

## For Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan is a close neighbor, reliable and strategic partner

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**At the invitation of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev, the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev visited Uzbekistan on April 14-15 on a state visit.**

Since the first days of independence, Uzbekistan has followed the course of developing relations with Central Asian countries, including with Kazakhstan, based on mutual trust and good neighborliness. Since ancient times, our peoples lived as close neighbors and brothers, supporting each other in everything. Over the past years, these ties have become even stronger, they are aimed at a single goal - the prosperity of the two countries.

The President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev and the First President of Kazakhstan – Elbasy Nursultan Nazarbayev's merits in strengthening the strategic partnership between the two countries are great.

Thanks to the open and pragmatic policies of the President, his initiatives to develop friendly and mutually beneficial relations with foreign, primarily with neighboring countries, cooperation between Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan has risen to a new level.

The state visit of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev to Kazakhstan on March 22-23, 2017 opened a new era in relations between our fraternal countries. The state visit of the First President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev to Uzbekistan on September 16-17 of the same year was a consistent continuation of the dialogue at the highest level.

For the past short period, unprecedented results were observed in relations between the two countries. Regular meetings and dialogues of the heads of the two states further strengthened the relations between the two countries.

The state visit of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev is another confirmation of further strengthening friendship, that relations of good neighborliness and strategic partnership between the two countries will be mutually beneficial.

The main events of the visit took place on April 15.

The President of the Republic of Kazakhstan has been met at Kuksaroy country residence with an official ceremony.

Following the formal procedure, Shavkat Mirziyoyev and Kassym-Jomart Tokayev held talks in a contracted format.

Uzbekistan's President greeted the President of Kazakhstan on a visit to the country and noted that the event constitutes a consistent continuation of the political dialogue between the two countries.

"We highly value the fact that your first state visit as President of the Republic of Kazakhstan is a visit to Uzbekistan. In this we see a clear manifestation of commitment to further enhancement of the strategic partnership between our two countries. For us, Kazakhstan is a close neighbor and strategic partner", Shavkat Mirziyoyev said.

Kazakhstan's President expressed gratitude to the Head of the state for the invitation to Uzbekistan and voiced his conviction that the negotiations would prove fruitful.

"Common history, religion, similarity of languages and cultural values bind our peoples. You, dear Shavkat Miromonovich, and the First President of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev, raised the interstate relations to a completely new level. I consider it my task to maintain this pace. In Kazakhstan, there is a very high need for cooperation with the fraternal Uzbekistan", Kassym-Jomart Tokayev suggested.

Today, relations between the two countries are consistently developing in all areas. The Treaty of Eternal Friendship between the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Republic of Kazakhstan signed in 1998, the Strategic Partnership Agreement between the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Republic of Kazakhstan adopted in 2013 provide a solid basis for mutually beneficial cooperation.

Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan interact constructively within the framework of such international bodies as the UN, the SCO, the CIS, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea. Kazakhstan supported the launch of an Uzbekistan-initiated United Nations Multi-Partner Human Security Trust Fund for the Aral Sea Region.

The Presidents exchanged views on strengthening regional cooperation and current issues on the international agenda. In particular, an agreement was reached on taking systemic measures to jointly fight, within the framework of bilateral and multilateral structures against international terrorism, religious extremism, drug trafficking, transnational organized crime, illegal migration and other threats that increase international security risks.

The heads of state stressed the need for implementing large-scale projects on rebuilding the economy of Afghanistan and development of long-term good-neighborly relations with this country, including in the areas of transport communications, education and health.

During the summit talks, the heads of state discussed promising areas of cooperation between Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, as well as current issues of regional and international importance that interest the parties.

At the negotiations in an extended format with participation of official delegations of Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, special attention was paid to the issues of further development of trade-economic, investment cooperation, strengthening ties in transport-communications, cultural-humanitarian and other spheres.

Kazakhstan is one of the important trade-economic partners of Uzbekistan. Due to the accelerated development of cooperation in the leading sectors of the economy in recent years, the trade turnover in 2018 grew by almost 50 percent and exceeded 3 billion dollars.

The parties confirmed their shared desire to reach the level of 5 billion dollars in bilateral trade in the coming years. The Intergovernmental Commission on Bilateral Cooperation between Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan has been tasked with expanding the range of trade relations, search for and develop new long-term forms of economic cooperation.

That would contribute to the realization of promising new projects in the fields of trade, investments, logistics, to the creation of integrated industrial technology parks, research and innovation clusters and free economic zones.

The two sides positively assessed the results of the First Forum of Interregional Cooperation between Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, held in November 2018 in Shymkent, as well as the First Regional Economic Forum of the Central Asian Countries that took place this March in Tashkent.

At present, 336 enterprises and 16 companies with Kazakh capital are operating in Uzbekistan. There are 199 enterprises established in cooperation with Uzbekistan businessmen in Kazakhstan. They represent trade services, transport-logistics and other types of services, produce building materials and a wide range of consumer goods.

Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan effectively cooperate in the field of passenger and cargo transportation by road and by rail. This important communication network also serves as a transit for third countries. Introduction of mutual preferences and additional benefits for the carriage of foreign goods on the territory of Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan allows to

significantly increase the trade turnover.

The heads of state welcomed the successful course of the demarcation process of Uzbekistan – Kazakhstan state border as well as the effective operation of checkpoints, which has served to significantly improve the living conditions of the population in the border areas of the two countries, revitalize cross-border economic relations and humanitarian exchanges, and enhance the reciprocal travel of citizens.

The parties confirmed that they are interested in expanding mutual cooperation of the states of the region within the framework of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea together with international organizations, financial and environmental institutions in implementation of certain programs and projects in the Aral Sea basin.

During the negotiations, agreements were reached on implementation of joint projects in the field of transport, logistics and industrial cooperation. The need was noted for development of additional measures on development of cooperation in the field of transport communications, expanding export potential and transit capabilities of the two countries.

The ceremony of signing bilateral documents was held. President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev and President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev adopted a Joint Statement.

About ten documents have been signed, covering diverse areas of cooperation between the two countries. Among the agreements signed are those on the procedure for recognizing official documents confirming tax residency, on the protection of labor rights of Kazakhstan citizens working in Uzbekistan and Uzbekistan citizens working in Kazakhstan, a Memorandum of Understanding on the establishment of the Central Asia International Trade and Economic Cooperation Center.

In addition, a Program of Cooperation between the ministries of foreign affairs for 2019-2020, a Memorandum of Cooperation between the Committee for Religious Affairs under the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Ministry of Information and Social Development of the Republic of Kazakhstan and other documents have been signed.

At the briefing for representatives of the mass media, the heads of state noted that the talks were held in the spirit of traditional friendship, mutual respect, openness, that they thoroughly discussed the entire agenda of cooperation, and that mutually advantageous agreements were reached. It was emphasized that the agreements between the Presidents of Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan reached during this visit, the signed documents will raise the cooperation of the two countries to a qualitatively new level.

In the afternoon, the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, accompanied by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Uzbekistan Abdulla Aripov, has visited Mustaqillik (Independence) Square in Tashkent. The distinguished guest laid flowers to the Monument of Independence and Humanism, a symbol of our freedom, noble aspirations and the bright future.

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