

## Uzbekistan-Turkey: new opportunities for cooperation

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**President of the Republic of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan arrived in Samarkand on 17 November.**

On 18 November Acting President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev and President of the Republic of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan visited the burial place of the First President of the Republic of Uzbekistan at the Khazrati Khizr complex and paid a tribute of respect to the memory of Islam Karimov.

The negotiations between Acting President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev and President of the Republic of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan took place at the "Forumlar majmuasi" Palace.

Shavkat Mirziyoyev expressed gratitude to the President of Turkey for sincere condolences on the death of the First President of Uzbekistan. The visit of Recep Tayyip Erdogan to Samarkand and paying a tribute of respect to the bright memory of Islam Karimov is a high symbol of respect to the people of Uzbekistan.

It was underlined, that this visit demonstrates that Turkey attaches a significant importance to developing relations with Uzbekistan.

It should be noted that Turkey was one of the first countries to recognize independence of Uzbekistan.

The Uzbek and Turkish people are inextricably linked by centuries-old common history, language and religion, shared values and similar customs and traditions.

Shavkat Mirziyoyev highlighted that Uzbekistan considers Turkey as an important and long-term partner and champions strengthening friendship ties between our people, developing cooperation on the basis of the principles of mutual trust.

Recep Tayyip Erdogan specifically stressed that Turkey considers Uzbekistan as its priority partner in Central Asia and noted the sustained maintenance of socio-political stability and continuation of economic progress in our country.

It was accentuated that the current level of cooperation of our countries does not correspond to existing capabilities and the potential of Uzbekistan and Turkey. This meeting is a favourable opportunity to exchange views on the issues of developing our

collaboration.

During negotiations, the issues of further strengthening mutual trust between Uzbekistan and Turkey were discussed, the parties exchanged opinions on organization of regular consultations between foreign ministries, mutual support within the framework of international organizations.

Uzbekistan, within the frameworks of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, initiated establishment of the Imam Bukhari international research centre in Samarkand. The parties expressed satisfaction on the support of this initiative by the OIC Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture, the headquarters of which is located in Turkey.

The issues of trade-economic cooperation were also discussed in detail during the conversation.

Turkey is one of the traditional and principal trade partners of Uzbekistan. In 2015 the volume of mutual trade turnover amounted to 1,2 bln. US dollars. It is expected that the growth rates in this sphere will be maintained this year as well. However, as was noted by the parties, these numbers do not reflect the existing potential of our countries and there are plenty opportunities to increase the trade volumes by 2-3 times in the coming years.

Currently around 500 Turkish firms and companies operate in Uzbekistan. The volume of Turkish investments to our economy exceed 1 bln. US dollars.

During the conversation the parties expressed confidence that this visit will give new impetus to mutually beneficial contacts of representatives of business circles of the two countries.

The sides considered the issues of construction of complexes on growing and deep processing of agricultural products, storage, packaging and exports of food products, establishment of modern joint ventures in textile and leather-processing industries, in particular, joint promotion of finished branded products in world markets through the joint deep processing of cotton fiber and leather, development and implementation of new projects in the field of pharmaceuticals.

The issues of further development of tourist infrastructure of Uzbekistan through attracting leading Turkish travel companies in construction of modern tourist complexes, meeting the international standards, in Samarkand, Bukhara, Khorezm and Tashkent regions, were considered at the meeting.

A special attention was paid to transport communications as well. It was emphasized that the launch of the Baku-Akhalkalaki-Kars railway will be an important factor in addressing such strategic issues as the establishment of direct transport corridor, linking the two countries, the development of trade and economic partnership.

Taking into account the discussed issues, the parties agreed to hold a regular session of the intergovernmental joint commission and Uzbek-Turkish Investment Forum early next year in Tashkent.

Cultural and humanitarian cooperation occupies a special place in relation of the two countries. The sides discussed issues of development of cooperation in this direction.

Shavkat Mirziyoyev and Recep Tayyip Erdogan expressed solid confidence that the agreements, reached during this meeting, will elevate bilateral relations to a qualitatively new level, serve in opening new pages of mutually beneficial cooperation.

In the second half of the day, the high-level guest visited Imam Bukhari, Imam Moturidi complexes and Amir Temur mausoleum, the Registan square.

Recep Tayyip Erdogan noted that during the years of independence, under the leadership of President Islam Karimov, these holy sites have been cardinally reconstructed and acquired a new look. The Head of Turkey underscored that Uzbekistan has been reaching high results in the revival, study and popularization of rich spiritual heritage of our ancestors throughout the world.

On this, President of the Republic of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan concluded his visit to our country.

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