



**Center for Global & Strategic Studies (CGSS),
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New Uzbekistan's Vision for a Modern and Developed Hub of Interconnected Regions



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There is no doubt that countries take years for their socio-economic and cultural development. Only a few can achieve this in relatively less time. In this aspect, Uzbekistan is an exceptional example to gain a respectable place in the comity of the nation in this short span of time. The vision of 'new' Uzbekistan not only encompasses a united, welfare nation but also a dynamic country willing to share the fortunes of development with other states in the region and beyond. Such grand visions require determined and focused leadership, which Uzbekistan has been blessed because of His Excellency Shavkat Mirziyoyev. He has introduced grand reforms and strategies to upgrade governance structure and made Uzbekistan a modern, democratic, and open country.



Uzbekistan's Third Renaissance:

Uzbekistan emerged as an independent state in 1991 due to the Soviet disintegration. There is a dominant notion that post-Soviet states lack national identity or nationalistic reason of statehood and even if it exists, it is along the religious lines, which is utterly wrong. Uzbekistan's identity is well-developed, rooted in great cultural heritage with a legacy of heroes and a glorious past in the form of the golden age of Temurid Rule.¹

¹ Adeeb Khalid, "The Roots of Uzbekistan: Nation Making in the Early Soviet Union" in *Uzbekistan: Political Order, Societal Changes, and Cultural Transformations* (Washington D.C.: Central Asia Program, 2017) p. 3



Under the leadership of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, the new Uzbekistan is on the verge of experiencing the ‘Third Renaissance,’ . It envisages the revival of common historical and cultural linkages for the national development of Uzbekistan and the social connectivity of the regions, i.e., Central and South Asia. Enhancing Tourism, cultural exchanges, and academic cooperation are the frontline policies under regional connectivity.

As a part of cultural diplomacy, Pakistan and Uzbekistan are also planning to co-produce a series on Mughal Emperor ‘Zaheer-ud-din Babar’ and Urdu poet ‘Mirza Ghalib’ .² It will rejuvenate spiritual ties between both countries. Both regions have common intellectuals like Imam Bukhari, Imam Maturidi, Bahauddin al-Naqshbandi and others who defined the humanistic essence of Islam by focusing on the teachings of wisdom, kindness, peace, and tolerance.³

Uzbekistan: From a Closed Society to an Open, Democratic Nation

Like most postcolonial states, Uzbekistan also faced many issues in the initial years of independence. However, the country got to succeed in addressing its issues in a short period. When President Mirziyoyev came into power in 2016, he resolved the border issues with the neighboring states and preferred cooperation over confrontation to

² Mahwash Ajaz, “Pakistan, Uzbekistan to co-produce TV series on historical personalities,” *Khaleej Times*, accessed on February 8, 2022, URL: <https://www.khaleejtimes.com/asia/pakistan-uzbekistan-to-co-produce-tv-series-on-historical-personalities>

³ Maryam Raza, “Uzbekistan’s Transformation under His Excellency President Shavkat Mirziyoyev” in *His Excellency Shavkat Mirziyoyev: A Visionary Statesman* (CGSS, 2021) p. 14



resolve conflicts.⁴ He also gave the “Strategy of Action (2017-2021)” for further developing the Republic of Uzbekistan. The policy has five pillars, including democratic reforms, strengthening the rule of law, liberalization of the economy, social development, and pragmatic foreign policy.⁵ This strategy has been successful in all domains. The presidential elections of October 2021 were also transparent and witnessed an overall 80.8% turnout in which the country’s young population (under the age of 30), which constitutes 57% of the total population, was active the most.⁶

Given Uzbekistan’s micro and macro-economic successes, the strategy is extended and now serves as the basis for achieving the ‘Vision 2030’. The Vision 2030 aims at raising the status of Uzbekistan from a lower Middle-Income state to a higher Middle-Income country. For materializing this goal, Uzbekistan has successfully localized the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and submitted its first self-evaluation report to the UN in 2020. This action was applauded across the world. Under the vision 2030, Uzbekistan is also focusing on the digitization of the economy and institutions for transparency and has started implementing green policies for sustainable development.⁷

⁴ Irum Khalid, “The Third Renaissance of Uzbekistan: Leadership Role of Shavkat Mirziyoyev,” in *His Excellency Shavkat Mirziyoyev: A Visionary Statesman* (CGSS, 2021) p. 18

⁵ “Uzbekistan’s Development Strategy for 2017-2021,” *Diplomatic Focus* (Oct. 2021), vol. 12, no. 10

⁶ Adam Saud, “Uzbekistan Votes in the 6th Presidential Elections: My Experience as International Observer,” (CGSS, 2021)

⁷ European Commission, “Republic of Uzbekistan: Multi-Annual Indicative Programme 2021-2027,” p.5, URL: https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/system/files/mip-2021-c2021-9137-uzbekistan-annex_en.pdf

From a landlocked Country to an Insurer of Land Connectivity:

Geographically, Uzbekistan is a double landlocked country and enriched in natural resources, including hydrocarbons, cotton, uranium, and gold.⁸ The narrative of Central and South Asia Connectivity by H.E. Shavkat Mirziyoyev holds great significance for visualizing 'New Uzbekistan' and regional prosperity. This connectivity program is part of Uzbekistan's pragmatic, open, multilateral, and people-focused foreign policy. The idea aims to turn the landlocked Central Asian region into a land-connected region in which Uzbekistan would hold a strategic significance given its central position in Central Asia, linking Europe with Asia, Russia with Afghanistan and Iran, and China with Europe.



New Uzbekistan: A Hub of Socio-Economic Prosperity

President Mirziyoyev stated during an International Conference, *"Without economic connectivity, we cannot turn this part of the world, and the Eurasian continent, into a stable and prosperous space."*⁹ Pakistan-Afghanistan-Uzbekistan trade corridor, Uzbekistan-Kyrgyzstan-China railway route, North-South project, Turkmenabad-Farab Road and Railway Bridge are all land connectivity projects initiated by Uzbekistan with

⁸ Zarmina Baloch, "Significance of Regional Integration for Resolving Common Disputes: Role of Uzbekistan," in *His Excellency Shavkat Mirziyoyev: A Visionary Statesman* (CGSS, 2021) p. 28

⁹ Ibid, p.30



neighboring states.¹⁰ The inter-regional connectivity program includes connectivity in multiple domains such as transport, logistics, energy, infrastructure, trade, industry, investment, technological, and tourism. Due to its active, open, and multilateral foreign policy, Uzbekistan has witnessed a 50% increase in foreign trade in 2019, and the level of foreign investment has increased twice.¹¹

If the current development trajectory continues at the same pace, Uzbekistan will successfully accomplish its set targets. Uzbekistan will be an economic hub at the crossroads of different regions and a practical manifestation of inter-religious and cross-border harmony. It will also be a torchbearer for maintaining friendly, harmonious, and prosperous relations with regional countries.

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¹⁰ ibid

¹¹ Multi-Annual Indicative Program