

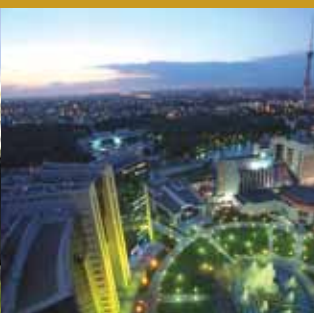
# UZBEKISTAN

## JEWEL OF THE SILK ROAD

**SOCIAL POLICY:**  
How Housing  
Enhances Living Standards

**TRAVEL & TOURISM:**  
Lasting Legacy of  
the Old Silk Road

**INVESTMENT & TRADE:**  
Investment Potential of Uzbekistan





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“Today, on this marvelous day, we naturally evaluate the accomplishments we have achieved in the past twenty two years on our way toward the splendid goals we set – the wide-ranging efforts to build a democratic state and an economy on fundamentally new foundations; the growth in the level and quality of life; and the mounting transformation of our cities and villages, our entire nation, in appearance and in terms of comfort”

**Islam Karimov**  
President of the Republic of Uzbekistan

# PRESIDENT'S INDEPENDENCE DAY ADDRESS

**D**ear compatriots!  
Esteemed guests!  
Today, the entire nation, all our people are celebrating, with incredible fervor, the 22nd anniversary of state independence of the Republic of Uzbekistan, which cardinally changed the meaning of our life, our consciousness and the way of thinking, an independence that our forefathers had strived for centuries.

It is my great pleasure to congratulate you – respected compatriots, and all the people of Uzbekistan – sincerely, from the bottom of my heart, on this remarkable date, on the holiday that is truly greatest, truly dearest for every one of us.

We perceive of independence, its essence and significance primarily as a right. Achievement of independence is precisely an opportunity to fulfill our great and sacred obligation, that is, to command our

destinies and the fate of our country on our own, along with its natural, economic and intellectual resources; to mobilize all this startling potential for the good of our people, by thoroughly understanding how great a history, culture and spirituality we have; and to revitalize our age-old values and faith.

Independence means to be independent of anyone at any time, to secure sustainable growth rates of the economy, consistently boost the wellbeing of the population, and bolster the standing and prestige of our country in the international arena, taking into account our national interests and long-term objectives.

At the same time, independence means building a robust backbone for our future, fostering a mature and comprehensively advanced, independent-thinking, courageous new generation, inferior to no one in anything, a generation capable of

continuing with our great undertakings.

Today, on this marvelous day, we naturally evaluate the accomplishments we have achieved in the past twenty two years on our way toward the splendid goals we set – the wide-ranging efforts to build a democratic state and an economy on fundamentally new foundations; the growth in the level and quality of life; and the mounting transformation of our cities and villages, our entire nation, in appearance and in terms of comfort. Tell me, dear friends: would it have been possible to make so important, internationally acknowledged achievements, without attaining independence?

The answer to this question is: No, absolutely no.

Independence and independence alone has served as a sturdy, the most potent foundation for us to reach these high accomplishments.

I believe in this context it would be appropriate to ask ourselves who we used to be yesterday and who we have become today.

Perhaps a lot of compatriots still remember that as recently as little more than two decades ago, Uzbekistan found itself in an abyss of extreme socio-economic misery; it was a backward region with a biased, raw material-based economic development vector, with an absolute monopoly of cotton production. They recall how low the living conditions of the people were, and all this led our Republic to the verge of disaster.

In a historically brief span of time, our country, as the majority of international observers note, has turned from a land incapable of supporting itself, into a modern, independent and sovereign nation that is advancing at steady rates, a nation that relies on its own virtue and capacities, that is capable of defending its borders, its peaceful and harmonious life – and this inspires us with a sense of pride.

To showcase the considerable achievements and spectacular accomplishments we have made in the past years, I would like to cite just a few facts and figures that brilliantly reflect our nation's current potential and development rates.

To date, Uzbekistan's gross domestic product has grown 3.1 times if compared to figures for the year 2000, and in per capita calculations it has risen 2.6 times. The volume of exports has increased 4.4 times; the nominal wage has multiplied 22 times in comparable prices; the average retiree pension has grown 12.7 times; per capita real incomes have swelled 8.4 times, while the economic growth within the last six years has been exceeding eight per cent. We would barely be mistaken, if we suggest that these kind of indicators are rare today across the entire world.

Our achievements in the past period also include fuel, energy and grain independence; the total self-sufficiency in essential consumer goods; and crucially, the public healthcare (notably, the 3.2 times reduction in maternal mortality and the 3.4 times decrease in child mortality, the growth in life expectancy from 66 to 73.5 years) – all suggestive of an incredible path of growth and development that we have travelled, of the rising living standards of our people.

Today, with time, we are convinced once again of the correctness of the well thought-out strategy of democratic reforms we opted for, acknowledged throughout the world as the Uzbek Model of development that completely meets the interests of our people.

When one speaks of the principal driving force behind our accomplishments, we can say with confidence that today, with our

world outlook, consciousness, thinking, attitude to life, to work, to the world surrounding us, we completely differ from ourselves of yesterday, of the 1990s.

Today we are a people with free thought, with confidence in its virtue, with persistently growing political, legal and cultural maturity, with a clear perception of the future, of the things and people we live and labor for.

We set out with a great goal, to build a democratic state with a market economy and a civil society, to join the ranks of advanced nations of the planet. And no force can turn us away from this path.

Esteemed compatriots!

In these turbulent and alarming times, when various regions of the globe, including those around us, experience mounting confrontation and armed conflicts, one cannot stay indifferent and unconcerned, and the current realities require that we be more vigilant and attentive, prepared to curb any attempts posing threat to our national security.

We consider that our most critical priority is to consolidate the truly invaluable wealth, namely, the reigning atmosphere of friendship, interethnic and civic harmony, kindness and compassion; to build up mutually-respectful cooperation with countries located both near and far.

I would like, from this point of view, that the principle “We need peace and harmony, that has been deeply absorbed in the flesh and blood of our people,” to become the most pressing task for every one of us.

Dear friends!

Let me take this opportunity to express my sincerest and kindest wishes to the ambassadors of foreign nations and representatives of international organisations and all esteemed guests who are present on this occasion and share our joy.

At these unforgettable moments, I deem it my duty to express my deepest respect and bow before the people of our hard-working

and magnanimous nation, who has seen much in their lifetime, who has become hardened amid tests, who has been writing down bright pages into its age-old history, and who display genuine self-sacrifice to secure the prosperity of the current and future life of Uzbekistan.

Addressing our sons and daughters – my children, our hope and support – who have filled this magnificent square, I would like to say: On our way toward the gracious goal of building a country with a great future, I rely first and foremost on you – the brave and initiative-prone youth, a healthy and extensively advanced generation that aspires to conquer summits in science and knowledge, that which is capable of overcoming any obscurities, and that which has been turning into a decisive force in our country.

Anywhere I go, be it an official ceremony or a forum, when I meet you, the representatives of the younger generation, when I look into your eyes that shine with enthusiasm, when I look at you full of power and energy, my heart gets overfilled with a sense of infinite delight and pride. I earnestly love you all and I am prepared to devote my entire self for you, for your happiness and future.

May you always be in heights, my dear children!

Respected compatriots, dear friends!

This dazzling and blissful evening, by mentally embracing you all, I sincerely congratulate you time and again on the greatest holiday – the Independence Day of our native Uzbekistan!

I wish you sound health, happiness and the best of luck, affluence and wellbeing to your families.

May the Almighty keep our people and our country from any misfortune and nuisance!

May the sky above our Motherland always be clear!

May our independence be eternal!

### **CONGRATULATORY MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF SINGAPORE TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN ON THE 22<sup>nd</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF INDEPENDENCE OF UZBEKISTAN**

Your Excellency,

On behalf of the people of Singapore, I am pleased to extend to Your Excellency and the people of Uzbekistan, our warmest congratulations on the joyous occasion of the 22nd Anniversary of the Day of Independence of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

I am confident that under Your Excellency's dedicated leadership, Uzbekistan will continue to achieve peace, prosperity and progress for its people. Relations between Singapore and Uzbekistan are warm and multifaceted. With your strong support, I am sure the friendship between our two countries will continue to strengthen in the years to come.

**Tony Tan Keng Yam**  
President of Singapore



# Towards Prosperity



**H**ome and Heritage are two themes that you will find prominently featured in this third commemorative magazine by the Uzbekistan Embassy in Singapore. Where we live affects the quality of our lives and the recent international conference on rural housing held in Tashkent in April showed the Government's commitment to improve the lives of its citizens. The country was able to share with the world the lessons learnt and benefit from models that work in the interests of family, community and country. A Singapore delegation had been there to see for themselves the strides made by Uzbekistan.

This year is the 'Year of Prosperity' for Uzbekistan and the President's message on this subject is illuminating. He makes it clear that these yearly initiatives (last year was the Year of the Family) are part of a systematic development plan, to raise the quality of life for the broadest possible segment of the population.

Uzbekistan is also balancing material development with a pride and respect for its history, its legacy from the days of the 'Old Silk Road,' its beautiful and colourful traditional clothes and its national cuisines, which are all part of its 'Heritage.' The country is hosting the biennial Sharq Taronalari Music Festival (Oriental Melodies), which attracts over 400 performers over one week and is an established international podium for traditional singing, music and dance. This year, a music group from Singapore participated in the event and we get to read about them.

In a short span of time the country has transformed itself into a modern, independent and sovereign nation that has set to build a market economy and a civil society on the same levels as other advanced nations of the world. It has been a privilege watching the country grow and develop; this issue provides an excellent primer to potential investors, who can get an insight into the country and also find out why it is such an attractive destination for investment.

Strategically located between Europe and Asia, Uzbekistan is today dominating Central Asia and with huge natural reserves of metals and minerals, poised to be one of the upcoming destinations of manufacturing in the world. To showcase this great opportunity the government is organising numerous events and trade shows, which have also been featured in this issue.

This issue carries an interesting article on a cheaper and environment-friendly alternative to traditional fuel. We are bullish on the prospects of the country and hope you will come on board and get to know Uzbekistan better.

**Nomita Dhar**  
Editor-in-Chief



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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 8.2 per cent. 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 per cent to 24 per cent. 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 53 per cent.

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 40 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	30 million people (as of 1 January 2013)
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 (Iyd ul Fitr) and Qurbon Hayit (Iyd ul Adha) are also national religious holidays. Dates of celebration differ each year depending on the Lunar Calendar.





# 2013 - Year of Wellbeing and Prosperity

Uzbekistan's annual programme serves as a roadmap for reforms in the most important sectors of social development

The government's implementation of 'targetted' yearly programmes is an effective way to accomplish its objectives for the year as well as a platform for the next few years. These social development programmes are developed by the government as well as non-governmental structures, public organisations, businesses and civil society representatives.

This all-inclusive approach provides continuity in all strategic directions of development of the state, whether it is politics, economy, health, education, or science. After all, regardless of the name, the emphasis of national programmes is equally placed on the most important issues of the country's development.

The goals outlined in the national programme for 2013, the Year of Wellbeing and Prosperity, are a logical continuation of the complex work, which started in previous years. Priority directions of social, economic, spiritual and political development are defined in eight sections and 86 items of this year's programme that lists out the mechanisms to increase the

wellbeing of the population, social stability, peace and prosperity in the society.

State and nongovernmental organisations, civil society institutions and local self-government bodies are increasingly involved in implementing the projected measures. The document clearly defines terms and executors: concerned ministries and departments, funding sources and monitoring system, legislative, legal, organisational and economic mechanisms.

## PRIORITISATION

Bolstering of peace and stability, civil and ethnic concord in the state, protection of human rights, freedoms and interests remain the highest priorities of the national programme. The lawmakers are entrusted with addressing the exigent tasks, as the first item of the programme envisage the adoption of new laws. Two of them will be revised to streamline the work of self-government bodies, as well as their electoral mechanism. Two others will introduce amendments to the Labor, Family and the Civil

Procedure Code aiming at further improvement of the employment terms for young people and strengthening the protection of children's rights.

Parliamentarians continue working on the draft laws 'On the appeals of legal entities and individuals', 'On public scrutiny in the Republic of Uzbekistan', 'On social partnership' and 'On environmental protection', which are enshrined in the national programme for 2013.

Accelerated building of the 'electronic government' is a requirement with the State programme's vision - creating a single online portal of interactive government services, operating through the 'single window'. Introduction of interactive services of online registration of licenses and permits is another item of the programme, which is also expected to tangibly simplify the interaction of economic entities and governmental bodies.

Increase of real income, intensification of employment, further development of small business and private entrepreneurship is another programme's strategic focus with



support for farming, improving the system of the state target protection and social assistance to the population, primarily to the socially vulnerable and low-income families.

Raising of employment and population incomes will come about by involvement of the rural population in horticultural activities, development of viticulture, livestock and sericulture; 288 new projects on building plants, reconstruction and upgrade of the existing enterprises for advanced processing of agricultural products and increase of food production. Scope of processing will extend to the expansion of production range and adoption of modern mini-technologies for agriculture.

The programme stipulates a set of measures on building new production and infrastructure facilities, development of the service sector, small business, family business, and expansion of the home-based work. It is envisaged to create over 970,000 new jobs this year. It is planned to expand the practice of commercial banks on issuing loans for the development of family business entities, private enterprise and craftsmanship, ancillary and peasant farms, as well as for graduates of vocational colleges to start their own business. This year, the total amount of such loans is expected to reach 269.6 billion soums.

### FOCUS ON REGIONS

Raising the level and quality of people's life remains a priority. In 2013, the salaries of employees of budget organisations, pensions, allowances and grants are scheduled to increase at least 23%. About 60% of the State Budget's expenditure will be allocated for the social sector and enhancement of effectiveness of social support for the population.

The national programme also envisages the construction of new dwelling, development of modern roads and engineering infrastructure, provision of settlements with clean potable water, electricity and heating. About 10,000 individual houses will be built this year on the territory of 353 rural arrays. Projects on improvement of water, gas, electricity supply and sanitation, will be implemented across the county, primarily in rural areas. It is projected to construct thousands of kilometers of new high voltage transmission lines, pipelines and gas supply networks, and reconstruct the existing ones. Public roads will be overhauled, 239.1 kilometers of new access road will be built in rural areas, and urban streets will be overhauled and reconstructed. The national programme envisages the development of transport infrastructure through opening a total of 48 new routes of public transport throughout the country, including 42 routes in rural areas.

The document assigns a special part to the implementation of regional territorial programmes of industrial development. The state's leader pointed out the relevance



of this issue at the meeting of the Cabinet of Ministers on the outcomes of socio-economic development in 2012 and priorities for the year 2013. To meet these goals it is planned to strengthen industrial cooperation, involve regional companies in the implementation of the Localisation Programme, and establish new industries on the basis of idle industrial areas.

Alternative energy sources are gaining favour and the state programme schedules the development of a range of measures to accelerate introduction of energy-saving systems installed in farms and rural health units as well as launching a credit line of US\$8 million to finance alternative sources projects.

### INVESTMENTS IN HUMAN CAPITAL

Investment in human capital is crucial for sustainable economic development and raise the welfare of the people. This year's state programme enhances the effectiveness of nurturing physically and spiritually healthy and advanced younger generation. Attention will be paid to enhancing professionalism in staff training, education and strengthening the logistical base of educational institutions. It is projected to reconstruct 217 secondary schools, overhaul 164 schools, 159 academic lyceums and vocational colleges, build and reconstruct 55 music and art schools, 116 children's sports facilities and 45 higher education facilities. Building, reconstruction and overhaul of children's health improvement camps will be continued.

Health sector can expect reformation as well. The government will further strengthen the logistical base of healthcare institutions, provide them with up-to-date diagnostic and treatment equipment, intensify preventive measures and introduce advanced medical technologies. Strengthening of reproductive health and children's health is accentuated as previously. The programme envisages building of 32 new rural health units in remote areas, building and reconstruction of 54 medical associations. It is also planned to reconstruct several national specialised medical research centers, 11 regional multidisciplinary medical

centers and other health care institutions. Along with 13 regional multidisciplinary children's medical centers, they all will be equipped with modern diagnostic and treatment equipment.

### EMPHASIS ON LOCAL COMMUNITY

Development of the local community as a citizens' self-government body is increasingly accentuated. The State Programme for 2013 stipulates important measures on improving this civil institution. The list of tasks includes the improvement of the image of mahalla, repair of facades and roofs of houses, streets and sidewalks, construction of children's sports grounds, development of outdoor lighting network with energy-efficient technologies. They will be carried out under the architectural and planning design schemes "Zamonaviy Mahalla" (modern local community).

An important "Obod Uyim" (well-appointed home) project will be implemented in local communities in 2013 to improve the social infrastructure in rural areas through the involvement of NGOs in the provision of amenities in local communities, and improvement of environmental conditions.

Another national programme is on Culture, Arts and Leisure Centers for the population on the basis of reconstructed and equipped clubs in the system of the Ministry of Culture and Sports. In 2013, materials from the big international scientific and practical conference on "The role of citizens' self-government bodies in strengthening of the institution of the family", will be published.

Uzbekistan will further strengthen the family, enhance the role and status of women in family and society. The national programme for 2013 stipulates the further implementation of the 'Housing for young families' programme and by the project on 'The involvement of women in business for the wellbeing welfare and prosperity of the family'.

The effective implementation of the national programme is another important step in improving people's lives, ensuring the welfare, peaceful, tranquil and problem-free life, and the country's prosperity. (Source: *Uzbekistan Today*).



# How Housing Enhances Living Standards

An international conference was held in Tashkent on modern housing construction as a driving force of comprehensive development and transformation of rural areas, enhancing the living standards of the population

A major international conference was held on the 16 to 17 April this year at Tashkent's Palace of Symposiums entitled "Modern Rural Housing as a Locomotive of Complex Development and Transformation of Rural Areas, Improvement of Quality of Life."

It was organised at the initiative of President Islam Karimov and was attended by leaders and representatives of the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the Islamic Development Bank, the Association of South-East Asian Nations, UNESCO and other prominent international organisations, as well as more than 300 scholars, specialists and experts from over 60 countries, including the United States, China, South Korea, Japan, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Spain, Italy, India and Russia.

They included high-ranking conference participants such as Mr Ahmad Mohamed Ali, the President of the Islamic Development Bank and Mr Xiaoyu Zhao, the Vice President of the Asian Development Bank. They noted that Uzbekistan, for its independent period, has achieved a tremendous progress and triumphs worth being proud of. Other guests who also took floor at the event included the Deputy Administrator of the UNDP Cihan Sultanoglu; the World Bank Country Manager Takuya Kamata; the official of the International Monetary Fund Veronica Bacalu; Deputy Secretary General of ASEAN Alicia Dela Rosa Bala; Vice President of China Development Bank Yuan Li; Chief Executive Officer of the California Coalition for Rural Housing Robert Wiener; and Director of Central Asia and Caucasus Department of the Japanese Agency for International Cooperation (JICA) Tetsuya Yamada.

The forum analysed how to boost the welfare of rural areas and modern housing construction on standard designs. This is a priority policy for the government and an important prerequisite for the transformation of the village, the integrated socio-economic development of the periphery, the elevation of population incomes and employment.

President Islam Karimov in his keynote address for the conference reiterated his

– constitute a practical embodiment of the gracious aspirations of the nation.

One unique aspect of the "Uzbek Model" of development elaborated on by the country's head of state is the urgent attention paid to the steady socio-economic development in the country's rural areas. He said that first and foremost, the country's roots go back with invisible thread to the rural land. The great and the sacred notion of the Motherland is linked primarily with village. For this very reason, it is impossible to secure the development of the entire country, the wellbeing of the people and the affluence in the households without the development of the villages.

In the wake of independence, Uzbekistan, under the leadership of President Islam Karimov, embarked on a consistent policy of socio-economic development in the village. State programmes are being adopted to boost the social infrastructure of rural areas, bolster employment and a range of other directions; vast amounts of funds are being channeled for the erection of modern homes, healthcare, education and sports facilities, and public service complexes in villages.

The announcement of the year 2009 as the one of Rural Development and Welfare at the initiative of the head of state, the elaboration and the consistent implementation of the State Programme built on the noble idea "The more the village advances, the higher the quality of our lives and prosperous the country" epitomised a new phase in this given sphere. In accordance with this programme, in order to further improve the quality of life among the rural population, wide-scale works have been in progress to perfect the architectural planning of villages and design the housing and social facilities in them. For the past period of time, numerous decrees and resolutions have been approved by the

”  
The integrated rural development initiative, is a powerful attestation to the consistency and effectiveness of the 'Uzbek Model' of economic reform, which has successfully combined improving living standards with the high and sustained rates of economic growth.

”  
*Dr Ahmad Mohamed Ali Al-Madani*  
*The President of the Islamic Development Bank*

government's objectives to ensure the welfare and prosperity of the nation as a principal task of the reforms and transformation underway across all spheres of life. Physical infrastructure development as seen in the changing landscape of the country's urban and rural areas, in the so-called villages of the new century, where kindness, mutual respect, friendship, affluence and abundance reign



President of Uzbekistan to boost integrated development of rural areas and raise the quality and level of living conditions of the rural population.

Notably, in line with the presidential resolution from 21 January 2009, Design and Survey Institute “Qishloq Qurilish Loyiha” was established. The Institute has worked out standard design for houses, social facilities and public service complexes in rural areas. During the expositions organised in recent years in Tashkent, these projects were presented to the wider public and perfected with an eye to general discussion. Also noteworthy is that the houses are built from domestically produced construction materials.

Some of the refinements seen in such three-, four- and five-room spacious, bright, comfortable houses included the latest engineering communications to take into account the lifestyle of the people and local natural-climatic conditions and based on approved standard designs. All versions of standard designs take into consideration insignificant, for the first sight, yet enormously



important nuances of the national way of life.

President Islam Karimov, in his keynote address to the conference, highlighted how the historical experience of many countries confirms the fact that the choice of the sphere of housing and infrastructure as a priority development was a key instrument for national economic recovery.

So the government had to undertake a fundamental review and transformation of the legislative, legal and regulatory framework for housing development. He said, “In accordance with the approved regulations, the construction of housing estates in the countryside is based on model projects developed and approved by the owners simultaneously in conjunction with the construction of facilities, engineering and communication, social and market infrastructure. Prerequisite is the laying of roads, internal communication networks – water, gas and electricity from the national and local budgets.”

Given the number of people expected to be living in new residential areas, schools, nurseries, rural medical centers, shopping facilities and sports facilities are built on standard designs. The organisation and implementation of rural services and new types of e-services deserves special attention in the development of residential complexes, along with engineering and communications infrastructure.

Uppermost on the government’s mind said President Karimov, “What is important



*Dr Ahmad Mohamed Ali Al-Madani*

is that these types of services that are almost new for rural population not only meet the needs of people, but at the same time provide jobs for tens of thousands of young men and women who have received the latest knowledge and profession in rural vocational colleges.”

This view was shared by many who attended the conference. The President of the Islamic Development Bank, Dr Ahmad Mohamed Ali Al-Madani, said, “The integrated rural development initiative, is a powerful attestation to the consistency and effectiveness of the ‘Uzbek Model’ of economic reform, which has successfully combined improving living standards with the high and sustained rates of economic growth.”

The consensus at the conference was unanimous on how the Uzbek Model has successfully been able to effect comprehensive human development in rural areas by improving of living standards and modernization of the rural infrastructure.

## Singapore Delegation for Housing Conference

Mr Andrew Khng, Director of Tiong Seng Contractors Pte Ltd, was part of a four-member delegation from Singapore who attended the conference. He said, “My personal experience in housing has always been in building of multi-storied homes for the population. However, in the projects that I have visited while in Uzbekistan have given me a new perspective into mass housing and interesting designs of the homes, where consideration of the people’s lifestyle and their needs are considered in the design. It is prudent that building an enclave around their industry is a good move to ensure that sustainable growth is maintained.”

The visit has given the Singapore delegation a better appreciation of rural developments and understanding of how integration works and it is definitely an eye opener to respect the different method of urbanisation.

The country, itself, has left an indelible impression on the Singapore delegation. Mr Khng, who is also the immediate past President of the Singapore Contractors Association, with over 30 years of experience in projects in Singapore and overseas said, “Uzbekistan has a stable government and a well-planned infrastructure and well developed housing policy for its people. And we found everyone we met in the country very friendly and hospitable.”

Another member of the Singapore delegation was Ms Phang Sock Yong. She first became involved in the “Housing for Integrated Rural Development” project in Uzbekistan in late 2010 as housing finance consultant to the Asian Development Bank. She said, “The conference had showcased to the international community the rapid progress that had been achieved. The conference and field trips were very well organised and provided participants a better understanding of the rural context in Uzbekistan, the challenges that needed to be overcome in implementation and construction, as well as the benefits to the rural population from this large scale housing programme.”





# *Investment Potential of Uzbekistan*

Uzbekistan demographics, stability and natural resources make it an attractive investment destination

Uzbekistan is the most populated country in Central Asia, where representatives of more than a hundred ethnic groups and dozens of religions live in peace and concord. Strategically located between Europe and the rest of Asia, it is the world's fifth-largest producer and second largest exporter of cotton, eighth in terms of gold, and has significant reserves of natural gas, coal, copper, oil, silver and uranium, etc.

Uzbekistan offers the cheapest electricity, gas, water rates to the industrial and commercial users, so manufacturing activity inside Uzbekistan will always be profitable.

From the very day of Independence, Uzbekistan selected its own course of development to socially oriented market economy based on five key principles:

- the priority of economics over politics
- the state is the main reformer
- the rule of law in all areas of life of the society
- strong social policy
- step-by-step transition to market relations

Thanks to successful implementation of this model, today, Uzbekistan has achieved and provided: macroeconomic stability, equilibrium of domestic and foreign sectors of economy, growth of currency reserves; framework for maintaining steady high rates of annual economic growth by eight per cent at average,

predominantly, thanks to internal factors; reduction of aggregate tax burden almost three times, while the State is providing additional packages of concessions and preferences to exporting enterprises, small businesses and entities, making investments and introducing new production; creation of sustainable banking and finance systems with strict observance of Basel principles of banking supervision. In particular, the degree of sufficiency of banking capital is more than 23 per cent, which is almost 3 times higher of international standards; development of new high tech industries through intensive investment policy, technological modernization of industrial facilities and production infrastructures.

The issued strategy of struggle against crisis and neutralization of its consequences allowed the country among few states of the world to ensure for the past period steady growth rates over 8% of economic development, which is according IFIs is one of the highest indicators in the world.

During the years of Independence, Uzbekistan created broad spectrum of legal guarantees and preferences for foreign investors, developed integral system of measures on encouragement of activity of enterprises with foreign investments.

The investment legislation of Uzbekistan is one of advanced amongst legislations of the CIS countries, and it incorporated major provisions of the international investment law, in particular, regulations on guarantees

of the rights of foreign investors, certain preferences for investors and others.

The state guarantees and protects the rights of foreign investors which carry out investment activity within the Republic of Uzbekistan. In the event, the consequent legislation of Uzbekistan makes investment environment less favorable, then, within 10 years from the moment of investment, foreign investors will apply the legislation, which was in effect as of the date of investment. Upon its discretion, after notifying the authorities, the foreign investor is entitled to apply those provisions of new legislation which make the investment environment more favorable.

Moreover, in some cases, foreign investors could be provided with additional guarantees and measures of protection of rights in case of investment into priority industries or projects, which ensure sustainable economic growth, strengthening and enhancing export potential of the country, projects in the field of small enterprises.

The following laws form the basis of investment environment in Uzbekistan:

- On Foreign Investments
- On Investment Activities
- On Guarantees and Measures of Protection of Rights of Foreign Investors

In addition there is number of legislative normative acts issued in the form of Decrees of the President and/or Resolutions of the Government of Uzbekistan.



In accordance with current legislation the concept of foreign direct investment includes: investing by foreign investors of material and non-material welfares and rights for them including IPR; any income from foreign investments in facilities of enterprise and other types of activities.

Foreign investments in Uzbekistan could be made in different forms, and in particular: equity participation in charter funds and other property of business entities, banks, insurance institutions and other enterprises established together with legal entities and/or with natural persons of Uzbekistan; creation and development of business entities, banks, insurance institutions and other enterprises completely belonging to foreign investors; purchase of property, shares and other securities, including the promissory notes emitted by residents of Uzbekistan; investment of intellectual property rights, including copyrights, patents, trade marks, useful model, industrial samples, company names and a know-how, and also business reputation (goodwill); purchase of concessions, including concessions on prospecting, exploration, extraction or use of natural resources; purchase of the rights for property for facilities of trade and sphere of services, for premises together with the land plots on which they are located, and also the rights of possession and using the land (including on the basis of rent) and natural resources.

### No Restrictions on Capital Investment

The Republic of Uzbekistan has no restrictions concerning the form of capital investment. Foreign investors are entitled to create within the county the enterprise in any organisational-legal form allowed by the legislation.

As of today, the most different forms of capital investment are offered to potential foreign investors:

- creation of joint venture
- creation of the enterprise with 100 per cent foreign capital
- purchase of a part or full package of shares of privatised enterprises

The enterprises with foreign investments are newly created enterprises meeting the following terms and conditions:

- the size of the charter capital of the enterprise is not less than the sum, equivalent to US\$150,000
- one of participants of the enterprise is the foreign legal entity



- the share of foreign investments makes not less than 30 per cent of the charter capital of the enterprise.

### Privileges and Preferences

Taxed profit for legal entities is reduced for the amount of:

- means addressed to expanding of major production in the form of a new construction, reconstruction of buildings and erections used for production needs and payment of credits received for these purposes with deduction of depreciations calculated in a corresponding tax period, but not more than thirty (30) per cent of taxed profit
- means addressed for modernization and technological reequipping of production, obtaining of new technologic equipment, payment of credits issued for the above purposes, compensation of the cost of a leased object with deduction of imposed depreciation in a corresponding tax period. Reduction of taxed base is carried out within five (5) years starting from a taxed period in which the above expenses were carried out and on technologic equipment from the moment of putting it into operation. In case of realisation and gratis transfer of new technological equipment within three (3) years from the moment of its obtaining, this privilege is annulled with the rehabilitation of duties on payment of income tax for the whole period of application of the privilege. Moreover, the enterprises - domestic manufactures who export the produced goods (works, services) for the foreign currency, except raw materials, independently of the

origin of production, are granted with: 50 per cent reduction in the income (profit) tax – if the company exports not less than 30 per cent of total amount of sales of produced goods (works, services); 30 per cent reduction in the income (profit) tax – if the company exports from 15 per cent up to 30 per cent of total amount of sales of produced goods (works, services)

From Value Added Tax (VAT) are exempted:

- turnover on realisation of property realised in the order of privatisation of public property
- turnover on realisation of goods (works, services) obtained by legal entities at the cost of loans (credits) provided by international and foreign representation financial organisations on contracts (agreements) signed with the Republic of Uzbekistan and received at the expense of grants
- turnover on realisation of property transferred as investment obligations in accordance with the contract between investor and authorised public agency on management of public property
- provision of services on contract for financial lease (leasing), with regards to interest income of the tenant in life (leaser)
- import of the technological equipment, imported to the territory of the Republic of Uzbekistan along with the list approved in accordance with the legislation and spare parts under conditions if their delivery is envisaged by conditions of contracts for delivery of technological equipment. In case of realisation and



gratis transfer of imported technological equipment for export within three (3) years from the moment of its import, this privilege is annulled with the rehabilitation of duties on payment of value added tax for the whole period of application of the privilege

- import of goods imported as investment obligations in accordance with the contract between investor and authorised public agency on management of public property
- import of raw products, materials and half-finished products imported for use in domestic production by the enterprises with foreign investments, specialised on the manufacture of child footwear.

When estimating the property tax for legal entities, the tax base shall be reduced by the cost of:

- equipment obtained for 5-year credit from the moment of putting it into practice, but not more than the term established for the reimbursement of the credit
- leased property for the period of lease contract duration
- new technological equipment reinstalled for implementation for the period of five (5) years. In case of realisation and gratis transfer of new technological equipment within three (3) years from the moment of its obtaining (import), this privilege is annulled with the rehabilitation of duties on payment of property tax for the whole period of application of the privilege

Moreover, the enterprises - domestic manufactures who export the produced goods (works, services) for the foreign currency, except raw materials, independently of the origin of production, are granted with:

- 50 per cent reduction in the property tax – if the company exports not less than

30% of total amount of sales of produced goods (works, services)

- 30 per cent reduction in the property tax – if the company exports from 15 per cent up to 30 per cent of total amount of sales of produced goods (works, services)

From property tax for legal entities are exempted: newly established undertakings within two years from the moment of registration. The mentioned incentive is not applied to the enterprises, created on the basis of manufacturing capacities and capital assets of the liquidated (re-organised) enterprises, their separated divisions, and legal entities created under the existing enterprises, in case i they are working on the rented equipment.

From the customs duties also are exempted: the property imported by foreign investors and enterprises with foreign investments in the Republic of Uzbekistan for own industrial needs; the goods imported by foreign legal entities, which made direct investments into economy of the Republic of Uzbekistan for a total sum of more than USD 50 million provided that the imported goods are goods of their own production; the goods, works and the services intended for work under the Production Sharing Agreement and imported into the Republic of Uzbekistan according to project documentation by the foreign investor or other entities, participating in performance of works under the Production Sharing Agreement, and also goods exported by the investor belonging to him/her according to the Production Sharing Agreement; technological equipment imported to the territory of the Republic of Uzbekistan along with the list approved in accordance with the legislation and spare parts under conditions if their delivery is envisaged by conditions of contracts for delivery

of technological equipment. In case of realisation and gratis transfer of imported technological equipment for export within three (3) years from the moment of its import, this privilege is annulled with the rehabilitation of duties on payment of value added tax for the whole period of application of the privilege.

Enterprises attracting direct foreign investment and specialising in the production of radio electronic devices, computers' components, ready-made cotton fabric and woolen cloth, ready-made garments, knitwear, socks and stockings and textile, processing of leather, production of footwear and ready-made leather and haberdashery goods, production of silk cloth and ready-made products made of silk, production of new kinds of building materials, industrial production of poultry meat and eggs, production of finished products undergone industrial processing produced from local raw materials (with the exception of alcoholic and soft drinks and tobacco products), production of finished meat, milk products, cheese and animal oil, production of medicines, synthetic detergents, and household chemical goods are exempted from payment of profit tax, property tax, tax imposed on improvement and development of social infrastructure, unified tax payment or unified tax, imposed on microcompanies and small enterprises deriving their income from main line of their activity, as well as from mandatory deductions to the Republic Road Fund.

The measures outlined above shows Uzbekistan is more than prepared to realise its potential for foreign investments. The Uzbek economy has already demonstrated high growth as a result of reforms and implementing its own development model. Finally, its legislative framework also guarantees the protection of investors and their capital.



November 2013 to October 2014

# Uzbekistan Trade Shows & Exhibition

All events' venue is in Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan.



## Uzbekistan Agrominitech Expo

The fair is usually held in May. The exhibition is aimed at stimulating development of SME and agriculture sector of Uzbekistan and helps to equip them with the technology of 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.



## 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.



## International Industrial Fair and Cooperation Exchange

Held mostly in October each year. Around 1000 companies from various parts of the world are participating and significant number of contracts is signed during this event. 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.

## Education and Career Fair in Uzbekistan

18 - 20 February 2014

Educational & Training Institutes: One of the biggest education and career fairs of its kind with schools, colleges and universities.

## Aqua Therm Tashkent

25 - 28 February 2014

Cosmetics, focusing on heating, ventilation, air-con, water supply, sanitary, environmental tech, swimming pool and renewable energy.

## UzBuild

25 - 28 February 2014

Building & Construction: The leading annual meeting place for the construction industry in Uzbekistan.

## MebeExpo Uzbekistan

25 - 28 February 2014

Home Textiles & Furnishings: Development of the domestic furniture market, cementing of business ties among manufacturers, trade companies and consumers, and realization of creative ideas of furniture designers.

## UzSpectechExpo

25 - 27 March, 2014

Building & Construction: An international specialized exhibition of special machinery & safety technologies.

## UzMining Expo

25 - 27 March 2014

Hand & Machine Tools: Products and services linked to the field of mining industry.

## Uzautomationexpo

25 - 27 March 2014

Automobile: Highlighting the latest developments in industrial automation.

## Uzsecureexpo

25 - 27 March 2014

Industrial Supplies: Dedicated to the latest developments in the industrial security equipment.

## WorldFood Uzbekistan

02 - 04 April 2014

Business Services: Features comprehensive range of equipment, technologies and packaging for the food processing industry, drawing food and drinks makers.

## Apteka Expo-Central Asia

16 - 18 April 2014

Medical Products: The only Central Asian international specialised exhibition for pharmaceutical products and pharmaceutical manufacturing.

## Power Uzbekistan

13 - 15 May 2014

Industrial Supplies: The major event in the power engineering industry attracting the interest of domestic and foreign manufacturers of equipment and technologies.

## Uzbekistan Oil & Gas Exhibition

13 - 15 May 2014

Dyes & Chemicals: The place to be for business in Uzbekistan's Oil & Gas sector.

## Chemie Uzbekistan

22 - 24 October, 2014

Dyes & Chemicals: The only international exhibition here for chemical, plastic and rubber industries.

For more information visit:  
<http://www.uzexpocentre.uz/eng/schedule.html>  
 or send an enquiry to:  
 Mr Doniyor Matkuliev  
 (info@uzbekistan.org.sg)



# *Uzbekistan Moves to Methanol Fuel Blends*

Methanol can help alleviate fuel shortage and high gasoline prices

Uzbekistan's Uznefteprodukt, subsidiary of the country's national energy company Uzbekneftegaz, intends to follow the example of fuel producers in China in using methanol-gasoline blends. Methanol is viewed as a cheaper, safe, and more environmentally friendly alternative to help alleviate fuel shortages and high gasoline prices in the Central Asian republic.

During recent visits to Uzbekistan, the members of the Methanol Institute (MI) met senior government officials and corporate leaders who shared the importance of energy security for the country, and how methanol was an important option for helping the country mitigate its reliance on foreign petroleum.

Uzbekistan has 1.9 TCF of proven natural gas reserves, produces 57 BCF annually, and consumes 49.1 BCF. It is ranked in the top 13 global gas markets, with around 60 per cent of the country possessing potential oil and gas reserves. Uzbekistan's projected reserves of hydrocarbons are around 10 billion tons of standard fuel, while prospective reserves amount to two billion tons.

## **METHANOL AUTO FUEL STANDARDS**

Uzbekneftegaz has technical committees which are developing automotive and methanol fuel standards. After the technical drafts of these standards are prepared,



one-year testing will start, followed by state adoption of a standard or regulation. Uznefteprodukt has successfully tested local cars equipped with Daewoo engines on M3 to M5 (3 per cent methanol and 5 per cent methanol) fuel blends, using RON 85 fuel. Uzbekistan is a huge center for automotive manufacturing, General Motors has its fourth largest global auto manufacturing center in the country. Located in Asaka, the UzAutosanoat-GM joint venture has produced more than one million units since it began production in November 2008.

Uzkimyosanoat is Uzbekistan's sole methanol producer, currently producing 15,000 tons per annum (TPA) of methanol. It is seeking to build a natural gas-to-acetylene facility that will produce 300,000 TPA of methanol from 2016 onwards. Uzbekistan is also looking to complete a methanol-to-olefins (MTO) facility by

2017 in the Bukhara region that will require 500,000 TPA of methanol.

MI staff visited Uzbekistan in March and May, and had extensive discussions with key Uzbek stakeholders on the global methanol industry and the benchmarking they could consider for future development of the country's methanol industry, both on downstream derivative production and on fuel blending. They also shared information on China's methanol fuel developments with Uzbek stakeholders and provided introductions to key Chinese parties. Some Uzbek companies have expressed interest in becoming members of MI, while other parties have asked the Institute to develop Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with them. These MoUs have been approved on MI's side, and are currently under final review by stakeholders in Tashkent.



# Developing as an ICT Hub

Interview with Mr Pritam Singh, Executive Director of the new joint venture, to establish an ICT entity that includes manufacturing facilities and software solutions

**A Memorandum was signed for a manufacturing facility to be built in Uzbekistan – what is the present status?**

After signing the MoU last year, we re-located a key senior business development staff to Tashkent to develop an understanding of the local culture and directly engage with various Uzbek government ministries. This was done to ensure that all parties understand the intent and scope of the initiative.

We have completed a detailed analysis of the project in the context of the local business environment and formulated a Comprehensive Feasibility Study. This study was submitted to the Uzbek Government through our local partner, Uzeltehsanoat, an association of Uzbek enterprises producing radio-electronic, electrotechnical appliances and instrumentation.

Currently, we are finalising the Investment Agreement, which has been circulated to the various government ministries. Once it is concluded, the Joint Venture (JV) will then be incorporated on an expedient basis. We have not decided on the name of the JV Company at this time. We are consulting our local partner on an appropriate name to reflect the Singapore-Uzbekistan partnership.

**Who are the members of the JV and what are the main business objectives?**

A Singapore-based consortium and Uzeltehsanoat will be the shareholders of the JV, with the Singapore-based consortium holding the majority stake. The Singapore-based consortium's role will be to provide the necessary capital, programme management and technical, marketing and distribution know-how to the JV.

The key objective of the JV would be the development of the Information & Communications Technology (ICT) sector in Uzbekistan in terms of products, solutions and services.

This will be predominantly in the areas of assembly/manufacturing of electronic devices, such as computers, tablets, smart phones, and the development and offering of software solutions that will leverage on the electronic devices, including eLearning solutions. The ultimate aim is to contribute in making Uzbekistan the ICT hub of Central



Foreign Economic Relations, Investments and Trade - have provided invaluable assistance to get us moving forward. The involvement of the Uzeltehsanoat Chairman, who also visited our office in Singapore, has helped.

The Uzbek Embassy in Singapore has guided, helped and facilitated all the relevant arrangements; the attention by the Honourable Ambassador of Uzbekistan in Singapore, H. E. Alisher Kurmanov, and the support of his staff has been invaluable in driving this project forward.

**How would you envisage the growth of the JV?**

Presently the ICT industry in Uzbekistan is



Asia. We envisage that the JV's operations will lead to the development of a supporting local ICT industry, which will in turn spur the formation of an ICT ecosystem, for a self-sustaining and self-reinforcing ICT industry in Uzbekistan.

**What is the initial investment amount for the venture?**

The initial investment is planned to be about US\$8 million and most of this investment will be from Singapore via private equity.

**From your past experience, can you please elaborate on how business-friendly the Uzbek Government co-operation?**

Two agencies in Uzbekistan - the local partner Uzeltehsanoat, and the Ministry for

in the nascent stage. Once the JV is incorporated and the plant becomes operational, the main focus would be to promote the local brand by offering a product range of laptops, desktops and tablets of world-class quality, at par with leading global manufacturers. This will be complemented with a robust after-sales support service network.

We are also focused on developing local talent, so that value-added jobs can be created in the IT sector.

**What type of trickle-down effect will the JV have on the industry?**

With the sustained growth of the ICT industry and the availability of a trained workforce, there would be an increasing demand for ICT support and services. The JV will encourage Singapore-based companies to enter the sector.



# *MDIS Tashkent* *A Top Choice University*

Singapore higher education provider establishes itself in Uzbekistan and Central Asia

**M**DIS Tashkent (MDIST) in Uzbekistan has earned a reputation of being a trusted brand name backed by high education standards. As the education sector in Uzbekistan continues to experience rapid growth with strong government support, MDIST rides the knowledge wave and strengthen its presence in Uzbekistan and Central Asia.

Recognising the need to continually explore its global outreach, MDIST stands firm as a testament to its spirit of optimising growth and seizing opportunities. MDIST takes pride in developing global talent and future leaders for the pillars of the business, finance, banking, accounting, marketing and the tourism industries of Uzbekistan and the Central Asia region. MDIST will celebrate its third graduation ceremony on 11 October 2013 and it is indeed a very special and significant achievement for the students as well as MDIST.

## **SPECIAL FINANCIAL TRAINING CENTRE**

Following the decree by the President of Uzbekistan on the establishment of priority areas to reform and enhance Uzbekistan's banking and finance system by 2015, MDIST was assigned to establish a special Financial Training Centre. The training centre would stimulate the trading floor of international banks and stock markets and allow bank specialists, financial institutions and MDIST students

to conduct real-time trades, as well as search and analyse financial and economic information using specialised databases and applications

In advancing the banking sector of Uzbekistan, MDIST also conducts training and development programmes in finance and banking areas for the benefit of bank employees. MDIST is strongly committed in its purpose to raise the educational standards and economy of the country with a firm focus in enhancing the education landscape of Uzbekistan and the Central Asia region.

## **NEW PROGRAMMES**

To further enhance and fulfil the educational needs of the young population in the Central Asian region, MDIST has introduced in 2013 new programmes in various disciplines from the University of Sunderland (UOS), UK and Bangor University, UK. These programmes are:

- University of Sunderland programmes
- Bachelor of Arts (Hons) Accounting & Finance
- Bachelor of Arts (Hons) Business & Financial Management
- Bachelor of Arts (Hons) Business & Marketing Management
- Bachelor of Arts (Hons) Business & Enterprise Management
- Bachelor of Arts (Hons) Business Computing
- MBA (Marketing)
- MBA (Finance)

Bangor University programmes:

- Bachelor of Science (Hons) Banking & Finance
- Bachelor of Science (Hons) Finance, Investment & Risk
- Bachelor of Science (Hons) Business & Economics
- Bachelor of Science (Hons) Industrial Management







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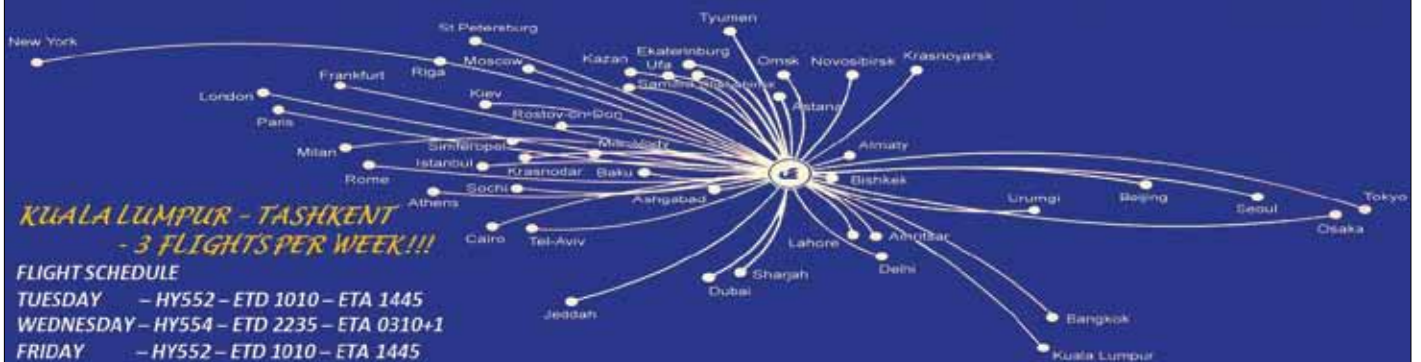
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# *Lasting Legacy of the Old Silk Road*

The amalgamation of different ethnic cultures have been preserved through the ages in the Uzbek national costumes

At the heart of Uzbek culture is the rich tradition, unique heritage and the long lasting legacy shaped by the Old Silk Road. Renowned for centuries for its rich cultural continuity that predates several decades, the Republic of Uzbekistan has preserved its heritage in its national attire.

Standing at the confluence of the East and the West, and influenced by it, Uzbek traditional attires are a beautiful synthesis that portrays this unique fusion. The exclusivity of clothes and designs found in Uzbekistan is a combination of various factors including age, gender, climate and social position.

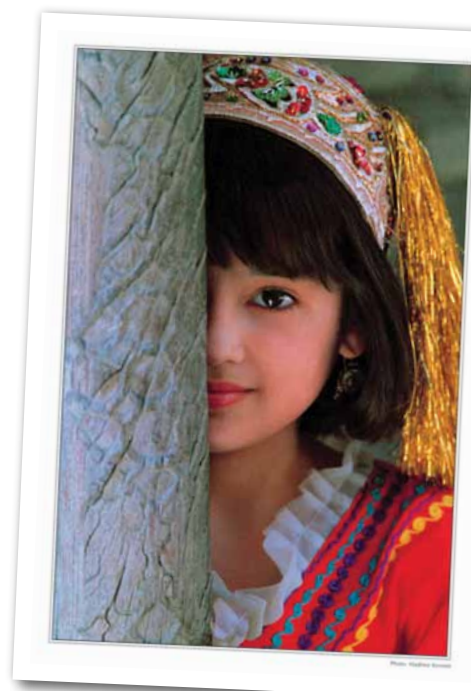
Since the early twentieth century, Russian influences were seen when the shirts and robes, became closer fitting. Shoulder seams, cut armholes, and rounded sleeve caps came into vogue. The traditional tunic shirt evolved over the centuries into a dress tucked with waist seam and a front yoke.

The traditional wears vary according to situations such as every day wear, religious or ceremonial wear and work clothes. Traditional wear for women usually includes long tunic-like dress called *Kuilak* and loose fitting trousers called *Lozim*. For men, it consists of knee length shirts or tunics called *Milliy Kuilak* and *Ishton*, which are wide trousers that narrow at the ankle. Sewn with cotton on wool, depending on the climatic factors, the designs and patterns of the traditional wear are mesmerizing in their details and dyed with bright hues. The cap called *Doppi*, which is one of the most popular fashion apparel from Uzbekistan, accompanies the national costume.

The robe is often embroidered with gold threads. Made on silk and velvet, floral motifs are more prevalent as decorative patterns. Today, gold-embroidered *caftan zarchapan* and turbans made of golden or silver brocade are an integral part of the men's wedding garment.

During the early days, three different outfits were worn by women during festivals and special occasions. The sleeve length differed, so that the beautifully embroidery cloth could be seen under the layer of outer clothing. Quilted tunic robes of women from the Khorezm region are especially unique, as they feature a horizontal slit on the elbow. Another variation of the robe called *Rumcha*, is found in the Bukhara and Samarkand region; they are long, light with short sleeves and embroidered at the neck. They usually taper down at the waist and are an integral part of traditional festive attire.

According to Uzbek tradition, the colour symbolises a person's age and social status. Red and pink are the colour of youth and are worn by girls and young women; middle-aged women wear shades of blue and gray; and white is popular with the elderly though it is worn by all ages.







# Uber Meals *with Meat*

Mutton is in many of the main dishes of Uzbekistan and soups are also a must

Uzbekistan cuisine is one of the most savoury and varied in taste among the countries of Central Asia. It's easy to visualise appetizing Uzbek food, with dishes such as plov, manti, shurpa, shashlik, lagman and samsa which have such wonderful fragrances, one usually can't resist the temptation to taste these dishes piping hot.

Many Uzbek recipes are centuries-old and national Uzbek dishes have benefitted from the country being a more settled nation that cultivates crops and cattle-raising. The country's fertile valleys produce a great variety of vegetables, fruits and cereals; Uzbekistan also breed cattle, which is the source of meat found in many of its dishes.

Traditionally, mutton is the most popular meat among Uzbek people and horse meat is used for preparation of traditional sausage – kazy. People of coastal regions also use fish.

## Meat Dishes

Traditional Uzbek meat dishes include cutlets (tukhum-dulma), shashlik (kebab), stewed meat with greens (kazan-kabob), cold meat snacks (kavurdak and khasib), roasted meat (jarkop), layered meat and vegetables stewed (dimlama) and others.

Usually Uzbek meat dishes are served with fresh vegetable salads or stewed with vegetables. During the preparation of major dishes meat is not separated from bones. To improve the taste, it is roasted in tempered cottonseed or sunflower oil. Some meat dishes are steamed.

Different regions of Uzbekistan have their own specialities. In the north the preference is given to plov, roasted meat, pastry and lepushka (bread). In the south, there is a wide variety of complex dishes of rice and vegetables as well as a tradition for an excellent range of desserts.

## Soups Popular Too

Soups are a very prominent part in the national cuisine menu. Uzbek soups are characterised by their thick and rich textures – a mix of vegetables such as carrot, beet, onion, greens and various spices.

Shurpa is the most popular Uzbek soup and there are many variants of it; for example, shurpa-chaban soup with meat, potato, onion and tomato; then there is, shurpa-mash - mutton soup with green gram; kaurma-shurpa - soup with turnip, potato and carrot and kiyma-shurpa - soup with meatballs, sholgom-shurpa - mutton soup with turnip and kifta-shurpa - soup with meat sausages, pea and other vegetables.

Other popular Uzbek soups are mastava - soup with meat and vegetables, in which the sour milk, pepper and greens are added at

## S'PORE CHEF'S FOOD VISIT

Well-known Singapore Chef and cookbook author, Devagi Sunmugan, visited Uzbekistan in August for a culinary tour – teaching Asian recipes and learning more about Uzbek traditional cuisine

Devagi was invited by the World Association of Chefs under the Train the Trainers programme to teach Asian cuisine to chefs there. At the same time, part of the trip was sponsored by the Association of Cooks of Uzbekistan and International Centre of Uzbek Culinary Art, so she was exposed to Uzbek cooking and here is what she says about it: "Uzbek cuisine is highly traditional, and recipes that may be hundreds of years old are still used. For example, the national dish is Plov (we call it pilau or pilaf), and it is served at weddings and any other celebrations. People still cook it with mutton fat! The rice is cooked with yellow and orange carrot, pea, quince, meat, dried apricots, pumpkin and many other vegetables. It is a tradition for men to cook the plov, and it is usually cooked in a deep cast-iron pot (kazan). Bread is relished like it is sacred. The most common bread is non, a round bread, and it is available everywhere. The breads are baked in clay ovens called thandir (it is like the Indian clay oven tandoor). The non is fluffy, light and addictive. It's got a glossy crust and an open, airy crumb and when it's piping hot, it's delicious without butter or anything. Some savoury snacks like the Samsa is actually another form of the Indian samosa; Manti is a steamed mutton or beef dumpling that resembles a Chinese steamed dumpling; Lagman is a thick soup with hand-made noodles." To read more about Devagi's trip please visit: [www.devagisanmugam.blogspot.com](http://www.devagisanmugam.blogspot.com)







serving mashkhurda - soup with green gram, rice, potato, which is also dressed with sour milk, greens and onion, and cholop- cold soup with cucumbers, radish, greens and sour milk.

#### Tea & Sweets

Tea (usually without sugar) is a staple here with a piala (cup) at the start and end of the meal. Most popular is kuk-choy - green tea and kora-choy - black tea most popular in the capital, Tashkent. Tea with sugar is called kand-choy and it is not uncommon to add various herbals and spices to tea. In Karakalpakstan people drink tea, both black and green, with milk.

The tea drinking customs are not just found in China. Serving tea is a tradition here. It is a sign of hospitality when a house guest is offered a piala of black or green tea. It should be served in a warm teapot and the host brews the tea him or herself, pours in a piala and gives to guests. Traditionally, the more the guest is esteemed, the less tea is poured in his piala.

The most well-known oriental sweets of Uzbekistan are khalva and navat. The former is prepared from wheat flour, sugar and nuts while navat is the boiled crystal grape sugar with spices and coloring agents. Other popular Uzbek sweets include yanchmish - dessert balls of dried fruits and nuts, kunzhutli engok - peanuts with sesame and dimlama behi - stewed quince with honey

Some sweets even have a part to play in national celebrations. Nisholda (made from beaten up whites of eggs with sugar and herbs) and sumalyak (sweet paste made from germinated wheat, which is prepared in a large pot) symbolise Uzbek national holidays and are prepared on the eve of Nawruz the Uzbek New Year and other festivals.

#### Serving the meal

Uzbeks generally eat by hand, sitting on the floor or at a low table called dastarkhan. At the start of the meal sweets and fruits are laid out on the table. Next, vegetables and salads are served, followed by soups such as savory shurpa, thick mastava, etc. The meal ends with main dishes such as manti, lagman, shashlik and plov.

Uzbek food is definitely one of the highlights of a visit to the country that will reward gourmets as well as lovers of fine foods.

“

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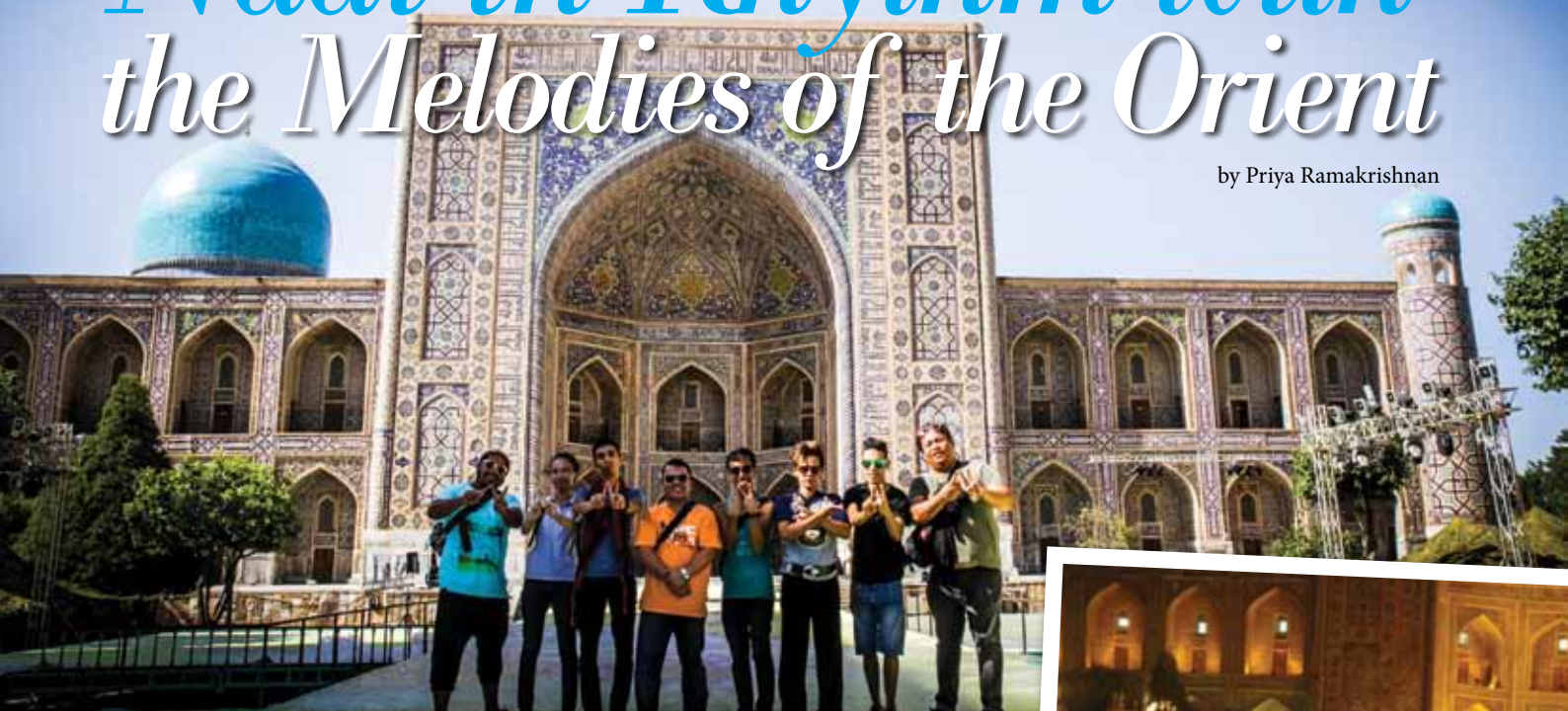
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# Nadi in Rhythm with the Melodies of the Orient

by Priya Ramakrishnan



## Singapore percussion group participated in Uzbekistan's international music festival at Samarkand

**T**he ninth edition of the popular biennial Sharq Taronalari Music Festival attracted 400 participants from all over the world including eight young Singaporean musicians of percussion group Nadi Singapura.

The name of the festival means 'Oriental Melodies' and took place from 25 to 31 August, at one of the oldest cities of the world, Samarkand. It is one of the largest and most established music festivals in the East. Artists from 53 countries presented traditional and cultural music and performing arts at the Registan Square of Samarkand, an United Nations' Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage Site.

The festival is supported by UNESCO and is an initiative of Uzbekistan's President Islam Karimov. It aims to foster international collaboration by building close ties between artists and musicians from across the world.

Nadi Singapura is a relatively new ensemble and according to Mohamed Yaziz Bin Mohamed Hassan, co-founder of the group, who is also a rebana (Malay drum) artisan, "We witnessed many inspiring performances. The people we met and interacted also appreciated our performance and our drums which caught the attention of the locals and international participants."

The festival also has several competition categories such as traditional vocal, best folk songs and traditional national instrumental

music; best performance of national melodies of the world and interpretation in modern musical art. Nadi received one of the six Special Jury Prizes awarded this year.

"It was an honour to be invited for such an event and we thank National Arts Council and Uzbekistan Embassy for the opportunity. No words can describe how we actually felt about Uzbekistan as it has such a rich history. To be involved in the festival, where so many countries took part, was a memorable experience," said Yaziz.

Nadi Singapura was the recipient of the National Arts Council's Seed Grant for the



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years 2013 to 2016. They are a group of musicians who believe in uplifting the profile and performance standards of traditional drums and percussion instruments of the Malay archipelago such as kompang, rebana, jidur and gendang. Nadi in Malay means 'pulse' or 'flow of consciousness' and Nadi, the group, is led by Yaziz Hassan, together with prominent Singapore drummer/percussionist, Riduan Zalani.

Apart from their participation in the festival, they had a wonderful opportunity to interact with ordinary Uzbek folks and participate in their daily life. "We met several locals from Jamboy and all the locals love to dance and especially during the festival, even the President danced on the opening day. The fun and exuberance we witnessed was unique," he said.

The festival also featured an International Scientific Conference on Musical Traditions of the Orient in the Context of Contemporary Culture, where music historians, musicologists and composers shared their experience in the field of preservation, development and transmission of the traditional music culture to future generations.

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# *Uzbekistan Trip for Raffles Institution*

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**T**he visit to Uzbekistan by Raffles Institution (RI), one of Singapore's top secondary schools, took place from 23 August to 4 September 2013. Besides visiting the capital Tashkent, the 21-member group, consisting 19 male students aged between 15-16 years old, and two teachers also visited Bukhara and Samarkand as well.

The entire trip was organised by AX Exotic Travels Pte Ltd, a boutique travel company specialising in creating customised tour packages to interesting destinations targeting individuals, families, Corporate-Business Clients and Schools in Singapore. "AX Exotic Travels is honoured to work with one of Singapore's top secondary school for this trip," says Mr Ryan Raman, Director of AX Exotic Travels, adding, "We hope to organise more such trips to travel-hungry Singapore as part of our plans to promote Uzbekistan further."

To this end, AX Exotic Travel has been working closely with the Uzbekistan Embassy in Singapore since 2010 to promote Uzbekistan to the local public and even took part in the Tashkent International Tourism Fair (TITF) in 2011.

See more photos of the trip at [www.facebook.com/AX.ExTravels](http://www.facebook.com/AX.ExTravels)



## ONE for the ALBUM!

Mr Ryan Raman, (extreme right with shades) Director of AX Exotic Travels posing with students and teachers from Singapore at Eagle Rock Resort



## Eagle Rock Resort Hosts Students from Singapore

AX Exotic Travels also worked with one of its travel partners Eagle Rock Resort to organise a BBQ and a photography project for the students before they departed for home. "Eagle Rock Resort is grateful for the opportunity to host the students and teachers from Singapore," says Mr Timur Chelebiyev, Operations Director of Eagle Rock Resort, adding, "We warmly welcome Raffles Institution and hope that our programmes organised is a great way to encourage friendships between the two countries."



AX Exotic Travels Pte Ltd is part of the Nixdorf-AX Group of Companies



AX Exotic Travels congratulates UZBEKISTAN

*A Happy 22<sup>nd</sup> Independence Day!*

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**REGISTAN SQUARE IN SAMARKAND**

The 25-member group posing in front of the majestic iconic landmark. The visit by one of Singapore's top secondary schools took place from Fri, 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2013 to Wed, 4<sup>th</sup> September 2013.



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