of exemption is 10 years with 50 percent reduction of profit tax for the following 5 years
- For FDI worth more than 30 million Euros, the period of exemption is 15 years with 50 percent reduction of profit tax for the following 10 years
- Export oriented businesses exempt from custom duties on import of equipment, raw material and production components
- Economic transactions can be in foreign currency, agreed in the contract

### Good to Know Facts

- 35 hectares of land within FIEZ to be developed as public areas and green areas
- 100 hectares of land located 1.2 km from Navoi FIEZ to be developed as ultra modern residential area
- In partnership with air cargo transportation leader Korean Air, Navoi airport has been modernised to create international multi-modal logistics centre





Besides the US, Austria, Russia, Turkey, India, China, S. Korea, Singapore, Malaysia, Germany, Italy, Spain and various other countries have invested in various sectors of the economy. Though the state gives preference to foreign investors, who want to enter the manufacturing and high technology sector, investors are already present in heavy industries, automobile, construction material, electrical, food, light and others. The government of Uzbekistan's objective is to select good projects and not just attract investments.

This objective followed by the government has created the desired effect. Report by the Asian Development Bank, in April, estimates GDP growth rate of 8.4% in 2012. According to the ADB report, most of this growth can be credited to manufacturing industry and services.

In the coming four years, the manufacturing sector is expected to continue on this upward trajectory and its share in the GDP is expected to increase from 24.0% in 2010 to 28.0% in 2015. Leading this high growth rate will be sectors such as mechanical engineering and automobile production, chemical and food industries, pharmaceuticals and construction materials, all of which are expected to grow at double

their current rates. The state will provide special privileges to hi-tech schemes such as setting up of production of synthetic liquid fuels, construction of modern gas and chemical complexes to generate polyethylene and polypropylene goods, liquefied and compressed natural gas, mineral fertilizers and new types of chemical goods. These new schemes will involve the latest state-of-the-art technologies involving clean and green mechanisms, with emphasis on power-saving and environmental preservation.

Uzbekistan has charted out its developmental plans within the framework of the state Investment Programme. Approximately 23.6 trillion soums of capital investments are planned to be drawn into the economy, of which more than 5.74 trillion soums will be centralised and 17.9 trillion soums will be decentralised investments. The mega development plans conceived by Uzbekistan is partly to be fuelled by foreign investments. The investment climate in the country has been meticulously customised to build the confidence of the foreign investors and the government is leaving no stone unturned to secure an economically, politically and socially stable environment to motivate foreign investors to come into Uzbekistan. The country aspires to enter Top 10 ranking in the list of investment destination of annual report 'Doing Business' published by The World Bank.

With a global recession in process, Uzbekistan has established itself as an attractive haven for investment. According to ADB, Uzbekistan is one of the fastest growing economies in Central Asia, and aspires to become an upper middle-income country by 2020. Its main priority is to sustain its remarkable economic growth, create more jobs and improve the welfare of

## Recent Success Stories from Singapore

Uzbekistan provides ample opportunities for Singapore companies, which is proved by the success stories that have already been scripted. On 30th August 2011, CFM Holdings Ltd opened its subsidiary in Uzbekistan with the Uzbek-Singapore joint venture 'CFM ProEnergies' in Navoi FIEZ. Management Development Institute of Singapore opened in Tashkent and the first batch of students graduated in 2011. Indorama Group from Singapore has invested in textile and is currently in the process of setting up a world class gas based petrochemical complex. Prescient, an associated company of Singapore Technologies Electronics Limited is also ready to enter the Uzbek market.

its citizens. Uzbekistan is characterized by energy self-sufficiency. Foreign companies investing here, get access to five largest and most dynamic markets. Uzbekistan is also developing its road, rail and air transport, so that the country offers unmatched transit potential. Other supporting advantages include a 100% literate population, an international education system, industry-related vocational and professional training and a naturally beautiful and hospitable country. It is hardly surprising that with multiple positives such as these, Uzbekistan is seen as the perfect place for investment and travel, where the quality of life is comparable to the best in the world.

## Angren SIZ at a Glance

### Facts

- Huge mineral resources of Tashkent region
- Largest coal deposit in the country
- Distance of Angren from Tashkent, Ferghana, and Samarkand is 80 km, 240 km and 220 km, respectively
- Angren Logistics Centre to provide freight
- Nearby railway station of Abylk
- Two power stations at Novo-Angren, Angren
- Natural gas through Akhangaran-I pipeline

### Privileges

All tax benefits and privileges applicable to Navoi FIEZ are also applicable to Angren SIZ. The financial threshold at Angren has been lowered than Navoi, following proposals made by several investors.

- For FDI worth \$300,000 to \$3million, the period of exemption is 3 years
- For FDI worth \$3 million to \$10 million, the period of exemption is 5 years
- For FDI worth more than \$10 million, the period of exemption is 7 years





# International Fairs Showcase *Potential for Investment*

International fairs and expositions are a regular part of Uzbekistan's development plans to promote trade relations with other countries and to attract foreign investors. Over 50 exhibitions are held annually, which mirror the various sectors of Uzbek economy such as mining, machinery, automobile, plastics, cotton, agriculture, industry, tourism and more.

**T**he Ministry for Foreign Economic Relations, Investments and Trade of Uzbekistan regularly holds many international fairs. Three of the exhibitions that are held each year have been highlighted here. The Uzexpocenter, set up in 1992, in Tashkent, is the common venue for these fairs.

## Uzbekistan Agrominitech Expo

The fair is usually held in May. This year, it was attended by more than 100 manufacturers catering to agro-divisions such as fruit processing equipment, meat, fish and dairy products processing, milk processing, veterinary, packaging equipment, freezing technologies, chemicals for plant protection, syringes, greenhouse equipment, beekeeping and equipment for cottage industries such as sewing machines, carpet production, etc.



The exhibition is aimed at stimulating development of agriculture sector and helps to equip farmers with technology. Close to 200 companies from Europe, Israel, South Korea, Singapore, China, Turkey, and others participated. Representatives of small businesses, agricultural companies, specialists and farmers also attended. Huge number of contracts was signed at the fair.

## International Uzbek Cotton and Textile Fair



Held annually in October, this fair is attended by representatives of the cotton and textile industries, as well as cotton traders from all over the world. The fair is aimed at stimulating development of market mechanisms in cotton trading and improvement of business relations between Uzbek producers and their customers. Last year, about 600 representatives from across the world attended. Major attendees



“Long-term analysis of supply and demand on the world cotton market shows that Uzbekistan is one of its largest participants,” said President of the International Cotton Association, Ray Butler. “The potential of the country in this area is constantly increasing. The textile industry is also rapidly developing. The approach that focuses on export of products, with high added value, increases the efficiency of the national economy.”



were from China, Singapore, Bangladesh, South Korea and Russia apart from first-time visitors from other Asian countries. Sales contracts for Uzbek cotton fiber and textile products were signed. The fair this year will have bilateral negotiations as well as discussions about the world cotton market, cotton prospects of Uzbekistan, and investment climate for foreign investors.

## International Industrial Fair and Cooperation Exchange

The Industrial Fair is held mostly in October each year. In 2011, around 1000 companies from various parts of the world participated. Companies exhibited a huge number of products, which also included new samples. A significant number of contracts were signed. It has become a tradition to hold the fair and cooperation exchange in two phases; in the first phase, which is a regional one, companies sign treaties of intention. In the second phase, these transform to supply contracts for the manufacturers and constitute their order for the next year.



Singaporean companies are welcome to present their products and establish business contacts with their Uzbek partners. The Embassy of Uzbekistan also extends its support to the companies interested in participating in these fairs and expositions.

For more information, please visit  
<http://www.uzexpocentre.uz/>

# *Uzbekistan Embraces the Green Perspective*



Uzbekistan's rapid economic growth in recent years has been accompanied by the Republic's determination to link this growth with a strong commitment to environmental policies that will respect and preserve the natural environment of the country and the planet.

**G**reen has clearly become the colour of choice for concerned and responsible governments and economic leaders. This holds true not just for the world's mature economies, but also for countries like Uzbekistan, which continues to set impressive examples of a transition from a formerly command economy to an open market economy.

As it steps up the pace of its economic development, Uzbekistan is working to see that this development is not only economically sound but also environmentally sound. And in this pursuit of environmentally sound development, Uzbekistan is partnering with Singaporean agencies and companies to reach their objectives.

## **Environmental Dialogue**

For instance, in April of this year, the Singapore Environment Council (SEC) signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ecological Movement of Uzbekistan aimed at sharing its more than twenty years of experiences in the pursuit of effective policies on such vital matters as conservation, the judicious use of natural resources and enhanced regard for ecological safety at the national, regional and international levels.

This is quite an achievement for the Uzbekistan agency as it is the first time the SEC has inked an MOU with a foreign government-linked environmental organisation.

As Sayedrasul Sanginov, deputy chairman of the Ecological Movement of

Uzbekistan, said, "We view this partnership as a vital building block towards developing a solution to Uzbekistan's pressing environmental challenges - a solution we hope will eventually result in positive action and change."

Mr Sanginov then went on to point out that "Over the years, SEC has given strength and bearing to the environmental movement in Singapore by reaching out to the public through its educational, community and industrial arms." With an eye to the new relationship with its Singapore counterpart, Mr Sanginov said, "We look forward to embarking on this momentous journey together."

For his part, SEC's Executive Director Jose Raymond added, "This partnership is a key development in facilitating the Council's expanding role in driving sustainable business practices."

Looking ahead at the cooperative venture with its Uzbek counterpart, the SEC Director said, "Urban sustainability is at the heart of SEC's work - we have spent the past two decades campaigning for ways to infuse environmental sustainability into all aspects of economic development and urban growth."

He then went on to outline some of the SEC's major projects, such as the Singapore Green Labelling Scheme, which focuses on the manufacturing and industry sector; the Singapore Environmental Achievement Awards; as well as Project: Eco-Office, which targets the wider corporate/office sector and the Schools' Green Audit Awards, which focus on inculcating environmental values in students from a very young age.

"Through these projects, we have accumulated a wealth of experience, contacts, learning points and strategies for project planning, implementation, media outreach and fundraising," Mr Raymond noted, then added, "SEC hopes to be able to share the lessons we have learnt with an emerging green economy like Uzbekistan. We hope our input will be valuable in helping the country overcome the challenges that are inevitable during the transition from a brown to a green economy."



## Solar Solutions

Another company deeply interested in helping Uzbekistan move steadily from a brown economy to a green economy is REC, a leading vertically integrated solar energy company. The company produces polysilicon, solar wafers, cells and modules for the solar industry.

REC is a multinational corporation with major operations across the globe. However, the Singapore group is responsible for providing products and services in the Asia Pacific region.

REC Singapore is now in the planning stages of opening a representative office in Uzbekistan with an eye to scoping out policies expected to be implemented in order to better develop a sustainable renewable energy program in the Central Asian Republic.

A spokesperson for REC Singapore says the company sees bright prospects in Uzbekistan as the country's rapid economic growth spikes its need for energy supplies.

REC believes its products and services are uniquely suited to Uzbekistan's remote areas, where solar energy has the capacity to provide sufficient amounts of energy to enhance both the quality of life and the economic productivity of the people in these areas. And, of course, increased productivity means increased GDP for the whole nation.

REC's plans include cooperating with a local research institute and other energy experts there to develop more custom-made products. The Singapore company believes that this careful linking of REC's expertise with the local situation can become a role model for the region. It will also enable Uzbekistan's people to utilize their natural resources for export, hence providing the



*Central Asia Natural Gas Vehicles Exhibition & Conference*

means to raise the capital for investment in the country and therefore raise the standard of living and technology.

### On The Road, Along Green Lines

Uzbekistan has also embarked on a number of its own initiatives to assure that its steady economic development proceeds along environmentally sound tracks. One of these involves natural gas vehicles, which seek to replace one of the leading sources of CO<sub>2</sub> gases threatening the environment – standard internal combustion motor vehicles.

Uzbekistan's market in these natural gas vehicles has seen exponential growth in just the last couple of years, from 5,000 to 300,000 vehicles. Plus, forecasts of the market are for this growth to remain steady into the foreseeable future.

In fact, Uzbekistan recently hosted a Central Asia Natural Gas Vehicles (NGV) Exhibition and Conference in Tashkent. All Events Group Pte Ltd, a Singaporean

business-to-business information & media company, organized and managed the ground-breaking exhibition and conference through its NGV Transportation division.

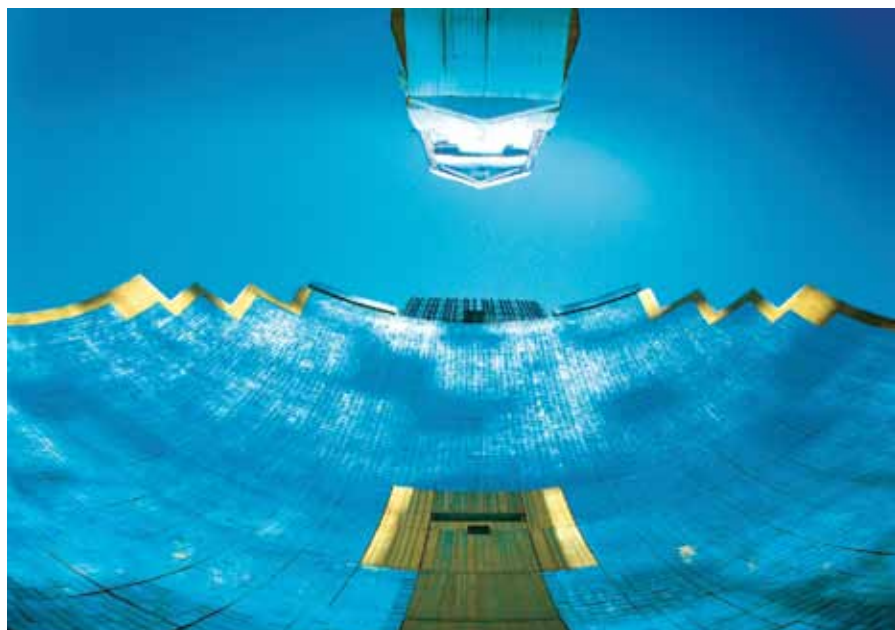
At this day event in mid-June of this year, some 300 delegates from 26 countries gathered to exchange views on the current state and perspectives for the gas motor market, investment and resource potential of Uzbekistan, and the role of strategic partnerships in alternative fuel energy.

Speaking of strategic partnerships, Singapore expertise also proved pivotal in this venture. The group worked closely with the well-trained professional team at the host's Uzexpocentre and the Association of Enterprises for Alternative Fuels and Energy, which is the Singaporean group's partners in Uzbekistan.

Following on this successful collaboration, All Events Pte Ltd will again be working with Uzbek partners soon in a major "green event": organising the Gas for Transportation and Renewable Energy Exhibition to be held in the Central Asian republic this coming April.

As seen from all of the above, official support from a wide range of Uzbek ministries and agencies testify further to the government's commitments to salutary green policies. It further underscores what Jose Raymond of the SEC has said: "During my short time in Uzbekistan and through meeting with various officials, it became very apparent that the Uzbekistan government was interested in implementing programs which centred around sustainability and clean living. It was also very apparent that the Uzbekistan government wanted to do a lot for their people and understood very clearly how a clean living and working environment was essential for Uzbekistan's development."

From just such a solid foundation are strong partnerships, and steady progress, made.



*Solar furnace in Uzbekistan*

# Partnering for Success

“I believe that Uzbekistan, with its strategic location in Central Asia, is positioned to be what Singapore has been to Southeast Asia. This gives a great locational advantage apart from the good quality of infrastructure, lifestyle and security which a foreign investor wants.”

**Amarnath Jhunjunwala,**  
Director of Verigrow Pte Ltd



Verigrow Pte Ltd is a Singapore company that specialises in high-end fabrics. The firm first learned about the vast opportunities offered in Uzbekistan through an Uzbek government delegation which visited Singapore and outlined the country's strengths, advantages and promise. Seeing the resource base and location of Uzbekistan as a perfect fit for its company, Verigrow started looking more closely at the Republic. Following this introduction, Verigrow representatives visited Uzbekistan and started discussions with the government, which ultimately proved fruitful for both sides.

It recently moved into Uzbekistan full-scale, taking over a silk complex in Namangan in the northeastern corner of the country. (Namangan is also the country's third largest city.)

Verigrow acquired one of the Republic's largest silk manufacturing facilities, which at one point in time employed more than 8,000 workers. However, in recent times, the facility was not operating optimally and required substantial new investments.

The facility required modernisation with new equipment and management practices. Verigrow submitted a proposal to the government to revive this facility by setting up a fully integrated mulberry-to-fabric manufacturing plant, which was quickly

accepted, and the process of revitalisation was underway.

Verigrow is now set to invest \$10 million in this project over the years from 2012 through the end of 2016, with \$5 million coming in the first three years. By the end of this year alone, the complex is expected to turn out 240 tons of raw silk and two million square metres of silk fabrics. It's also projected that 80% of this output will be exported. More, 700 new jobs will be created. Verigrow is also planning to set up specialised mulberry plantations on 200 hectares of land allocated by the Namangan regional administration.

In a recent interview with our publication, Amarnath Jhunjunwala, Verigrow's director, proved very upbeat about his company's move into Uzbekistan. He sounded a strongly appreciative note about the support his company has received from the central and local governments. As Jhunjunwala put it, "I feel that the government is continuously facilitating a better environment and a less regulatory framework to make it easy to carry out business."

Jhunjunwala also drew encouraging comparisons between Uzbekistan and Singapore, which not too long ago produced its own economic miracle: "I believe that Uzbekistan, with its strategic location in

Central Asia, is positioned to be what Singapore has been to Southeast Asia. This gives a great locational advantage apart from the good quality of infrastructure, lifestyle and security which a foreign investor wants." He then added that "The local population is literate and hardworking, which is a big plus for business."

When asked what are the most attractive features of this market and those sectors that hold particular promise, Mr Jhunjunwala replied that "Uzbekistan is resource-rich with low value-added industries. Any industry which is able to leverage on its resource base to add value and cater to the regional market will be a winning proposition. Sector-wise, textile, energy and agro-based industry hold big potential."

Noting that Uzbekistan has been one of the most stable among the Central Asian countries since achieving independence in 1991, Mr Jhunjunwala shared his belief that "for anyone looking at Central Asia, Uzbekistan is best positioned to set up your base in. It offers good connectivity to the region and is competitive in terms of business and living cost."

"As a result," he confidently concluded, "This seems to be the obvious choice."



# Sharing Singapore's IT Expertise with Uzbekistan

Giving a quick review of his company's experience in Central Asia, **Jonathan Ratnam**, General Manager of Prescient Systems says,

“Prescient sees great opportunities in the Central Asian region in general and particularly in the Republic of Uzbekistan with its forward looking policies and incentives.”

Here we take a broader look at Prescient's successful experience in the Republic.

Following the successful path taken by so many rapidly developing societies (such as Singapore's), Uzbekistan is intent on building a strong knowledge-based economy. To do so, government and industry leaders realise that they must not only call upon the skills and drive of their own population and their home-grown technology, but must find partners from abroad who will bring in their own expertise and experience in helping Uzbekistan reach the pinnacles of IT achievement.

One of the foreign partners Uzbekistan has reached out to is Singapore's Prescient Systems & Technologies Pte. Ltd. A logical choice: Prescient is a leading provider

of training, simulation solutions and related infrastructure for the commercial, civil training and education markets. An established brand name for simulator-based training solutions and instrumentation training systems, Prescient is transforming business operations with capability-driven training solutions to address a rapidly changing world.

Prescient has long forged strong partnerships with state organizations in Asia and the Middle East to develop and strengthen their training regimes. Its market research has now highlighted the enormous potential that the Central Asian region offers, with its large domestic markets which have been exhibiting tremendous growth over the last decade.

The Republic of Uzbekistan stood out for Prescient in the Central Asian region as having an optimal blend of markets, youthful population, infrastructure and government support for foreign companies' engagement in Central Asia.

Seeing this potential, Prescient approached the Embassy of the Republic of Uzbekistan in Singapore to discuss business development in the country. They have received significant help from the mission, in developing contacts with critical government and industrial agencies as well as in providing it with useful information and advice.

Tapping on the assistance provided by the Embassy, Prescient is working to develop ties with relevant ministries to develop opportunities in the fields of Specialised

Training, E-Learning and the development of supporting systems and infrastructure for general education. These initiatives are aligned with the Uzbek Government's goal of developing a knowledge-based economy.

Prescient's business direction was quickly found to be compatible with the vision of the Uzbek government in developing their burgeoning ICT industry. Discussions were held between Uzelteksanoat, an Association of Enterprises, Radio-Electronic, Electrotechnical and Instrument Enterprises, and a Memorandum was signed to undertake a computer assembly/manufacturing facility in the new Angren Special Industrial Zone (not far from Tashkent), which was incorporated in April of this year.

As a first step, the facility will house a modern assembly plant for producing computers to meet educational and government requirements. This will grow from desktops to laptops and tablet computers. The initial supply chain will employ equipment sourced both from within and without Uzbekistan, with a view to increasing the portion of local content over time.

By setting up this facility in Uzbekistan, Prescient aims to create a critical capability for the localization of IT solutions, as well as to create a vital capability to support government business, education and consumer usage of Information Technology and the use of Internet computing.

Prescient is also actively working with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to support their development programs in Uzbekistan. This includes supporting studies to evaluate and develop energy-efficient buildings.

The multi-faceted Singapore company is also in discussions to develop training methodologies and systems to support the training of public transport operators to meet the growing transport demands in the cities.

As Prescient expands its contacts and operations in the Central Asian region, it is happy to have a strong foothold in Uzbekistan, with its future-focused policies and programs. Prescient's General Manager Jonathan Ratnam reiterates this: "We will continue to develop our relationship with the government agencies and relevant industry associations in Uzbekistan."





# MDIS Tashkent: *A Vision of Excellence*

MDIS Tashkent was established in 2007 with the vision to build an institute per excellence for business studies, which would cater to students from Uzbekistan and other CIS countries. Courses in entrepreneurship, management, business, marketing, banking, accounting, finance, hotel and resort management, in collaboration with highly acclaimed universities in Australia and UK, were charted.

**R**ecognized by the Ministry of Higher and Secondary Specialized Education of the Republic of Uzbekistan, MDIS Tashkent has established itself as one of the country's premier institutes. MDIS has always explored uncharted territory and its global expansion, by optimizing on the growth opportunities in Uzbekistan, is no surprise.



## First Batch of Graduates

For MDIS Tashkent, October 7th, 2011, was the culmination of four years of dedication, as the first batch of graduates passed out. The MDIS Tashkent – University of Wales Graduation Ceremony, held at MDIS Tashkent UniCampus, was a new beginning for one of the leading private education institutes in Singapore that opened its campus four years back. On the 19th of October, 2012, the 2nd batch of graduate students will be passing out. Students passing out this year would be graduating from two University courses –

that of University of Wales and Southern Cross University. According to Saidnumon Mansurov, a postgraduate student in banking and finance, “the great team of professionals provides high quality education with professional experience. Teachers come from foreign countries and provide both academic knowledge and practical awareness about cultural differences.”

That the first graduating class included two students, who were conferred first class Honours in Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Banking and Finance, speaks volumes about the faculty. More than 1500 students from across Uzbekistan as well as international students from South Korea, Ukraine, Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Kazakhstan, study at MDIS Tashkent.



For Agzam Niyazkhodjayev, a graduate student, enrolling in MDIS Tashkent had been a life-changing decision; “I am absolutely sure that the knowledge acquired at MDIS Tashkent will help me to contribute to the prosperity of my country.”

## AN ACTION-PACKED 2011

**MDIS Tashkent** had an eventful 2011; students participated in a tourism industry conference, gaining insight into the tourism industry and its challenges as a career option. They also participated in the International Career and Education Exhibition in Tashkent. **MDIS Tashkent** faculty developed specialized training courses for commercial banks. A Career Centre was started to assist students with placement. MDIS Secretary-General Dr. R. Theyvendran received the Commemorative Medal from the **Government** of Uzbekistan, the first Singaporean to be thus honored.






  
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The MMI brand name is equated with the stamp of quality and assurance. MMI achieved many prestigious accreditations like ISO 9001:2000, Singapore Quality Class (SQC), Singapore Quality Class for Private Education Organisations (SQC-PEO), Singapore Franchise Mark, Open & Distance Learning Quality Council Accreditation Council (BAC), etc and adding onto the recognition is the Edutrust certification.

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# A Hot Coffee for Cold Mornings



Mr Tan Wang Cheow, Chairman and Managing Director of Food Empire Holdings Limited

Few joys could compare with enjoying a cup of strong MacCoffee early in the morning, with the chill still in the air. The smell of freshly brewed coffee beans plus the warmth and invigorating taste of the coffee can be an ideal start to your day.

**And what if you get all this in an instant, everyday!**

**F**ood Empire has made life simpler for many busy Uzbeks with its instant coffee and other instant food products, and that too without compromising on the original, homemade flavour.

Traditionally, Uzbekistan is a beverage-loving country. It is no wonder that the country has fallen in love with all the products of Food Empire's range — including MacCoffee, chocolate drinks, and a wide choice of snack foods.

Food Empire set foot in Uzbekistan in 2000 and started off by introducing its flagship product, MacCoffee Instant 3-in-1 Coffee.

Within 12 years since then, the company has managed to rise to become a household name today. Food Empire has established a personal touch with its Uzbek consumers with its below-the-line advertising, such as wet and dry sampling

and in-store promotions. A variety of billboard advertising campaigns are also being implemented.

With the evolution of the coffee drinking culture, there is a demand for a wider product range. To cater to this, Food Empire has introduced MacCoffee Agglomerated and Freeze-Dried Coffee to the Uzbeks.

These collaborative and tireless efforts have today made MacCoffee one of the strongest and trusted coffee brands in Uzbekistan.

Besides Uzbekistan, Food Empire is deeply entrenched in Russia and Central Asia, with the 3-in-1 MacCoffee mix and MacTea selling the most — a perfect combination for the region's extremely cold weather.

Mr. Tan Wang Cheow, Managing Director of Food Empire Holdings, says with the company's global turnover now well over the USD220 million mark, they

“The Group's products include a wide variety of beverages including regular and flavoured coffee mixes and cappuccinos, chocolate drinks, instant breakfast cereal and flavoured fruit teas.

It also markets a refreshing range of food products including snack food such as potato crisps, confectionery and an assortment of frozen convenience food such as bite-sized morsels of seafood, dim sum and spring roll.

Food Empire has been warming its way into coffee lovers' hearts all across the world for the last two decades. With its line-up of high quality products and clearly demarcated plans for expansion, Food Empire is here to rule the food and beverage world.”

are ready to expand into new regions in Asia, the Middle East and African continent and convert them into new core markets.

## Empire setup

Started in 1992 in Singapore, Food Empire Holdings is a SGX-listed global leading food company that manufactures and markets food products. It was the first company to sell three-in-one coffee mixes in Russia and Central Asia. Today, the company sells more than 3 billion servings of coffee each year.

Food Empire's products, more than 200 of them, are exported to over 60 countries in markets such as Russia, Eastern Europe, Central Asia, the Middle East and U.S. The Group has 17 offices (representative and liaison) — in Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Iran, Poland, Turkey, Bahrain, Mongolia and Vietnam.





## Food Empire Wishes Uzbekistan A Happy 21<sup>st</sup> Independence Day!



SGX mainboard-listed Food Empire Holdings (Food Empire) established its presence in Uzbekistan in 2000 and since then, the company has grown to be one of the strongest market leaders in Uzbekistan instant coffee mix market. Food Empire is famed for its proprietary brands, including MacCoffee, Petrovskaya Sloboda, Klassno, Hyson, OrienBites and Kracks and they are available in more than 60 countries worldwide.

Since its public listing in 2000, Food Empire has won numerous accolades and awards including being ranked one of "The Most Valuable Singapore Brands" at the national brand award organised by IE Singapore. MacCoffee was ranked one of "The Strongest Singapore Brands" and the company has been named one of the "Best under a Billion" companies in Asia by Forbes Magazine.



**Food Empire**

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**Greetings to the government & the people of Uzbekistan on their 21<sup>st</sup> Independence Day**



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**Congratulations to the government & the  
people of Uzbekistan on their  
21<sup>st</sup> Anniversary of Independence**



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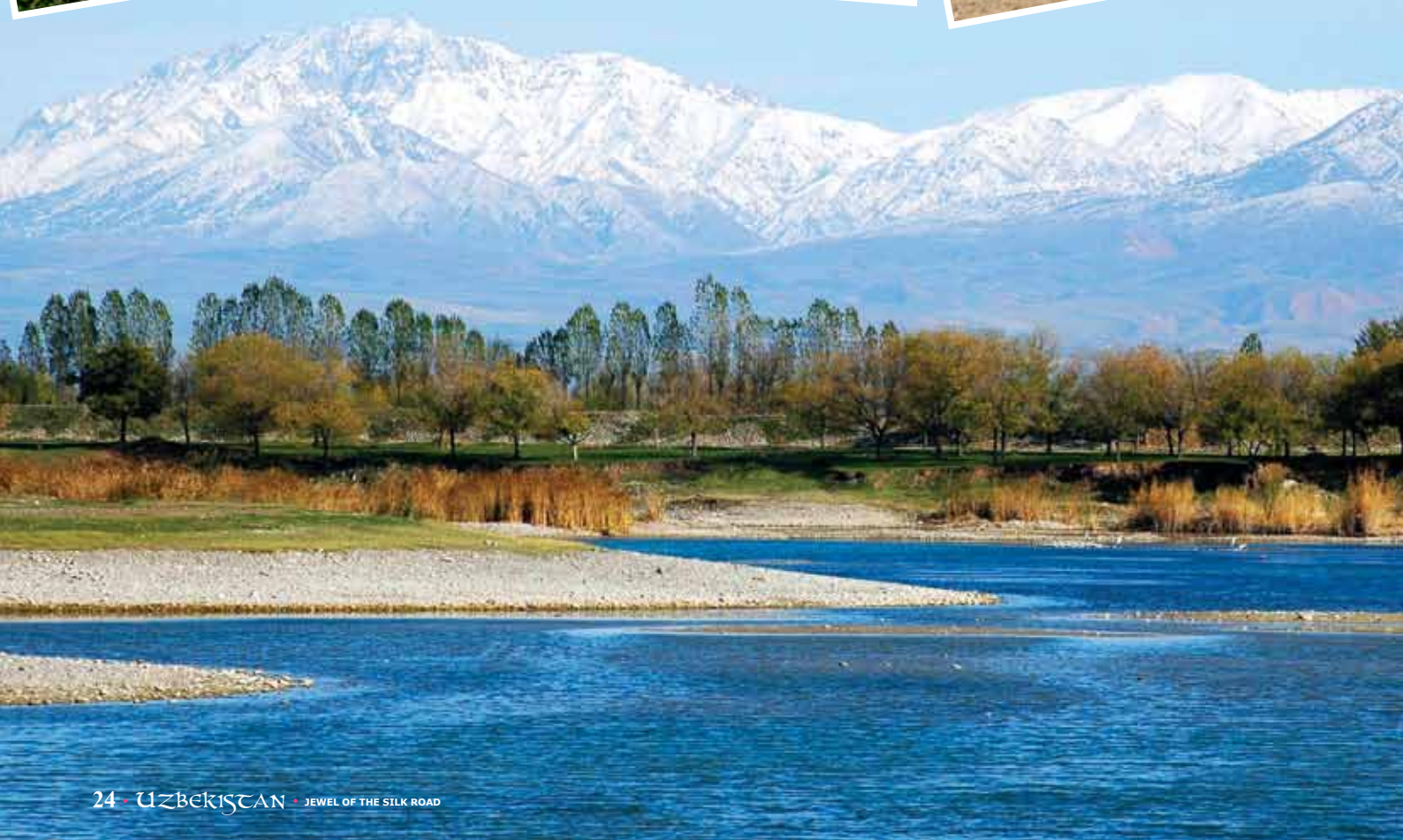
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# On the Silk Road

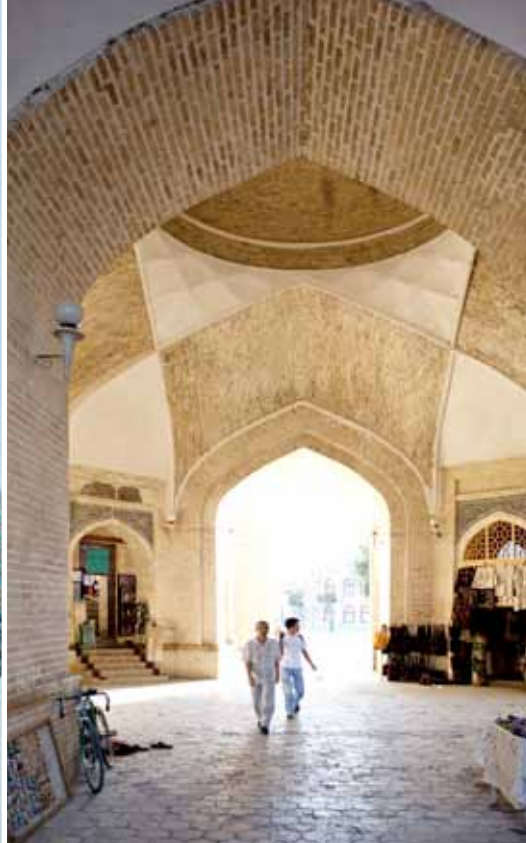
“Away from the teeming streets of Singapore, Uzbekistan seems a world apart, cocooned in the heart of Central Asia. Remnants of a fascinating past, the Oriental mystique of caravanserais, the time-less cities of Samarkand and Bukhara, combined with modern Tashkent it is like a Magic Carpet Ride,” says Aaron Stewart, from Sports+Travel Magazine, Singapore, who travelled to Uzbekistan with photographer Eugene Soh.







Samarkand



Bukhara



Tashkent

For tourists from Singapore, Uzbekistan, wrapped in millennia of mystery, comes across as huge, roughly 600 times in size! From soaring mountains to the grassy steppe, from deserts to the valleys, it covers almost all types of terrain. In addition to the natural beauty, what takes your breath away is the feeling of going back in time, almost 3000 years.

### The Tale of Three Cities

Uzbekistan is home to some of the world's most ancient cities that stand witness to names which you know through your history books. Samarkand is the second largest city in Uzbekistan and in 2001 was added to the UNESCO World Heritage List as Samarkand – Crossroads of Cultures. Once the centre of Islamic studies, it became the capital of Timur's Empire in the 14th century.

Samarkand dates back to 700 BC and has been one of the continually inhabited cities of the world. It is best known for the Registan Square, which in ancient times was the centre of the city. With three historic madrassas, it is the city's single-most recognizable structure. Built on an opulent scale, it is here that the erstwhile ruler and mathematical genius – Ulugh Begh – once taught. Today, the dorm rooms house the handicraft shops, which possibly are the best places to bargain for local art and craft! The Bibi-Khanym Mosque is yet another landmark which you should not miss. Even if necropolises are not your

thing, it is strongly advised that you visit the Shah-i-Zinda. This blue-marbled graveyard houses a lineage of Timur's relatives and military aristocrats over nine centuries. The long, narrow walkway, flanked by beautiful mosaic-walled buildings, is a memorable sight. There is an interesting story which you can put to a test! Count the steps that lead up to the Necropolis – if they do not match while going up and coming down, it is proof that you have sinned and it's time for atonement.

While Uzbekistan is home to many other ancient cities, such as Khiva and Shahrissabz, the other must-see city is the 2,600-year-old Bukhara, another World Heritage Site. Bukhara, too, is awash with historic sites, including the soaring Kalyan Minaret, a 45-metre tall monument that still dominates the skyline of the city. The Ark of Bukhara is a 1,500-year-old fortress that inspires awe. Uzbekistan is a foodie's delight, and Bukhara has its own claim to fame with the 'Bukhara Obi Nan' – a flatbread that locals vouch to be the country's best.

Though Tashkent has claimed its place as a modern city, you can still see glimpses of its mesmerizing past with places such as the Chorsu Bazaar, which is one of the best places to see Uzbekistan's rich tapestry of food and faces. Once part of the Silk Road, it has been home to every ethnic community living in Central Asia since many centuries. At Tashkent, you should not miss the physics-sun solar laser located at a high altitude in the Tian-Shan Mountains, 45 km

outside the city. The 40-meter tall solar panel is a combination of 62 large individually controlled mirrors arranged in a concave shape to collect solar energy. An important centre for scientific experiments, this is a marvel of modern science.

Just a short drive from Tashkent, the Chimgan Mountains is a great escape into the country's natural landscape with scenic valleys and villages tucked in between. Biting into a juicy apple, straight from the street vendor, and feeling the crisp mountain air is a pleasure beyond words. This is also the country's ski-zone, drawing large number of tourists.



Khiva

To travel in Uzbekistan and not mention its cuisine is a crime! Plov, manti, shurpa, shashlik, lagman, samsa with their wonderfully tempting smell should be had piping hot. The vastness and beauty of the country has to be covered with sufficient time in hand and may not be covered in one trip. Make your bucket list, so that the best things are not left out.

# Property & Travel Exchange



AX Travels ventures into Uzbekistan



AX Property Developments' team in Uzbekistan

People-to-people exchanges are the fastest way to leverage on the growth opportunities between two countries. Getting Singaporeans to visit Uzbekistan and developing health and recreational zones in mountainous regions for tourists are some active steps that have been taken by AX Holdings, a Singapore company.

Since 2009, AX Holdings has been organizing business missions that help Singaporean businesses to expand their ties in Uzbekistan. In its second phase of development, the company is concentrating on three growing areas — tourism, real estate and capital management.

Two new subsidiaries, AX Exotic Travels Pte Ltd. and AX Property Developments, were launched in 2009 and 2010 respectively, to focus on these areas. Promoting and arranging travel to exotic destinations is the aim of the travel subsidiary. As Mr. Ryan Raman, Asia Pacific Operations Director, AX Holdings, says, “Given Uzbekistan’s richness in culture and hospitality, we are aiming to promote this alluring yet affordable destination to our corporate clients, members as well as fellow Singaporeans.” The company is taking direct, result-oriented steps to make inroads into the Uzbek travel market.

In November 2011, a familiarization trip was organized to Uzbekistan to establish travel contacts and explore new tourism opportunities between Singapore and Uzbekistan. According to Mr. Raman, “the trip followed Uzbekistan’s election to the Executive Council of the UN World Tourism Organization and, hence, was more special for us.”

The same year, the company participated in the 17th Tashkent International Tourism Fair. The fair gives international travel

**Uzbek delicacies in Singapore**



Besides exploring Uzbekistan’s natural beauty, Singapore residents can now relish Uzbekistan’s culinary specialties such as plov, samsa and lamb shashlik in Singapore itself. Café Lyubi Menya, the newly established boutique café at Burlington Square in Singapore, offers international cuisines such as Uzbekistan’s, Italian’s and other Western cuisines along with local favourites. Thanks to AX Exotic Travels, which organised an exclusive presentation on Uzbekistan, guests were treated to authentic Uzbek dishes, prepared by their Chef from Uzbekistan.

operators a chance to meet the local tour companies. In this effort, Exotic was supported by the National Association of Travel Agents Singapore (NATAS) and the Singapore Tourism Board (STB).

A Mega Info-tour in November 2011, was organized for the media. It took them across Bukhara, Samarkand, Tashkent, the Charvak Lake and the Chimgan Mountains.

The tour was followed by media publicity and country presentations during February and March 2012. The ninth edition of the internal quarterly newsletter ‘InterLINX’ was brought out in the first quarter of 2012.

Apart from travel, AX Holdings has ventured into real estate with AX Property Developments. They plan to build health and recreational centers in the pristine and beautiful mountain regions of Uzbekistan. The company has acquired properties reserved under the Health and Recreation sector and has started several new projects from 2011. The Eagles Rock Resort in the Chimgan Mountains, one of Uzbekistan’s most beautiful regions, is a popular project. Designed to be compatible with the environment, the projects are aimed both at the domestic and foreign tourism markets.

Travel hungry Singaporeans are always game for exotic locales. And Uzbekistan is a country that combines beauty, safety and commendable infrastructure. “We are at the right place at the right time, matching market forces of demand and supply”, said, Mr. Raman.





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AXHL is the appointed representative of the Chamber of Commerce & Industry of Uzbekistan in Singapore, providing support in **Business & Trade Advisory Consultancy, Real Estate & Private Capital Management Advisory, Marketing Communications (MarCom), Advertising, Design & Media Productions, Event Management & Consultancy** as well as **Travel Consultancy** to the Jewel of the Silk Road.

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# Young Music Talents from Uzbekistan Regale Singapore Audiences



Behzod Abduraimov

Adelya Nartadjieva

Singapore audiences were recently able to sample the fruits of Uzbekistan's long and deep support of the musical arts when two young virtuosos from the Central Asian republic gave bravura performances here.

The love of music seems to be an indelible characteristic of the Uzbek people. Indeed, the Uzbek leadership supports and encourages the development of music and other arts through state programs, music competitions, awards and new music schools. In fact, Uzbekistan boasts the oldest music university in Central Asia, the State Conservatory of Uzbekistan. Then, following from this great tradition, a Presidential resolution was issued to create 136 new art and music schools and reconstruct 142 already established ones from 2009 to 2014.

Numerous competitions are held in the country to identify, promote and educate music talents. Covering all genres of musical performance, these competitions are widely contested, with the winners frequently going on to international fame. The Sharq Taronalari International Music Festival, held in Samarkand since 1997, further demonstrates the country's commitment to studying and promoting the nation's musical

heritage and connecting to other nations.

Music lovers in Singapore were recently able to sample the fruits of this commitment when they were treated to two stirring performances by stellar young musicians from Uzbekistan: pianist Behzod Abduraimov and violinist Adelya Nartadjieva. Both performances, at separate concerts, left a lasting impression on their appreciative audiences.

Pianist Behzod Abduraimov debuted with the Singapore Symphony Orchestra under the direction of conductor Lan Shui at the Esplanade Concert Hall in July. He turned in a bravado performance, entralling the audience with Tchaikovsky's *Piano Concerto No. 1*, *Nielsen's Helios Overture* and Rachmaninov's *Caprice Bohémien*.

A pupil of Tamara Popovich at the Uspensky State Central Lyceum in Tashkent, Abduraimov has given many concerts in the USA, Italy, Russia and Uzbekistan, to rave reviews by critics. He is currently working on his undergraduate degree under Stanislav

Loudenitch at the International Centre for Music at Park University, Kansas City.

Violinist Adelya Nartadjieva shared the stage with the T'ang Quartet in March this year at Singapore Yong Siew Toh Concert Hall. (She is herself a second-year student at the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music.)

Leading a sextet in Richard Strauss' *Capriccio*, the graceful Adelya performed like a virtuoso, her rendition moving and opulent.

This was Nartadjieva's second featured performance at the Concert Hall. In February, she appeared with the conservatory orchestra. Conducted by Prof. Jason Lai, Tchaikovsky's *Violin Concerto* came to life in her hands. Critics hailed the performance; some even noted that it was on a par with professionals in the field.

Such music exchange programs which add a new dimension to the cultural bonds between the countries can also benefit Singapore and Uzbekistan musicians enormously. With a growing number of musicians from both countries participating in international music festivals held in their two countries, bilateral ties take on a rich cultural flavor. As music is the universal language, such exchanges as these strengthen the valuable communication between the two nations.





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