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Uzbekistan's club

MAGAZINE



FURQAT SIDDIQOV
JONATHAN HENICK

UZBEKISTAN AND THE US:
SIMILARITIES AND COOPERATION

TOP 7

GOLDEN MAPLE NATIONAL AWARD FOR CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

LOLA
GONNA BE A STAR ANYWAY

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The Wings of Central Asia

UZBEKISTAN AIRWAYS

Uzbekistan's club
MAGAZINE

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Dear reader! What you are holding is the second issue of our glossy magazine Uzbekistan's club. There is a rule in the theater: the second showing of the premiere performance is always more important than the first. Since at the first stage the actors' adrenaline is pumping and the audience is excited. And on the second, only professionalism and high class that come into work. And it is the second showing that decides everything: whether the performance will be a hit or not.

That is why we decided not just to repeat the success of the first issue, but also try to surpass ourselves: to raise the bar. The debut issue of Uzbekistan's club magazine was widely distributed in Tashkent as much as throughout the world. The readers received it at a very special premise – at the Old Royal Naval College in London, following its presentation ceremony. France, US, Germany, Canada, Poland, Italy, Spain are but a few countries we received news with photos of the magazine from grateful readers.

The earliest readers received this issue in their hands before a high-level Golden Maple Awards ceremony in Tashkent. This issue came to life during the season of series of projects that a creative team of Uzbekistan's club has undertaken in the US. It contains the stories as well as thoughts of Uzbekistanis living in the US about the development of their homeland.

All financial flows in the world converge in the US. The US is host to one of the largest Uzbekistani diasporas in the world. And they are also the most talented and creative people. Its remarkable museums house incredible arts. We decided to focus on them in our new issue.

In this magazine, we not only prepared materials with the most interesting people, in our opinion, attracted the best authors, and compiled the best ratings. But we also immersed them in the world noosphere – in the space of classical, modernist and contemporary arts.

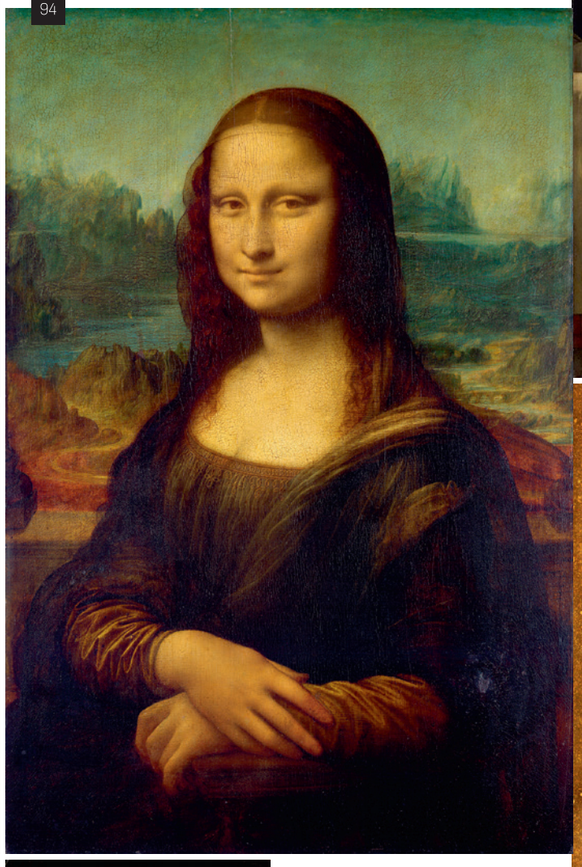
Because we, Uzbekistanis, are an integral part of our planet. We breathe in rhythm with all its other inhabitants. We are at the forefront of events. We are in the heart of the continent. We are capable of everything!

Sincerely, The Editorial Team

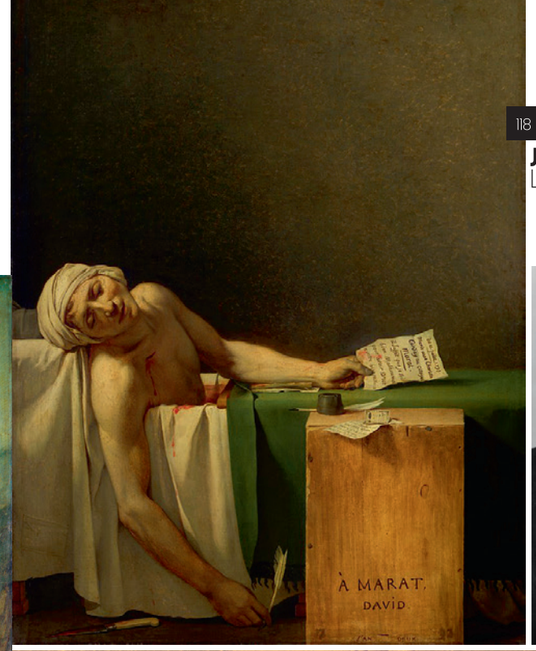
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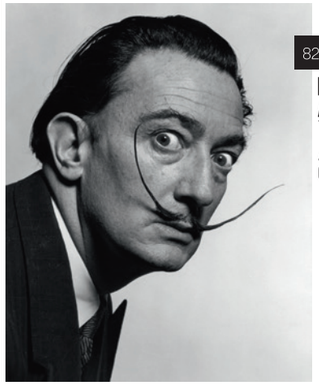
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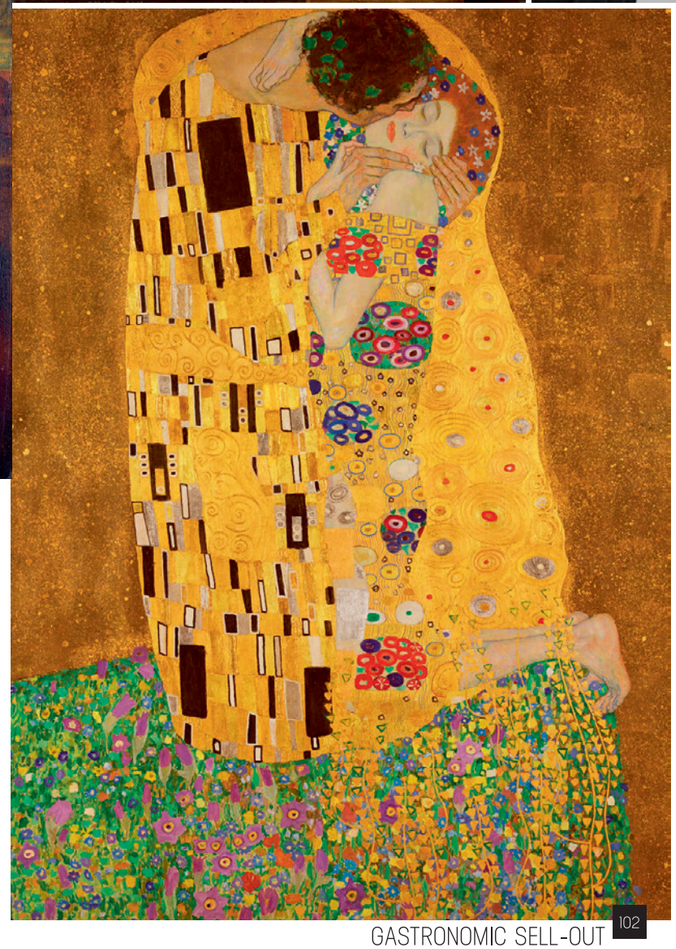


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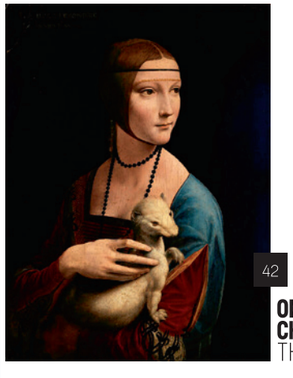
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YULDA SHEVA

GONNA BE A STAR ANYWAY





PERFORMED MY FIRST CONCERTS TO MY NEIGHBORS.

I used to hand out invitations in our neck of the woods. I could feel that the job I did was to be stamped in my destiny. While writing exam work at school, I would say, “no, I don’t need these, because anyway I’ll become a star, I’ll be a singer.” My mother was the one who supported me in this. The thought spinning in my brain was that which my mother had it settle in: “there is nothing impossible in life, you can achieve anything if you want to.”

HAD A QUITE HAPPY CHILDHOOD.

Vanilla scent used to air our home because my mother baked cake for orders. I still remember well how she made beautiful swans from Marshmallow. Remember eating the rest of the creams that my mother had prepared. This vanilla and felicity are the warmth of my childhood.

MY MOTHER WAS THE ONE WHO INSTILLED A SENSE OF FREEDOM IN OUR MINDSET.

Every evening my mother, brother, sister and I would organize a disco at home. We used to play the latest posh music in our home-based disco, including Whitney Houston, Michael Jackson, Queen. My dad would DJ the shows. We would turn off the light and dance to a lot of different music. Perhaps that is why we grew up so much freethinkers and liberty lovers.

THE FIRST MONEY I EARNED I GAVE TO MY GRANDMOTHER.

At the age of 11, at graduation parties I sang my song “Bahor” (Spring). Back then, royalties used to be given in cash, and I knocked out a backpack of money. I took that bag to my granny and, while handing it to her, uttered: “Gramma, check this out! Look at this millionaire. I will get even richer when I grow up”. I felt like a great person indeed.

STARRED IN A TV COMMERCIAL FOR SHIRIBOM GUM.

That advert came to be rather popular back then. Thus everyone would start calling me Shiribom. That same year I went to the children’s summer recreation camp, Semurg. My room-mate girls there would ridicule me all way long. I remember that one of those days I lay scratching in my blanket refusing to see or hear anyone. The girls would come and ask me, mocking, ”What’s up, Shiribom gum, are you upset?” I still remember their names and know how their lives went later. Those events became a major trauma in my inner world.

AS FAR AS CENSORSHIP IS CONCERNED.

I approach this issue with humor. I do not make a drama out of it, nor do I want to lead the cause to combat it, neither do I try to fight it. Attempts at censorship have only had a positive effect on my work. Because pressure always creates an opposite force. You get a certain feeling of pain and at the same time inspiration to create.

NEVER TRIED TO GO AGAINST THE SOCIETY.

I tried to show a different way of life and thinking. I attempted at breaking stereotypes. But I can’t change a person if they do not want to go beyond their frames and think more broadly. In general, the pressures on me have made me more tolerant of people who do not understand me. I cannot change them. It is important for me to keep my self and not give up my values.

Interview by Nikita MAKARENKO

KAHRAMON KURANBAYEV,

CHAIRMAN OF MAHALLA ASSOCIATION OF
UZBEKISTAN, POLITICAL SCIENTIST

WORKING WITH YOUTH

**INTRICATE.
EXCITING.
HONORABLE**





THE ERA OF EMPOWERING YOUTH

Our country's population has exceeded 37 million, while more than 60 percent of them are youth, that is, people under 30 years old. Naturally, this figure implies that it is essential that we place special significance to their thoughts, challenges they face as well as their dreams.

In recent times, the attention and concern for the future of young people, the feeling of involvement in their fate has increased more than ever. Youth policy has become an important criterion and priority direction of the reforms taking place in Uzbekistan. We have been tasked with addressing the pressing issues bothering them for many years. Rather suggestive of this is the fact that more than 100 normative documents have been adopted on this front in the past short period and are being consistently implemented. Throughout the history of our country, boys and girls have never been delivered as wider opportunities and conditions as they are today.

Currently, no one is left out when it comes to youth issues. It is true that their problems are everyone's problems. If we all work together now, we will help young people overcome life's difficulties and obstacles on the way to their goals.

In hindsight, working with youngsters and creating conditions for them to become fully mature individuals has always been on my agenda. When I think about it, I come to believe that it is written on my destiny, a great responsibility and duty. It is a great honor for me, to be sure. After all, working with young people at any time is the thorniest, the most interesting and the most honorable job.

I remember being a leader in school, an active guy, having boys and girls follow me. Later, I had to apply these experiences at the National University of Uzbekistan. Then I was lucky enough to be present at the creation of an important, large youth organization in the country – the Kamolot youth social movement. Then I worked in responsible positions in the Republican Spirituality and Enlightenment Center, the Cabinet of Ministers, the National TV and Radio Company and the Presidential Administration.

At the moment, I am directly involved in youth issues, both as the head of Uzbekistan Association of Mahallas and through my role in the "Mahalla Seven Leaders" scheme support department at the Cabinet of Ministers. I am accountable to the national leadership on this issue.

THE CHANGING MINDSET AND ASPIRATIONS OF PEOPLE

I fully realize how tremendous is the responsibility to serve as Chairman of the Association of Mahallas of Uzbekistan, itself an important institution in the new stage of our national development. After all, today the state aims to deliver all reforms to the population through the mahalla.

Currently, the mahalla system has become the central and decisive backbone of reforms. As the head of our state noted, today all work is organized in the mahalla, together with our people. This, of course, means both authority and responsibility. Chairman of the Association will not be able to address these things on his own. Therefore, the "Mahalla Seven Leaders" scheme was set up as a solution to this problem.

At the moment, 86 percent of the scheme members are qualified personnel with higher education. The fact that 24 percent of them are young people shows that today the youth capacities are used more widely in addressing the pressing problems faced by the wider population.

Another vital point is that the youth problems are solved not only with the help of educational institutions or specialists at the workplace, but also in an environment that knows them and their family well – in mahallas. After all, there is no one who knows the problems of the youth better than the youth leaders who live in the same neighborhood as them. Because they can see the real situation in the neck of their woods. That is why it is useful in all respects for the President's trusted representatives, that is, youth leaders to work in neighborhood communities or mahallas.

As required by my profession, I travel a lot, visit cities and villages of our country and talk with young people working in diverse fields, with differing life paths, and their parents. As the society develops, we are witnessing the change in their worldview, aspirations for life, and the people's sense of belonging to the reforms has grown.

Please note that our compatriots, who have returned from migration, say that "while we worked abroad, our lives have passed void, we did not see our children grow up, and we have not been able to serve our parents". Today, the state is helping return labor migrants to Uzbekistan, creating opportunities for them to earn and be employed here. What we call the 'Saykhunabad Experience': within the framework of a series of measures, we witnessed that in some villages there are such families who earn millions and millions of income from the wonderful farm land and ensure their well-being. So, if people strive, be in search, and works tirelessly, they can change their lives right there. Our people understand this now. Land is seen as a great source of income.

It is true that there are expats working in good jobs abroad, earning decent income and providing for their families. We are working not to return them, but to support them in the countries where they live and work. In addition, compensations have been introduced to cover the expenses incurred by citizens with professional and language skills in order to obtain employment certificates as well as travel tickets.

EDUCATION BREAKS THE CHAINS OF POVERTY

Observations show that the sense of gratitude for their lives and confidence in the future, especially the sense of investing for the future of their children, are awakening in our people. Surely, it is pleasing to see that striving for children to be knowledgeable and educated is becoming a value.

I am lucky that I was born and grew up in a family where children are given a lot of attention. I was one of 11 kids. But my parents gave me special attention and upbringing, like every other child. We all studied, got higher education, and found our proper place in society. This was the biggest goal of our parents.

My father, Kuchkar-ata Kuranbayev, chairman of a large farm in Shavat district, known in person by the renowned state and public figure, Sharof Rashidov, whom he would meet quite often while on trip to Khorezm, moved to Tashkent for the good of his children, to secure a better future for them. He studied at an agricultural technical school, and obtained higher education, working in difficult conditions. At that time, my mother, who stayed at home with six babies, got up every morning, cleaned the school near our house, and raised us with honest job and earning.

I deeply understand how critical it is to do your utmost for the development of children, following the example of my parents and my family. I am proud of the fact that today there are more and more families who live for their kids' future. State bodies and mahallas wield every opportunity and capacity to guide them in this regard.

It must be admitted that there were times when our society, that is, we, could not pay enough attention to the education and upbringing of children, and left this matter out of vital agenda. There is also a belief that due to the fact that work with young people used to be looked at superficially; the issues that need to be solved have piled up.

Today, we are carrying out systemic work with parents who deeply feel their responsibility towards their children, who make every effort to deliver all the conditions for them to grow up to be professional and possess modern knowledge.

If children study, learn, become experts in any given field, it will be easy to break the chains of poverty. The standard of living of such young people will increase, and the quality of life will rise. Here we are talking about all stages of education. Looking back 7-8 years, coverage in preschool educational institutions was less than 10 percent. Today, this indicator has grown several times, and the segment of the population, which is rapidly growing year by year, is adequately preparing for school education. Schools are adapting to the needs of the times and becoming a place that can guide both higher education and profession.

I think it is appropriate to mention one point here. The head of our state said, "One important issue that always comes to our mind is related to the manners, behavior, and, in a word, outlook of our youth. Today, times are changing rapidly. Who will feel these changes the most? Young people will. Let the youth be in harmony with the demands of their time. But at the same time, they should not forget their self-identity. Let the call of who we are, what great people we are the descendants of always resonate in their hearts and encourage them to stay true to themselves. How can we achieve this? Thanks to enlightenment, enlightenment and only enlightenment".

These tasks place great responsibility on the school, family, mahalla, and the entire society. Based on this, the work style of all mahalla leaders and activists in the spiritual and educational spheres in neighborhoods has changed radically. Improving the education, spirituality and enlightenment of young people has become a daily priority task of the mahalla system. An online communication platform was launched on the basis of "school-parents-mahalla" cooperation scheme.

Besides, intellectuals, enlightened people, every compatriot who goes on Hajj and Umrah pilgrimages are promoters of spirituality and good manners and encourage people for kind deeds. Communicating more with the youth of the neighborhood, listening to their hearts, knowing their challenges, finding solutions to their problems, working with unorganized youth has become a daily task. In protecting young people from any spiritual and ideological threats, first of all, we should not be indifferent to each other, to our neighbors, to the upbringing of children growing up on our street, in our neighborhood, to be active on this front.

Today's youth are not yesterday's youth, their consciousness, outlook, dreams, and demands have changed. They actively participate in political processes and boldly express their opinion. The state has not left the youth with their problems face on face. It is trying to create all opportunities and conditions for them, to listen to their pains and concerns.

Ensuring employment of young people, providing for their entrepreneurial activities, delivering opportunities for them to become educated, helping them to show their talents, and supporting their initiatives will always be in the heart of our policies and strategies. Joining hands, we will mobilize all the capacities to maintain harmony in the family, and for our sons and daughters to grow up in a healthy environment. Since under the influence of globalization, at a time when the ideological landscape of the world is changing hourly, we have absolutely no right to be complacent in youth matters. If there is just one youngster in the neighborhood who is unemployed or unable to find his way, who is causing problems to others through bad behavior, we do not have the right to be in peace of mind.



RAHIMA SURAYYO

CHILD AS A DISCRETE INDIVIDUAL





Providing children with high-quality education and healthcare, ensuring their rights is the most proper investment in human capital.

Uzbekistan's club has talked with Surayyo Rahmonova, Oliy Majlis (Supreme Assembly, the national parliament) Representative for Children's Rights (Children's Ombudsman) on topics pertinent to the welfare and safety of the country's junior citizens.

PROPER UPBRINGING IS NOT AT THE EXPENSE OF RIGHTS

Children and their dignity are arguably the most critical topic for any person, be they are in politics or out. For this reason, when I assumed office of Children's Ombudsman, I wondered if I was ready to work in this rather specialized, delicate field, and if I could cope with the responsibility.

One of the principal areas of our activity is the pressing issues in child upbringing methods. Much depends on how children are raised and nurtured. The saddest thing is that when it comes to education and rearing, the topic of violence is again on the agenda.

Why? Because the mentality of our people has rarely considered the child a discrete individual. Historically thus, the value of the child as a person, as bearer of personal, social and other rights was scarcely taken into account in principle.

As a side effect of such mindset, our attitude towards children is manifest in the fact that we seldom try to listen to them, nor allow them to make decisions related to their most basic needs, to take independent decisions crucial for their fate.

Regrettably, violence in various forms is still a vital element of rearing and is still accepted in society; we have come across numerous proofs of this during our work. Children are deprived of their rights in the social environment, at home, at school, among their relatives.

To be sure, this is a global problem. One should note that not only in Asia, but also in some European countries, violence is considered essential as an effective means of raising the child.

Nonetheless, Uzbekistan is currently undergoing grave paradigm changes on this front. If you recall, some time ago, before the topic of violence in upbringing children became a taboo, it was not customary to talk about it; violence in the family used to be voiceless, it was hidden by our mentality and traditions. Yet now we are not only talking about it, we are sending a clear message to the society: the rights of the child are under the protection of the law and the state.

OUR GIRLS' PATH FROM WEAKNESS TO INDEPENDENCE

A FIRM POSITION AND COMPLEX ISSUES

Another tough issue in our reality is early marriage. Unfortunate as it is, traditions and historical outlook in our region have had this phenomenon endure in our society.

What is the reason behind this? The reasons are the same as they were 100 years ago. This is basically the instinct of parents to marry their daughter to a good family and ensure her a comfortable and steady life. Yes, 100 years ago, such an outlook was most likely socially and historically justified. Girls had no other way of life than early marriage. But now the times are completely different: girls have a lot of opportunities for education, professional development, self-realization, vocation and creativity. It is essential that we change the approaches shaped by different traditions and motives.

Girls are of the same value as boys! They are equally entitled to study and develop. Undeniably, marriage is an important stage in their lives, but they should go to it consciously, not under pressure by parents and society.

Early marriage leads to violence again. A girl who is only prepared to marry and serve her husband will not work on herself, develop as a person or as a professional. As a result, a woman is exposed to all types of violence at the same time. But it should be said that everything starts with economic violence, that is, material dependence.

It is difficult to limit the rights of a girl who can do her own business and support herself. That is why the main attention should be focused on the education of girls not only in traditional professions, but also in strict and natural sciences. At the moment, serious efforts are underway in this regard. For example, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) education is a model that combines natural sciences and engineering.

When it comes to violence, unfortunately, sexual violence against minors should be under focus, and the Children's Ombudsman has a sturdy position on this issue. We are working closely with all law enforcement agencies in this respect. We are provided with written information on each case of pedophilia, we attend court trials and can protest against verdicts in the interest of children.

As you know, Uzbekistan has augmented the punishments applied to any forms of sexualized crimes against minors. The register of persons who have committed such a crime was launched in October 2023, and they are prohibited from entering educational institutions even after they have served their sentence.

Surely, combating this problem requires multiple measures. Today, we are working systemically with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Ministry of Preschool and School Education of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the Prosecutor General's Office and other interested bodies and organizations in order to inform children and their parents about threats and hazards, including sexual violence. Currently, enlightenment materials are distributed in schools explaining what violence is like, how to behave in situations of danger, and where to appeal for help.

Attitude towards sex education in our society has been controversial. For some reason, many believe that that would lead to crooked rearing.

In my view, taking into account various nuances, it is essential that we gradually incorporate this discipline in the school curricula as a non-compulsory, optional course and leave the choice to parents.



PROXIMITY OF A THOUSAND KILOMETERS

FURQAT SIDDIQOV

The distance between Tashkent and Washington is about 6,500 miles. While on trip to explore the nation on the other side of the planet during the American season of Uzbekistan's club projects, we were in close contact with the team of the Embassy of our country in the United States and Ambassador Furqat Sidikov, who were generous enough to extend a hand of help to us on many issues. A truth we discovered on our travel across the USA found its confirmation during the conversation with our top diplomat in Washington, D.C.: that America is our close friend in distance. Our hero reflects on its reasons and evidences to support that view.



THE EVOLUTION OF COOPERATION HAS ACCELERATED

President Shavkat Mirziyoyev's state visit to the U.S.A. in 2018 kicked off a new era of strategic partnership between our two nations. What we observed is the vibrant dynamics in cooperation across spheres owing to the reforms implemented in Uzbekistan. In recent years, we have held more than 20 high-level exchanges. These included visits to Tashkent by Secretary of State Anthony Blinken, the President's Homeland Security Advisor Elizabeth Sherwood-Randall, Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman, among others. Over the past 5 years, more than 40 senators, congressmen and their staffers have traveled to Uzbekistan and contributed to the consolidation of our strategic partnership.

The historic first summit meeting of Central Asian countries and the United States, which took place in New York on 19 September 2023, manifested once again the robust bonds tying our countries. Reforms in Uzbekistan are the most important factor in the development of interaction between Tashkent and Washington.

In particular, the US Congress has strongly supported the course of reforms in our country. Quite indicative of this was our joint celebration of Uzbekistan Day for the first time at the Congress in 2023.

THE ECONOMIC TIES UNHINDERED BY THE OCEAN

Uzbekistan's trade with the United States increased from USD277 million in 2020 to USD657.3 million in 2023, making America the 13th major trading partner. In the three months of 2024, our turnover grew by 40 percent.

Today, more than 50 companies like SpaceX, HP, Google, Apple, Microsoft, General Electric are members of the American-Uzbekistan Chamber of Commerce. Most of them joined the Chamber as a show of faith in the economic reforms undertaken our country within the last few years.

In 2023, the Air Products presented a new investment program in Uzbekistan with a total value exceeding 10 billion U.S. dollars. In cooperation with UzAuto Motors, General Motors plans to gear up production in Uzbekistan 1.5 times, up to 500,000 cars a year.

The enhancing interaction in the field of IT is rather crucial to us. In 2023, Uzbekistan's exports of IT services to the world market increased more than 2.4 times. A significant share of these exports, or 44 percent to be more precise, goes to the U.S. market.

UNITED IN THE FIELD OF SCIENCE AND ENLIGHTENMENT

Academic cooperation between Uzbekistan and the United States has flourished over the past few years. Webster University has been a success in Tashkent for several years, and Arizona State University intends to establish its own campus by the end of this year.

A dozen leading American higher education institutions, including Texas A&M, Syracuse, Michigan State, Old Dominion, Penn State University, among others have signed cooperation agreements that facilitate academic exchange and boost ties between our students.

Over the past five years, together with our American partners, we have trained more than 18 thousand English language teachers from Uzbekistan and delivered English language textbooks to 10 thousand schools.

In addition, 50 high school students of our country are in the U.S.A. under a one-year Future Leader program. More than 80 winners of El-Yurt Umidi [Hope of the Nation - trans.] scholarships are studying at more than 30 universities in the United States.

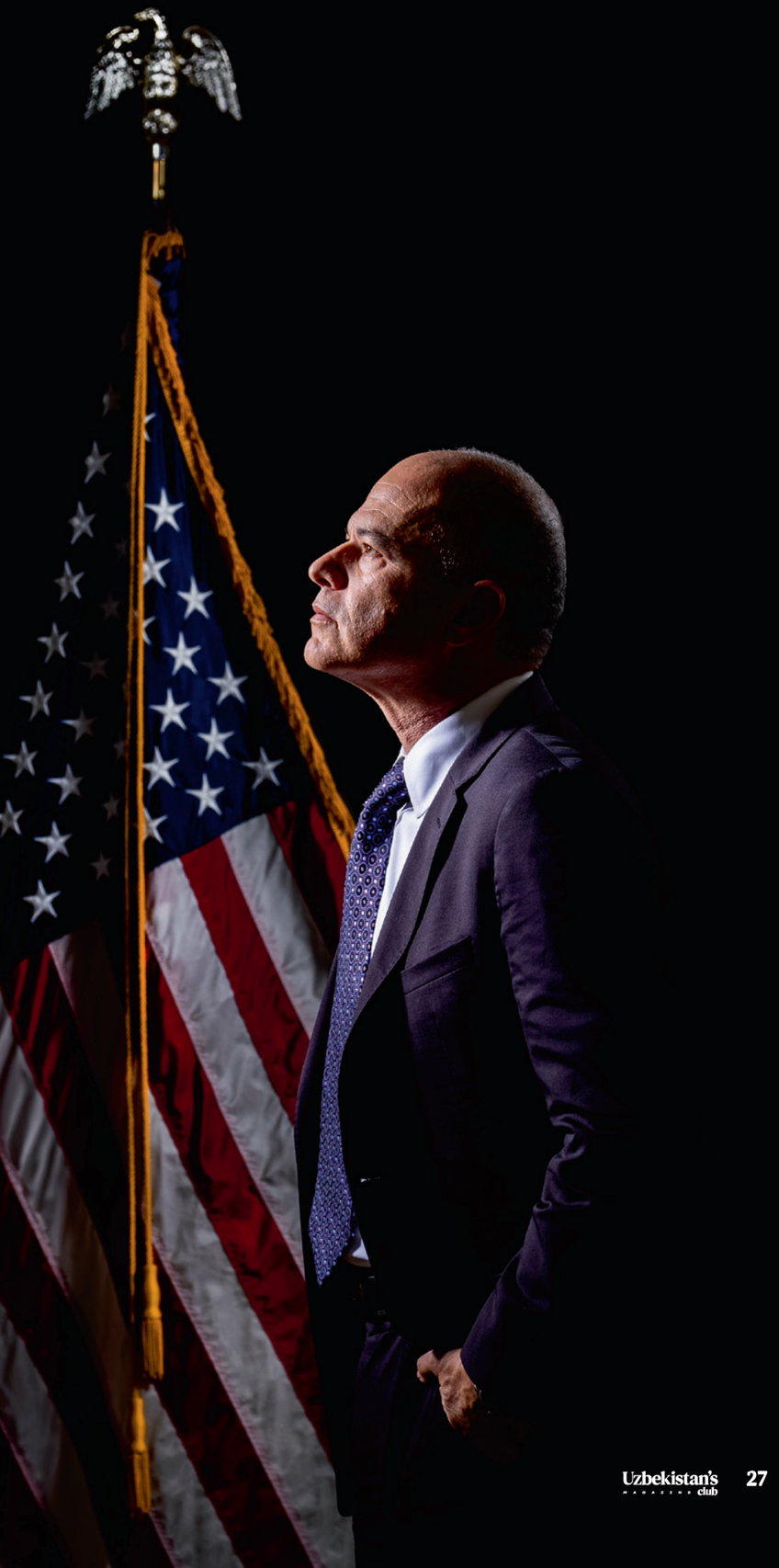
I should stress that interest in learning Uzbek has been growing in America, too. Today, building on the strategic importance of Central Asia in global geopolitics and academic interest in Uzbekistan's rich history and culture, more than 15 universities in the U.S. offer Uzbek language programs and courses.

Furqat Sidikov also noted that the American tourists visiting our country has been growing in number, that visa-free regime has been introduced for U.S. citizens over 55 years old, and that direct flights between New York and Tashkent several times a week have been unique to the entire region. Speaking about the prospects of bilateral interaction, as the U.S. side is showing interest in the field of minerals and business process outsourcing (BPO), Ambassador stresses that Uzbekistan seeks to bring the most advanced experiences in the fields of finance, technology, and business transformation from across the ocean.

Interview by Nikita MAKARENKO

SIMILAR UZBEKS AND AMERICANS

In his interview to Uzbekistan's club, Jonathan Henick, Ambassador of the United States to Uzbekistan, has shared with his observations about positive changes in our country and new challenges it faces.





AIR QUALITY, A UNIVERSAL ISSUE

In Tashkent, the first air quality monitoring device was installed at the US Embassy, and we are glad that such monitors have been widespread now. Air quality is everyone's concern. We are currently focusing on connecting the Uzbek government with American experts to share research strategies and US experience in reducing air pollution.

I like walking, and amble around Tashkent as soon as I get a chance. It's a city worth exploring, yet much more could be done to make it more pedestrian-friendly. The subway stations are gorgeous, so it's just a pleasure to ride the subway. The bus system is also improving. The more we encourage people to use public transport, the better it is for the environment.

VISA AND GREEN CARD

We want as many Uzbeks as possible to visit the United States. Such trips are beneficial for the economy of both countries. However, visitors must comply with US law when traveling. Our consular department regularly checks whether travelers have returned to Uzbekistan on time, whether they have used their visas appropriately. Visa misuse makes it difficult for legitimate travelers to obtain them again.

We also know that many Uzbeks cross the US-Mexico border illegally. Some of them follow this path after their US visa applications are rejected. This is a clear evidence that those persons intend to misuse their visas.

The American Embassy regularly publishes anti-Green Card fraud tips. We encourage applicants to complete the application by themselves – it is free of charge and allows contenders to oversee the accuracy of information they provide. If you use the help of others, we recommend that you make sure that the helper has filled out the appropriate form correctly to avoid mistakes that could disqualify the application from participating in the lottery.

CHALLENGES UZBEKISTAN IS FACING

Uzbekistan should pay attention to a number of aspects in order to consistently continue the reforms. First of all, about 600 thousand young men and women join the labor market in the country every year. The only way to employ so many people is to expand the role and size of the private sector. In order to attract foreign investments and develop the private sector, the government should improve the business and investment environment, combat corruption, and keep with the privatization of state-owned enterprises. Independent and well-trained judiciary, transparency and anti-corruption measures are also important in building a New Uzbekistan.

The media sector has seen positive developments, but it is hardly enough. Uzbekistan deserves a free and independent media environment. Journalists should be able to work without pressure and self-censorship, even when covering some politically sensitive issues. I hope that the government will continue to deliver conditions more favorable for journalists for a truly open communication.

The World Trade Organization accession process is also critical; this requires having a legal framework that protects investors, consumers and labor. All the reforms necessary for WTO membership will make Uzbekistan's economy more competitive, innovative and investment-friendly.

PEOPLE CONTRIBUTING TO THE ADVANCEMENT OF UZBEKISTAN

There is a category of people in this country who deserve special acknowledgement. First, human rights defenders. It takes a lot of courage to speak out about workers, political prisoners, religious freedom, and other human rights issues. I also admire journalists, especially those who come up with investigative materials and expose corruption, who dare to hold the government accountable. I also appreciate entrepreneurs who create jobs. Another group that amazes me is teachers. In Uzbekistan, as in other nations, teachers inspire the young generation to pursue their dreams. And finally, I appreciate the civil servants. These are people who earn not much money, but try to improve their government and their country.

One interesting thing I have noticed is that Uzbeks and Americans are very similar, even though they seem very different at first glance. We prioritize family and local community. We are patriots and proud of our countries. We are entrepreneurs and hardworking. This is one of the reasons why our relations are getting stronger day by day.

Interview by Nikita MAKARENKO

OUR ECONOMY IS A BLOOMING GARDEN



EKATERINA YENIKEYEVA,

Deputy Chairwoman of the Board. Kapitalbank

RETURN TO UZBEKISTAN WAS A DREAM COME TRUE

– How did you end up in the banking industry?

– I have been working in the banking sector for more than 10 years. The most interesting thing is that for 8-9 years I had worked as an auditor on the "other side of the barricade", Ernst & Young. Was involved in the auditing of banks for a long time, and Kapitalbank was one of my first clients from the dawn of my career.

I really enjoyed that experience. Once I decided that the banking industry would be more interesting, and have not regretted about that decision.

– The bank was founded 23 years ago. What do you think Kapitalbank represents today?

– Kapitalbank is not only the largest private bank in Uzbekistan, but it also provides for a major network of branches and ATMs across the nation, an unprecedented number of almost 2 million customers and 67 thousand entrepreneurs.

As a modern financial institution, Kapitalbank devotes a lot of resources and efforts to digitalization of services. The purpose is not only to stay advanced in the field, but also to offer reliable, convenient and accessible financial services to citizens in every settlement around the country.

For me, Kapitalbank is the flagship of Uzbekistan's financial market. We offer very interesting and advanced banking services in the local market. Other financial organizations in the country are following suit.

– You, Uzbekistan and Kapitalbank. How did this harmony come about?

– I grew up in Tashkent. It was an interesting process for me to return to my homeland to apply the knowledge and skills I had gained over the years working in the world's leading companies and banks.

I can call it a materialized dream. Ahead of my return to Uzbekistan, I discussed with my acquaintances how interesting it would be to adapt my experience to an environment that is new, but close to me. This is an opportunity for me to be of use to my country.

I liken the current economy of Uzbekistan to a blooming garden. If you sow just a stick, for example, it will bloom and bear fruit. Today, it is a very exciting experince to launch the services underway in other countries in this market. What results can be achieved, what mistakes can be made and what should be taken into account to avoid them – all this is quite familiar to me.

Currently, there is a shortage of digital products in Uzbekistan. The team at Kapitalbank is able to deliver them.

– What was your main accomplishment last year? What are your goals for 2024?

– The biggest achievement of the past year, which determines the bank's development today, is that we became part of the Uzum ecosystem. Together, we created the first one-billion dollar company in the history of our country.

When we embarked on this business in the distant 2021, all of this seemed completely impossible. Today, we see the result of our efforts: we managed to deliver an ecosystem from scratch, which is familiar to everyone in the country.

Principal objectives for 2024 are clear, namely, to continue with digitalization. We want to be the largest private bank as much as the leading customer-oriented one. Our goal is to become the number one bank in terms of customer services and service quality.

Who creates the service? The team does. We set up a training center of our own, where more than 3,000 staff members of the bank undergo free classes. We are ready to offer each member of the team the opportunity to grow and develop together with the bank. We want to deliver a consistent high level of service regardless of region or personnel.

– How does Kapitalbank see the development of regions of the country and how does it participate in it?

– We spent 2022 under the motto of expanding the retail network, now Kapitalbank has its branches in all regions of the nation. Our goal is to deliver services where there is no need to go to the district center to use the necessary banking services.

Our mobile app offers solutions for many tasks. After a comprehensive update planned for this year, the Kapitalbank app is expected to be even more convenient. This means that you can always use our services even if there is no Kapitalbank branch in your area of residence.



I STAND FOR CERTAINTY AND STABILITY

Yet it is barely enough to offer a service – it is also important to teach how to use it. This is one of the most important aspects in the country's financial sector. In schools and universities, our colleagues provide detailed information about banking, deposits and loans. By increasing financial literacy, we ensure that our customers do not let fraudsters get hold of their confidential data.

By raising awareness on basic concepts, we teach people how to save money, spend wisely, and get the most out of it using a convenient service. Thanks to the deposit guarantee fund, Uzbekistan offers a great opportunity to keep money in a safe deposit. In my opinion, no country in the world guarantees 100% return of the deposit. In Uzbekistan, funds will be reimbursed by the state even if a bank loses its license. This is a 100% safety cushion for both citizens and non-residents. So, make a deposit, keep your funds in the bank.

During a recent internal audit on ESG, we witnessed that we have been supporting and implementing such projects for many years now. Banks are not only encouraged, but also obliged to contribute to the future of society as system-creating participants of the market.

– What do you think, is there a difference between the management style of women and men? What are the key challenges you face in team management?

– Is there a difference in the attitude of subordinates to men or women? I do not think so. It all depends on the person and their abilities. A true leader can be recognized immediately. They accept them, listen to them. There are men who are less efficient at leadership than women.

I have worked with female and male leaders both in Uzbekistan and abroad. Have met leaders who demonstrate a high level of consistency in their decisions and actions, who work with systemic mindset and precision. I am all for sustainability. Accuracy and stability.

– What three pieces of advice would you give to girls who dream of leadership?

– First and foremost, do not be afraid of responsibility.

I would give this advice to everyone, regardless of age and gender, not just girls. It is essential not to be afraid of responsibility for your words and decisions. This will help you move up the career ladder. In many cases, such people are promoted faster.

Second tip: explore new tasks and directions. We are all human beings and we would like to stay within our comfort zone. Achieving success requires exploring new areas and mastering additional skills.

I try new things that I scarcely know, nor do I have the necessary skills to do them. It was like that at the start of my career, and it is still like that now. It broadens the worldview. You prove to yourself that you can do more. Do not be afraid of that.

Tip number 3: do not stop learning. Since there is a lot of information, everything is changing rapidly, knowledge can quickly lose its relevance. It is critical to constantly acquire new knowledge and get acquainted with information. It is vital that we not only read books and attend seminars, but also increase our practical experience. Cultivation of the eye through practical experience and observation is important in improving this skill.

– You were born and grew up in Uzbekistan. What is the source of power for you?

– Mountains. I spent my entire childhood in the Chimyon Mountains. I love hiking the mountains on weekends. Nature, fresh air, a conquered peak and a brilliant view in front of my eyes always give me strength. What could be better than that?

I love the Grand Chimyon Mount. It is 3,309 meters high in its summit. I spent a lot of time and effort on this mountain. All these actions are justified, because they gave me invaluable experience and where I found my purpose. Playing professional sports teaches many things, the most vital of which is the will to achieve goals.

Interview by Murad NASIROV



SHERZODKHON KUDRATKHUJA

LET BE OUR SYMBOL

Text by Saidaziz AZAMOV

WE WILL ALL BE WELL RID OF PRIMITIVE PERCEPTIONS ABOUT UZBEKISTANIS.

AVLONI'S WARNING A HUNDRED YEARS AGO IS STILL RELEVANT: EDUCATION IS A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH.

STRONG PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL CLOUT CONSTITUTE THE NATION'S GREAT ASSET.

EVERY UZBEKISTANI CAN MAKE A CHANGE, EVEN IF IT IS SMALL.

TAKING PRIDE BY CLAIMING "I AM AN UZBEK, A BEK FOR MYSELF" WILL LEAD TO NATIONAL DEGENERATION.



Interview day. 6.30 pm. I was warmly greeted on the campus of the University of Journalism and Mass Communications of Uzbekistan; the staff offered me a tour of the administrative office saying that the rector was holding a meeting. An official who has been working here since the reconstruction of an old college in the neighborhood and a kindergarten [territories and buildings of the two served as foundation for a new university – trans.] went to introduce me to a small museum. He noted that in the first year the institution commenced, applications and admission examinations were organized at another university in Tashkent. Back in 2018, when Sherzodkhon Kudratkhuja worked as head of department at Jurfak [Journalism Faculty] or the '16th faculty' of the National University, the President of the country initiated the idea of establishing a journalism university. It admitted 119 students in the first year. Then, as the official told me with pride, the University of Journalism and Mass Communications of Uzbekistan went on to house blocks totaling 25 stories as well as a library of its own, TV and radio studios, media center, state-of-the-art educational blocks and dorms, almost 4,000 students, 350 faculty members. It has come to be a promising major university with 19 fields of journalism and disciplines such as political science, psychology, and sociology.

I entered the rector's room when the meeting was over and the professors working on new textbooks were leaving. But Sherzodkhon Kudratkhuja called them to the books piled at the other end of his desk:

"I am sending [these books – trans.] to School 260 in our neck of the woods. Would it be enough if I give a copy of them? No, I'd better give two copies of each of these texts. "The Fourth Industrial Revolution", "Animal Farm", "The Latte Factor"... Let me see what is there... Wow, "How did Georgia succeed?", "Don't be scared", "Scorpion from the Altar"... They say they don't have these books in the school library..."

18:40. I got welcomed by the rector with honors. Tea and sweets are part and parcel of such premises. The honorable rector wanted me to try some tandoori meat that someone had brought from southern regions of the country. With such hospitality we started our conversation by talking about the notion of Uzbekistani, our national identity, our distinct features...

ART RESTAURANT IRAQI SKULLCAP HUMAN CAPITAL FLEXIBLE

At the dawn of independence, once we started to make out of our identity, when we said 'Uzbekistan', we thought of lagans (Uzbek folk-style big plates) and chapans (national robes), red suzanis or art restaurants with muddy walls. I have acquaintances who do not know a single word of Uzbek, and they used to wear our pink and yellow adras clothes on holidays. Our shared values as a nation are not just our food, clothes, music and dance. The fact that people get skullcap on their head during some events barely makes them Uzbek or Uzbekistani.

When it comes to the notion of Uzbekistani, especially abroad, we have facilitated the formation of such a view based on our outward images, but this is a very primitive perception and we need to change it.

For me, Uzbekistani is a vast concept. That is a human capital that is being formed and developing in us. Uzbekistanis are a large class that includes not only Uzbeks, but all our citizens who consider themselves to be part of our country as well as our expats abroad. It is important for representatives of the people of Uzbekistan to know and introduce themselves as "I am from Uzbekistan", "I am Uzbekistani", regardless of what region or district they were born and grew up in.

- What can unite the people of such a large nation like Uzbekistan?

Pilaf unites all Uzbekistanis. In other words, they get united by two things: wedding or mourning pilaf. I don't look at it positively either. It is not enough. As our great Jadidist statesman Alikhantura Soghuni said, "If Uzbeks gathered together for other things as they do for pilaf, there would not be a more powerful nation in the world". Thus, we need to unite to address our problems, say, by contribution to the advancement of science and education, not by food and drink, chaykhana-style parties.

– How? Can you provide examples?

- For example, there are 10,750 schools in Uzbekistan. The state provides them with basic conditions, 5-6 trillion soums are spent on paying teachers and employees. But it is impossible to deliver smart boards, the latest books or other modern conveniences to so many schools at once. Uzbekistanis at home and abroad should unite their efforts on this issue.

Today, wherever you look around the world, there is a battle for talent. Take Indians and Chinese. In my opinion, a big competition between them has yet to come in the coming years. Why are Indians as mature specialists ascending to top jobs in the UN and other prominent international institutions and managing positions in giant multinational corporations across the world? Why are there Chinatowns in the capitals and cities of every advanced country? Why is the iPhone made in China? All this goes back to the fact that if there is a large population, both its labor-capable part and its unique talents, probably one in a million people, will naturally be more than those of other countries. In accordance with the probability theory, it is more likely that more population produces more geniuses and unique talents.

English is an official language in India, many people in that country are fluent in English and aspire to opportunities around the world. Young people from India or China are flexible, able to dynamically and quickly absorb lifestyle novelties. And they have many examples worthy of inspiration and aspiration.



– Where are we on this path and what should we do?

– We have a great opportunity, a demographic dividend, to make a good use of. We are 37 million these days. New talents are likely there to emerge. The provision of quality healthcare and education for our population is going well. If our young people are well educated, they can make a tremendous contribution to socioeconomic development.

Sometimes, unfortunately, the word Uzbekistani has for the most part come to mean labor migrants who take up the jobs that the host peoples abroad do not want to do. To be sure, this is a result of a weak economy that used to be the case in our country for many years. Many nations have passed through this stage. But the new generation of Uzbekistanis should set big goals for themselves and take a well-deserved place in the world. I liken it to Maslow's pyramid: we fill our bellies first, then we think about other things. I believe we have reached this new stage. As we develop education, we must bolster universal human values and education in the family, school, and society.

Another example: look at the history of Turkish immigrants in Germany. Having suffered defeat in the war and lost its influence, Germany received millions of migrants from Turkey. They worked in unskilled jobs, but across years, their children have come to own large businesses and be mature professionals in diverse fields. German Turks are even elected to the Bundestag [German national parliament – ed.].

– You say that our youth should set big goals. What should be the common objective and idea for Uzbekistanis?

– Look at the splendid national idea the Turks have: Ne mutlu Türk'üm diyene! [What a happy person who says I am a Turk – ed.]. Or what the French say, "Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité", or the American Dream in the U.S., for that matter.

I would like the Uzbekistanis to think that they can make a good input into the development of Uzbekistan, even if it is small, and not behave like they are just a consumer in a big country or that they can't have any impact on decisions. Realizing this, it is worth living in pursuit of such a high goal.

For that, we need to know Uzbekistan, its principal pressing issues, its geography, history and speak Uzbek well. After all, how can you love your nation if you have little knowledge about it, and how can you contribute to its development if you don't love it?

MASLOW
BUNDESTAG
AMERICAN DREAM
IQRO, IQRO, IQRO

Regrettable as it is, children growing up in our country do not know the Uzbek language well, let alone the kids of Uzbekistanis who have gone abroad. After all, language is a unique part of a nation that distinguishes it from others. Some compatriots love to boast that their children speak three languages, they send their sons and daughters to foreign language schools, but who do not know a single word in Uzbek.

Born in Uzbekistan, many young people, unfortunately, do not know much about this land. No clue about, say, what kind of problem the double locked country is for us, or how many percent of Uzbekistan's territory is attributed to Andijan and how many people live there.

(19:20. Suggesting that we have talked enough, I thanked the rector for the insightful conversation and the interesting information).

– What else would you like to talk about that I failed to ask?

– Don't be afraid to write this down: I don't like this phrase being misused like this. Telling everyone that as an Uzbek, you are bek [sovereign – trans.] for yourself [uz – trans.], that is, thinking only of yourself is selfish and hypocritical. Especially after reaching a certain level in society or after gaining some material wealth, it is wrong to live with such a notion.

We will all pass away, and all that will remain of us is the good deeds we did and the knowledge we acquired and shared. So many rich people have passed away in the world, but we don't remember them! We will remember Imam al-Bukhari, Ibn Sina, Khorezmi even after a thousand years have passed. They did not live for themselves, thinking that they are beks for themselves. Did Imam al-Bukhari, for instance, collect so many hadiths for himself? Wasn't the Noble Prophet (p.b.u.h.) an example of good behavior for all Muslims and showed them how to live? After all, he lived in a small hut, slept on a simple mat, and distributed the blessings that came to their home to the needy people. His two shovels did not see a Jacuzzi, he was short of food for weeks, and used to go to bed with his stomach tied with rocks to make it feel full. Living in Arabia, he performed Hajj just once and Umrah four times. Today we know people who undertake Umrah 10–15 times; they don't check their child's diary of marks, while the school and polyclinic in their neighborhood are in the poorest condition...

"Iqra", "Iqra", "Iqra" (Read), tells us Allah Almighty in the Holy Qur'an. Learning is a duty for us. There is a lot to be said for acquiring knowledge, the solution to most of our problems lies in reading and learning, and our development as a nation directly depends on magnifying our intellectual prowess.



THE HAPPY PERSON

OKSANA CHUSOVITINA

All the ten years that Oksana had to live in Germany, she longed for the moment to return home. She was loved over there; Chusovitina competed for Germany and earned several brilliant victories for that nation. Everything was perfect there, and she lived in between the two countries. Yet every time she landed at Berlin airport she would cry. And as soon as her son Alisher defeated the disease, she could not miss a chance to return. Since it's only here, in Uzbekistan, that Oksana Chusovitina feels happy.

She cannot even explain why. We sit opposite one another, and Oksana selects words to describe the phenomenon, but they all boil down to the hackneyed: East or west, home is best... It's probably impossible to express verbally why you love your native country so much. And why it is only on this land that you enjoy life and all the troubles you encounter here seem insignificant. We thus forsake this idea now, to describe the feelings. Yet during the conversation I came to understand what the secret is.

The fact that anything she embarks on, she does it with love. Oksana has always accepted everything that happened to her with gratitude. She wanted to be happy, and she became one, in spite of everything or against all odds. With tenacity and perseverance, she took on this goal to be happy as a thorny objective.

Now she is trying on the role of director of the Academy of Artistic Gymnastics. Following the Tokyo Olympics, where Oksana announced her retirement, President Shavkat Mirziyoyev suggested that she establish and lead an academy named after herself. And that turned out to be a dramatic coincidence with her long-time dream.

ACADEMY

- I remember you promised to learn Uzbek...

- I have learned it, - Oksana laughs. - At a construction site. I can be a forewoman. I swear professionally.

She had to become a forewoman, construction worker, director, as well as psychologist and nanny for the boys and girls who are admitted to the Academy. The issue of uniform became a serious stumbling block; parents want their child to do gymnastics, but they are confused by swimsuits.

- Now you can safely perform in overalls. I tell our parents, look, gymnastics is a popular discipline even in Arab countries, girls go out in full suits. Many parents don't know this. Many people do not know that gymnastics is where you can start a sports career in any sport. This is the basis on which you can put martial arts, boxing, running and jumping. Three or four years into gymnastics and then you can go to any discipline, and they take you at once, because you have coordination, you have stretching, you have brains.

- Brains?

- Sure. There is a rule: if you do poorly at school, you cannot become a good athlete. These are complex neural connections, your head and body are a single whole, in a split second you need to decide how to raise your arms, how to turn your body, how to push off and jump, how to coordinate. Without intelligence, you ruin your sports.

In addition, she has strict discipline at the Academy. Not everyone likes this, and, to be more precise, no one likes it. At a parent meeting, Oksana explains that there is no need to feed children with treats in secret from the coach; they receive exactly what athletes are entitled to. There is no need to constantly feel sorry for them, as in the manner "Oh, she's picked a callus, she will miss the drill this time." Oksana then ended up announcing that that's it, the kids will go home only for the holidays, because when they come from home, they're as fat as balloons.

And Chusovitina really doesn't like rudeness in any form. She can kick anyone out if she notices that boys treat girls badly or are rude to cleaners and cooks.

The Academy is almost ready, all that remains is to deliver the equipment there. Oksana wanted everything posh, European, that will last at least fifteen years. It is easy to teach on such equipment. It's expensive, but you better not even think of bargaining with Oksana when it comes to Uzbekistan's standing in the international sporting arena.



FAMILY

- Oksana, you've got a good husband. No drinks or smokies, nor domestic violence.

- Yeah. I'm lucky.

He is Bahodir Kurbanov, a Greco-Roman wrestler, Asian champion. When Alisher, their son, fell ill and they went to Germany to treat him, he sacrificed his career for Oksana's. Someone had to stay "at home" and solve all the pressing problems, and someone had to train. And Bahodir Isakovich put Oksana, Alisher, treatment, his wife's training, alien mentality, livelihood and another wagonload of tasks on his own shoulders.

- I sometimes ask myself, would I have acted like him? And I think no, it's too big a sacrifice.

- You're slandering yourself...

- Nope, I mean it. And he always guards me from everything, protects me, solves all problems.

- Who's in charge in the family?

- We don't have any bosses. We decide everything together. He also has a character, but somehow, we've managed to live for 25 years. Twenty-five... flew by in an instant. Baha says that over the years I probably love him less, but I say, no, it seems our love has a cumulative effect.

- Mother-in-law?

- I adored her. Unfortunately, she is no longer with us. They have eight children in their family, they all love me. When I came to them, in Ishtikhan [a district in Samarkand region – trans.], for the first time, I didn't know anything, and the younger daughter-in-law insisted that no one bother Oksana at all because of the constant training, and that there are enough people to cook.

PEDESTAL

- You are too happy, Oksana...

- When you stand on the pedestal with the anthem playing out loud, you think you did it, you managed it. Through all the difficulties, injuries, through pain and hellish work. After all, every time you compete with yourself. And I don't understand when people say that they can't perform like me, "I won't succeed". Man, you haven't even tried! But you have to go and try over and over again, until you succeed.

- While the rivals are all young and strong...

- Yes. I know all of them very well, I know who is capable of what.

- Meanwhile, the haters have been yelling that Oksana is already too old and that she needs to train children, not perform herself...

- Well, let them do what they love to do. Why do people like to decide what I should do?

In Tokyo, she announced that she was retiring from the sport. And after some time, she announced the resumption of her career, went to the Asian Games and reached the finals. And now she is preparing for the Olympics in Paris. The World Cup stages start on February 15, where she must take first or second place in the rankings. It's not that simple either.

- I'm getting ready and I think I should get in, God willing. There, in Tokyo, I fell for the arguments of those around me, they said that it was time for me to finish. I will never do this again; I will only do what I myself consider necessary. In general, people are interesting, they say, stop jumping around, teach others. And when you come back with a medal, these same people say, you're great, we believed in you. I don't know a single athlete who went to the Olympics and didn't dream of winning a medal. But if some predictor had told me that I would definitely not win, I would still go. It's my life. And you never know what happens next, this is a very unpredictable sport. Sometimes you are 100% ready and you break down. While sometimes you win even if you didn't prepare much. And then you can't figure out how the heck that is possible. It is a good luck; the stars have aligned.

Her son's illness taught her not to rejoice prematurely, nor to worry about failures. Her husband's love helped her to endure and not break. Sports made Oksana a Legend. Uzbekistan made her Big Dream come true.

And she made herself happy. Since no one but she could do it.

Interview by Sasha IVANYUJENKO





olympic debut

TIMUR KAPADZE

THE RECORD

April 29, 2024. We beat Indonesia in an important soccer match, 2:0. In fact, this in itself was a historic accomplishment, an unprecedented one.

It was after that success that Uzbekistan Olympic football team qualified for the Paris 2024 Games. Crucially, our country had never taken part in team sports at the Olympics



THE RESPONSIBILITY

Going to the Games was our sacred dream. We worked for it to come true for 3.5 years. The Olympic football club was established for that same purpose. We strengthened both the field team and the reserve.

Yet there was no time to celebrate the great goal we had secured, namely, to have a deep sense of a reality that was there for the first time in Uzbekistan' history. We had very little time left for the Olympics in Paris. Having accomplished the task set before us, we went to the Olympics, but naturally we could not say after that, "It's enough to go to Paris and just show up". We realized well that millions of fans were watching us and expected us to win. It was a tremendous responsibility.

THE SUPPORT

In early June, we went to a pavilion where the video for the song "O'zbekistonlik", the official anthem of our national team at the Games, was being filmed. The pavilion had gathered prominent folks in the internet and media, including bloggers, sports commentators, celebrities and youths. "This is the beginning of a great project", I said then to myself.

In fact, the support of our people was what our players needed critically. So, as soon as the video premiered it went viral on networks, leading TV channels, everywhere. The motivational fragment of the song got soon on everyone's mouth: "I'm Uzbekistani, victory is in my blood".

THE MOTIVATION

Every one of our Olympic football team has high talent, diligence and hard work, as much as family and loved ones who contributed to the development of these qualities. Had their parents and those around them said, "What are you going to do with this nonsense? Do something useful than kicking around a ball from morning to night", we would not have made it to the Paris Games.

Motivation also has an important role to play in the rise of skilled athletes. We felt the fabulous magic in the #qonimdagalaba challenge, promoted at the initiative of Uzbekistan's club by many organizations and companies, celebrities, mass media with immense enthusiasm. That was meant to have our players who have done a great job as a source of motivation for millions of our compatriots, and especially those who strive for success notwithstanding difficulties.

Instagram is now popular among youths and even among middle-aged people who are raising children. It was there that hundreds of creative videos were uploaded in support of our Olympian soccer players, raising our spirits and those of our fans. They contributed to us being looked at with more support and love.

THE DEBUT

At the end of the first game at the Olympics, against Spain, the scoreboard showed the digits of our defeat. But that night we felt that we had secured a great achievement. We made up a real team spirit, becoming one body and one soul. As the squad that went to the Olympics for the first time, we played a decent game against the Games' favorite team who had earlier earned one gold and two silver medals in previous Olympic contests.

We also had a solid 12th player. This should also be mentioned. It is our fans who were able to shout louder than the thousands of Spanish spectators who came from not far away to the city hosting the Games, and who were able to give us an indescribable realization and spirit. They won the attention not only of ours, but also of everyone in the stadium, especially journalists from other countries.

As I always told the boys, "Football is such a sport that when you lose, there is no person worse than you. Therefore, always work on yourself and strive for higher goals". There seemed to be something unfair about soccer. But even if we lost the subsequent games, too, during the Olympics, we felt that our fans were with us.

The Paris 2024 competitions have ended, but there are still many games ahead of our Olympic and national football teams. In terms of Uzbek soccer rising to a new level, I think this is just the beginning.

TOP 10 UZBEKISTANI SCIENTISTS



UTKIR ROZIKOV (UZBEKISTAN)
Professor, Deputy Director, Vsevolod Romanovsky Institute of Mathematics, the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan.



RAVSHAN SABIROV (UZBEKISTAN)
Director, Institute of Biophysics and Biochemistry at the Mirzo Ulugbek National University of Uzbekistan



ANVAR ZOHIDOV (USA)
Professor, Doctor of Physics. Deputy Director, Nanotechnology Institute, the University of Texas at Dallas.



ALISHER KADIROV (AUSTRALIA)
Professor, Department of Physics and Astronomy, Curtin University

The Center for Progressive Reforms in cooperation with Uzbekistan's club magazine has compiled a list of Top-10 Uzbekistani scientists. The ranking includes fellow countrywomen and men living and conducting academic research not only in our country, but also abroad. We are convinced that the national rating will serve as a potent tool to inspire and guide young people into science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields. To shape the list, the scholarly works of more than 300 Uzbekistanis became subject of research. The H-index of their research was evaluated in Google Scholar, Scopus and Web of Science databases, with an eye to their activity and recognition among the local and foreign public, mass media, and social networks.

* ACCORDING TO UZBEKISTAN'S CLUB



BOTIR KABILOV (USA)
Harvard University PhD, Professor, the University of Texas



AZIZA SHONAZAROVA (USA)
Professor, Columbia University, scientist



RAUFKHAN SALAKHOJAYEV (UZBEKISTAN)
Director of ERGO-Analytics / Professor, Tashkent State University of Economics



DILFUZA EGAMBERDIYEVA (UZBEKISTAN)
Head, Biological Research and Food Safety Laboratory, the National Research University "Tashkent Institute of Irrigation and Agricultural Mechanization Engineers", microbiologist



TEMUR YUNUSOV (UNITED KINGDOM)
PhD in Biology from the University of Cambridge



UTKUR MIRSAIDOV (SINGAPORE)
Associate Professor, the National University of Singapore



OLTIN CHINOR

(GOLDEN MAPLE) NATIONAL AWARD FOR CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

The advanced corporate world has already realized one truism: to be an enduring and sustainable company, it is critical to aim both profit for oneself and benefit to the society. Self-respecting businesses who care about their reputation before their stakeholders prepare financial statements that reflect not just economic indicators. They also ponder about non-financial accountability. It is measured through environmental, social and governance (ESG) or corporate social responsibility (CSR) criteria.

Uzbekistan's club magazine published an article on this topic in its first issue under the column "Hot Topic" and announced the ranking of TOP 7 socially responsible companies.

Our team believes that the creation and publication of such ratings will encourage growth in the number of businesspeople and companies who care about society and the environment in the country. Therefore, this time around, we turned to a group of experts of the Center for Progressive Reforms as well as the CARE CSR consulting company, and asked them to look for ESG and CSR projects by leading companies operating in Uzbekistan.

These projects were selected and evaluated using a special methodology, and seven of them were found deserving the Oltin Chinor (Golden Maple) national award for corporate social responsibility, established recently by Uzbekistan's club.

Maple is a symbol of endurance, longevity, strength and benefiting others.

We have decided to launch a tradition of presenting a special award in the form of this tree to companies that strive not only to make good profits in the short term, but also to be sustainable by delivering long-term good to society.

TOP 7 CSR/ESG PROJECTS

Ranking methodology.
ESG and CSR initiatives are evaluated based on 8 indicators that take into account local needs and global trends.

TBC BANK

TBC Ornaments (2023) – a digital catalog of more than 300 national ornaments collected from various regions of Uzbekistan.

Stability - 2
Impact - 1.5
Transparency - 0.5
Compliance with social goals - 1
Environmental compatibility - 0.8
Stakeholder participation - 1
Innovative approach - 1
Ethical considerations - 0.5

Total score
8.3

SQB

The School of Entrepreneurs is an educational center that trains more than 120 representatives of construction material manufacturing companies and businesspeople in various regions of Uzbekistan.

Stability - 1.8
Effect - 1.3
Transparency - 0.6
Compliance with social goals - 1
Environmental compatibility - 0.4
Stakeholder participation - 1
Innovative approach - 1
Moral considerations - 0.7

Total score
7.8

uzum

Uzum IT Academy (2024) – online courses in cooperation with IT Park on the current trends in the industry to guide their graduates to work and practice.

Stability - 1.5
Effect - 1
Transparency - 1
Compliance with social goals - 1
Environmental compatibility - 0
Stakeholder participation - 1
Innovative approach - 0.5
Ethical considerations - 0.5

Total score
6.5

Agrobank

School of Water Managers: Season 2 (2024) – classrooms and experimental sites to train 10,000 farmers by 2030 across 13 regions of Uzbekistan.

Stability - 1.8
Impact - 1.4
Transparency - 0.8
Compliance with social goals - 1
Environmental compatibility - 1.2
Stakeholder participation - 1
Innovative approach - 0.8
Ethical considerations - 0.7

Total score
8.7

Publication of a series of eco-books, The Age of Heroes, explaining environmental topics in an accessible and entertaining way to children.

Stability - 1.5
Effect - 1.5
Transparency - 0.5
Compliance with social goals - 1
Environmental compatibility - 1
Stakeholder participation - 1
Innovative approach - 0.5
Ethical considerations - 1

Total score
8

KAPITALBANK

As Critical as Air (2024) – 30 air monitoring sensors, IQ Air, at bank branches and Uzum Market order distribution points throughout Uzbekistan.

Stability - 1.5
Effect - 1
Transparency - 0.5
Compliance with social goals - 1
Environmental compatibility - 0.5
Stakeholder participation - 1
Innovative approach - 0
Ethical considerations - 1

Total score
6.5

payme

Beside Women's Enterprise (2023-2024) is a project for women to advertise their business on PAYME media resources and to provide them with cash prizes and expert advice through the PizzaPitch Women competition.

Stability - 1
Effect - 1
Transparency - 0.5
Compliance with social goals - 1
Environmental compatibility - 0
Stakeholder participation - 1
Innovative approach - 0.5
Ethical considerations - 0.5

Total score
5.5

CPR CENTER FOR PROGRESSIVE REFORMS

SITORA ALEXANDER

PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS

Text by Saidaziz Azamov



Sitora Ashrafova, a teenage girl who has just graduated from school, travels to the other side of the ocean with her family, a Green Card winner. Uzbeks and other immigrants from other former Soviet countries in general begin to adapt to life in the United States normally in New York's Brooklyn. The subject hero of our article, a girl from Samarkand, initially works in a shoe store in the Borough Park neighborhood. Meanwhile, she studies at night courses at a university.

"At first I went to a local university not to study, but looking for a job. They had a vacancy for cleaners and said they would hire me if I became their student. But once I received my salary in a fortnight of work, they said, "We didn't know you were 16 years old. If you are under 18, you cannot work for us, it is against the law," Sitora recalls the awkward situation she ended up in.

"In the year we graduated from the uni, we took exam at the end of the course, which taught us skills such as getting a job and communicating with employers. Four students got shortlisted and invited to the examination room along with me, and I was selected as winner. Though I had thought I would fail. Thus, the management of the special study center at the university offered me to work as a teacher, helping students who have some difficulties studying, saying, "You are awarded excellent grades, you are talented, you've done very well in the exam, and so you can do it". They persuaded me to take up a position of assistant teacher." Starting to work as such, Sitora steps into the world of information systems in medicine, to eventually become the principal area for her to pursue.

When her career just started... between 2014 and 2017, Sitora used to work three jobs from 4 a.m. to midnight (20 hours overall!) and still gets excited when recalling her night courses at the university. "To work in the healthcare sector, you have to study for 12 years and do free internships in medical institutions", she explains. "Thus I would go to the hospital early in the morning to practice, then leave there for my two offices, followed by studies starting at 6 in the evening, and after the university, I would return to the office..."

Years of hard work, courage, and dreaming big have allowed Sitora to own a $16 million telemedicine business that today employs nearly 120 professionals, serves thousands of people, and operates a federal government program. Along the way, she even had to change her last name:

"I wondered why talented and hardworking people should be hindered by their surnames," Sitora complains. When she started her business, she used to meet with potential partners, and in most cases the meetings would go well. However, when it came to signing a contract or handing over a business card, prospective American associates would look at the name Ashrafova (accent is on the 'o') and say, "Let's think over again". "Last names ending with the Russian 'ov-ova' unfortunately give Americans the impression of fraud. Especially in our field. When I went to a conference somewhere, a Pakistani professor told me that he sees me everywhere and asked, "Who do you think you are? Why are you like Alexander of Macedonia, want to rule all over the world?" Then I left the place, called my lawyer and told him that I decided to change my surname to Alexander."

Sitora's father always encouraged her to study, to set great goals and strive towards them. Her family always proved supportive of her career. "Since childhood, my father would take me to hobby courses and the Olympiads, and if I needed to go to Tashkent, he would give his permission and create everything needed for the trip."

At the gatherings of Uzbek expats, when compatriots praise women in that they get up early, do housework from morning till night, and that this has hindered them from seeing and knowing much in life, Sitora is seldom shy in replying that this view is similar to the way slavery was justified and boomed in the 19th-century United States.

"It is essential for girls to know the things important in housework, cleanliness and household needs, but this should not become the most critical basis of life," Sitora Alexander insists. According to her, just as her parents gave her freedom and dreams, all Uzbeks should give their daughters the opportunity to study, pursue a career and do business.

"Women's hands are delicate, fingers are thin, and this is crucial in complex surgical operations, and these characteristics can be effectively used with elegant engagements. Or, for another example, women are mentally more resistant to stress. This could prove expedient across professions. In general, women have a tremendous role to play in society, and if we grant them a chance, they can bring in more benefits."





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OLIM MUHAMADIYEV

He takes crisis situations as an opportunity to implement new ideas, not to be discouraged or to give up. He is Olim Muhamadiyev, an entrepreneur who has lived in the United States for about 15 years, the founder of iExpressPrime, UzBER startups. The Uzbekistani businessman would like top managers of major companies and billionaire businesspeople to emerge from his diaspora in America.

LET US ALSO MAKE BILLIONAIRES

Text by Saodat ABDURAHMONOVA



MOTTO: WORK HARD FIRST, MONEY WILL PURSUE YOU LATER.

THE THINGS ONE WOULD NEVER EXPECT...

"As a Law School graduate of Samarkand State University and as professional law worker, I had never thought that I would dedicate my life to technologies and startups," Olim Muhamadiyev thus begins his story.

The lawyer moved to the USA in 2009. His classic immigration path starts with trying to improve his English and gain experience. At that time, Olim starts driving a taxi through the now popular Uber app.

"I was one of the first partners to work with Uber. I was amazed that such a big business could be managed remotely without any dispatchers. It was Uber that taught me how to start a business and compete using modern technologies."

Starting from 2015, Mr. Muhamadiyev embarks on researching business ideas related to technology. His first startup was iTaxi (local alternative to Uber), which is currently operating in Samarkand. Startups and technologies thus eventually turn into main hobby subject for the emerging businessman.

OPPORTUNITY GRANTED BY CRISIS

The global pandemic of 2020 did not pass by Olim's life either. Though in a positive sense. He killed two birds with one stone by launching iExpressPrime, a startup based on Halal-Market stores operating at two locations in Samarkand: it provided an opportunity for Uzbekistanis abroad to send various products to their relatives in the homeland, and offered a platform for online shopping for large and small businesses. The project currently employs more than 60 people.

A STARTUP IN THE SERVICE OF CITIZENS

"Uzbekistani immigrants who come to America often end up in awkward situations because they speak the language very little and are too gullible. That was the reason I wanted to help them by setting up a bridge between the experienced and the 'fresher' immigrants," Mr. Muhamadiyev recalls his early ideas.

This kind desire was first realized in the form of an ordinary chat on the Telegram network. In this group of more than seven thousand users, everyone has access to gratuitous help and information. Gradually, UzBERclub, located in the heart of the Uzbekistani diaspora in New York, emerged as a one-stop shop. The startup now offers services like employment, assistance related to traffic, preparation of various legal documents, legal advice, and business consulting.

"We've been working also on the UzBERpro bot, which allows immigrants from different parts of the world to find job ads and offer their services," says the author of the idea.

IN LESS THAN 20 MONTHS INTO ITS LAUNCH, UZBER SERVED MORE THAN 10,000 EXPATS.

"IF WE FAIL TO INVEST IN CHILDREN, THEY'RE DOOMED TO BE IMMIGRANTS, TOO"

Olim Muhamadiyev admits that Uzbekistanis in the United States are distinct by their mobility and courage, while regretfully mentions some aspects of their mentality.

"An Uzbekistani does not sit still, he/she is always on the move. But sometimes they act imprudently because they hardly know the laws. What worries me most is that my compatriots, after years of hard work, spend all their savings on a half-empty round house. Yet they do not try to send their kids to good kindergartens and schools, preferring instead state-funded institutions. Although there is a chance for better things, the priority is rarely knowledge.

My appeal to all our expats: invest in your children, you need to have a modern approach to life, otherwise they will also face the fate of immigrants. Indians and Chinese in America are among the leading ethnic groups in terms of average income, and they are the top managers of giant companies, wealthy businesspeople. At the end of the day, let such figures emerge from among us, too."

UZBEKISTANI

INVEST,

AKMAL KHOLB

Akmal Kholboyev, a.k.a. Akmal Kholb in America, is an Uzbekistani businessman who lives in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He has been working as a real estate agent for 12 years. He started with reputable real estate companies, ending up founding his own, Skyline Realtors. In his opinion, the housing and the infrastructure where it is located are an investment for the future...

IN REAL ESTATE

Text by Saidaziz AZAMOV

He made his first money at the age of 12 by selling rice in Tashkent's Farhad Market.



FORSAKE EVERYTHING IN TASHKENT...

At the age of 12, Akmal went to the United States with his parents through the green card lottery.

"My brother, sister and I learned English in a few months. For the first few years, we acted as translators for our parents. Every time I go to Uzbekistan, I feel how difficult it was for my parents to leave everything in Tashkent and start a new life in the States. I always wondered what made my father decide in a way he did, especially when I found out how much he left in Tashkent. The answer is obvious: it's us, the children..."

A BRIDGE COLLAPSE AND A LIFE-CHANGING DECISION

Akmal's graduation in 2008 coincided with the collapse of a bridge in Minneapolis, which caused an uproar across America. Newspapers would report about a shortage of construction professionals and engineers in the United States. In the meantime, the subject hero of our article, confused about what field to choose as major at the university, decides to become a construction engineer. His father Akrom-aka and mother Munira-opa Kholboyevs used to be engineers in Uzbekistan.

"I like talking about myriads of life lessons that I learned from my father. He is one of those people who can calculate profit and loss in business in a few minutes without a calculator. But the key wisdom we learned from parents as children was to be open-minded. They always taught us that there are many solutions to a problem, and never to be satisfied with one solution..."

PENN STATE AND A BUSINESS THAT STARTED AS A SIDE JOB

Akmal Kholboyev managed to overwhelm a great competition for admission as an engineering student to Pennsylvania State University, one of the top educational institutions. Following graduation in 2012, he returned to Philadelphia and started as an engineer. Right from the first day at work, his manager encourages Akmal to do an additional hobby or business. Owing to the growing demand for good real estate services (especially in light of many people from New York moving to Philadelphia for better and cheaper housing), he starts working as a part-time real estate agent.

"I failed to sell even a house for a whole year. I declared 2012 as the year of failure and analyzed the mistakes in hindsight. Figured out that the problem was with communicating and especially listening to people. Then I worked on this shortcoming and gained confidence in myself. Then embarked on something no other agent had done: I started driving clients from Brooklyn, New York, to Philadelphia in a van. The reason was that people living in the Big Apple normally do not own cars, nor even a driver's license."

Over the years, Mr. Kholboyev has helped thousands of people own their homes. During our chat, telling the story of a woman who cried recalling that she had looked for a house for 1.5 years, Akmal spoke about how he realized what sacrifices his parents had made to improve the lives of their children.

"UZBEKISTANIS PREFER INVESTING INTO REAL ESTATE"

The subject hero of our article, a real estate specialist, believes the Uzbekistani diaspora is one of the leading disporas in investing in realty. We find it safer and better to bet on real property than stocks, bonds, cryptocurrencies or other assets. Moreover, we settle around cities like New York, Philadelphia, Chicago or Cincinnati, and we hardly ever move out of there. In these areas, for example, housing prices have grown by more than 120 percent since 2016.

CHOOSING A DISTRICT ADVANTAGEOUS FOR CHILDREN'S EDUCATION WHEN BUYING A HOUSE

Meanwhile, it is also true that many Uzbek families are lagging behind when it comes to taking active part in the life of local communities and thus caring more about their children's education in the long term. In the United States, property taxes are also used to assign for schools in the area where the property is located. New immigrants settle in areas with low taxes on this front. Unfortunate as it is, there are few opportunities for better education in such places. In general, however, it is essential for Uzbeks to bond with each other and also communicate with representatives of all ethnic groups in the area where they live, participate in local decision-making, elections and other political processes.



MIDDLE CLASS, MIDWIFE OF OPEN SOCIETY

OTABEK BAKIROV

WHO IS MIDDLE CLASS?

The place of middle class in government and society has been the focus of opinion holders from the ancient world. Euripides wrote that only middle class is the trustee of the city, they are subject to laws and loyal to the state. Aristotle believed that a state made up of middle-class people will have the best state construction.

To be sure, in the contemporary sense, the concept of the middle class was formed by bourgeois revolutions and the thrive of capitalism, as well as the social evolutions of the 20th century. Only by the last decades did the notion of the middle class begin to incorporate a broader meaning than the stamps of the bourgeoisie or entrepreneur, the layer of owners.

It is hardly accidental that the middle class has been the subject of discourse since the ancient world. Because the middle class performs three very important functions for society and the state: the political – middle class ensures the strength of the system of political power. The economic – middle class creates new jobs and sustainable consumption demand. The social – it softens conflicts, provides evolutionary path to progress.

According to the World Bank classification and methodology, the middle class begins with a layer with an income 1.5 times higher than the level of poverty. But this criterion is suitable for the identification of the middle class living in more prosperous and free states (the poverty rate in Uzbekistan is set at 621 thousand soums, but this figure does not mean that the income of the middle class in the country begins at 932 thousand soums). Under the World Bank methodology, it is often overlooked that middle-class affiliation receives a base from stable incomes starting at USD3,500 per month.



Therefore, when it comes to middle-class criteria, it is more appropriate for different nations and different regions to have differing measurements available. Economic schools use the three commonly popular approaches that define middle-class affiliation. It is a social status and identity that encompasses income, namely, level of welfare, property ownership and education, that is, an individual self-perception of belonging to the middle class.

When it comes to the income approach, it is believed that the income of the middle class representative, say, should be sufficient for the purchase of imported goods, travel (including abroad) and education (including higher education), savings. It is difficult to add to the middle class those who have to spend larger part of their income for food. Another sign is that the middle class can spend money on costs that are not critical, especially comfort, for example, buying a second or third phone, flying in a business class. The middle class creates a constant demand for quality and high-tech goods. The income of the middle class is not tied to only one source, they are distributed in the form of profit, rent, interest with either active or passive entrepreneurial income.

In the social status approach, the main character is tied to the level of ownership and education. A middle-class person has their own home, there is at least one car in family. Equity, shares, or direct entrepreneurship also are indicative of the middle class. Even when a hired worker, as a rule, a representative of the middle class has a higher education, and earns mainly through mental labor.

One may refer to the middle class even if the above criteria are absent or incomplete. This is due to the fact that the individual considers him/herself close to middle-class values. Suppose a poet who is not an owner, a freelance journalist or an artist who are left without a commission are also inclined to regard temselves as representatives of the middle class.



MIDDLE CLASS REPRESENTATION

Do you want to give stability to the state? In that case, bring those on the polar sides as close to the middle as possible, do not spare the rich or the poor. They always trade with the freedom of the people, while the former buys it, whereas the latter sells it, wrote Jean-Jacques Rousseau. The great French philosopher did not deny the existence of these two extremes of society, the rich and the poor. But in both of them, the state was able to see risks for stability. Therefore, the philosopher dreamed of reducing the difference between these classes, easing inequality, pulling the poles between them by the force of law.

For the formation and expansion of the middle class, it is very important that there is a state policy that ensures the participation of citizens in the decision-making process. This policy should include an increase in the accountability and transparency of public bodies, an effort and desire for the engagement of the the middle class through to the needy strata in political processes.

Middle class pluralism and stability create a moderate inequality consensus. In the ideal model of a sustainable society, the middle class is 80% of the total population, in such a society, distribution and redistribution will not need much effort. In unsustainable societies, the middle class does not even reach 25%. For such societies, constant social dissatisfaction is characteristic, resources are often insufficient for socio-economic development and political stability. Any distribution and redistribution creates pain and conflict.

The planning horizon of the middle class is always long. This is also one of the main signs that distinguish it from the poor. The longer the planning horizon in individuals, the stronger factors are formed for the sustainable development of the economy.

The middle class increases inclusiveness. Especially through social favors. One of the factors that give an incentive for children of the poorer class to get out of poverty is precisely the fact that they go to school and the university and communicate with representatives of the middle class. The critical social helpers to the state in breaking down the poverty trap are representatives of the middle class.

MIDDLE CLASS PROVIDES FOR DEMOCRACY

The greatest creative power of the middle class is not spoilage, but its indifference. Representatives of the middle class are always interested in what is happening around them and naturally express their attitude to the process, interfering as much as possible. They are always politically active and request from the state for a fair distribution of social benefits. The middle class always needs education, medicine and infrastructure. Representatives of this class want to see the fruits of the taxes they pay. In this sense, the middle class creates demand for democracy, democratic institutions. Classical literature highlights the decisive role of the middle class in the decision-making of democratic institutions. In the words of sociologist Barrington, without the bourgeoisie, there will be no democracy. In the formation and prosperity of the classic institution of the parliament, middle class is considered an integral part of the democratic process, starting to demand its rent and representation, tirelessly struggling to see its well-deserved place in government.

What is interesting is that the middle class, regarded as the principal class fighting for democracy, is also the one who reaps most the fruits of democracy. It is impossible not to refer to the studies of famous economists Bosch, Ajemoglu and Robinson. According to the class model in the process of democratization, the coalition of the middle class with the poor ensures that resources are redistributed towards the poor and paves the way for the democratization process. Also, according to the hypothesis of the American economist Aaron Director, in a democratic society, the government pursues a policy of distribution from relatively rich and poor groups to middle-income groups. The Director hypothesis relies on the goals of gaining voter attention between the political and social spectrum. In itself, in democracy, politicians work in the interests of middle-income groups.

Middle class in nation building is considered the main backbone for open, free and prosperous society as the most reliable, practice-tested and effectively working model.

THE HISTORY PRESENT OF PEPSI

THE PEPSI BRAND ENTERED UZBEKISTAN IN THE 1980S. MOST OF THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE OLDER GENERATION CALL THE DRINKS CONTAINING COLA IN THEIR COMPOSITION PEPSI. WHAT IS THE REASON FOR THE POPULARITY OF THIS BEVERAGE? ARE THERE ANY PECULIARITIES OF THE CULTURE OF CONSUMPTION OF SOFT DRINKS IN OUR COUNTRY?

Pepsi is really worth boasting its long history in this land. As much as this soft drink is now popular among young people over 18, it was a leader in this regard during the youth years of the older generation. For many, Pepsi has come to be a symbol of modern culture, creativity, change and technologies. The population of Uzbekistan is known to be rather young, and the per capita consumption of carbonated drinks is quite high; the nation is well ahead of its neighbors nations on this front. In addition, because our climate is hot, beverages come to help to refresh. This is also one of the success factors of drinks. As for the consumption culture, even pilaf or somsa in Uzbekistan are usually eaten with drinks containing cola.



DILSHOD ABDUBEKOV
Member of the Board, International Beverages Tashkent

HOW DID THE PEPSI BRAND ACTUALLY EMERGE?

According to one assumption, the recipe for the drink was invented by pharmacist Caleb Bradham in the late 19th century as a digestive and mood booster. The drink was originally called "Brad's drink". It received the title Pepsi-Cola later, in the early 20th century, when the pepsin enzyme was added to its ingredients to improve digestion. The drink with a new name began to win hearts and minds first in the United States, the entire world following suit.

ALTHOUGH THE PEPSI BRAND HAS A HISTORY OF MORE THAN A CENTURY, ALMOST ALL ADVERTISING CAMPAIGNS ARE AIMED AT THE YOUNG CONSUMER AUDIENCE. HOW IS IT TO MAINTAIN DEMAND AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE?

Pepsi has always followed its audience. It is in the same wave with its customers and strives to grow together. Pepsi has turned into an attribute of the style, lifestyle and life of young and intelligent people who have manifested themselves in music, sports, fashion, various subcultures, and new technologies.

The brand recently renewed its image around the world. We are also upgrading the appearance of the product and our communications in Uzbekistan. Pepsi is entering a new era with a new design, new history and new partners. The fresh image of the brand is based on the most basic interests of drink lovers.

Its global platform or brand philosophy is now "Thirsty for more". It encourages people to pursue new, interesting and unexpected things. Pepsi strives to be with those who challenge the things that make life boring, to keep pace with the interests and aspirations of the modern generation.

DOES THE BRAND HAVE A NEW LOGO THEN?

Pepsi's blue, red, and white color palette remained largely intact over the past century. The idea was to add a modern spirit while preserving the traditional palette. The new electric blue-black palette creates contrast, brightness and modern style. The font has also given way to a dynamic, bright look that reflects our new philosophy and mood. But the key elements - the name and the globe - remain logo components recognizable by our customers.

WILL THE RANGE OF PRODUCTS UNDERGO TRANSFORMATION AS DID THE IMAGE?

Pepsi brand products are constantly evolving, as is the entire range of PepsiCo. The company seeks to keep pace with the interests and requests of its consumers. The PepsiCo Positive strategy adopted in 2021 has a separate direction called Positive Choice. It represents the company's commitment to produce consumer goods and beverages that are better for people and the planet. This can be achieved by making more use of nutritious ingredients, reducing the amount of sugar, salt or saturated fat, and using recyclable or recycled materials while avoiding individual plastic packaging.

Of late, if we talk about changes in the brand portfolio in Uzbekistan, it is worth noting that the sugar-free Pepsi Sugar Zero drink has been gaining popularity. We started producing it in 2024, the drink is presented in several forms: in 0.25-liter cans and glass bottles, and in 1.5- and 0.5-liter plastic bottles. Last fall, we launched the production of the drink in 1.5-liter bottles made of recycled rPET plastic. The company uses this material in many countries. In some places, beverage packaging is even made entirely of this material. rPET is a plastic obtained by recycling used bottles, allowing to reduce the consumption of primary material, reduce plastic waste by attracting recycled packaging to the second cycle. As a result of using 20 percent rPET in packaging, primary plastic consumption will decrease by approximately 2,500 tons in 2023. This means 125 trucks of 20 tons each.

PEPSI IS PRODUCED IN UZBEKISTAN BY INTERNATIONAL BEVERAGES TASHKENT. HOW DID THE PARTNERSHIP WITH PEPSICO BEGIN?

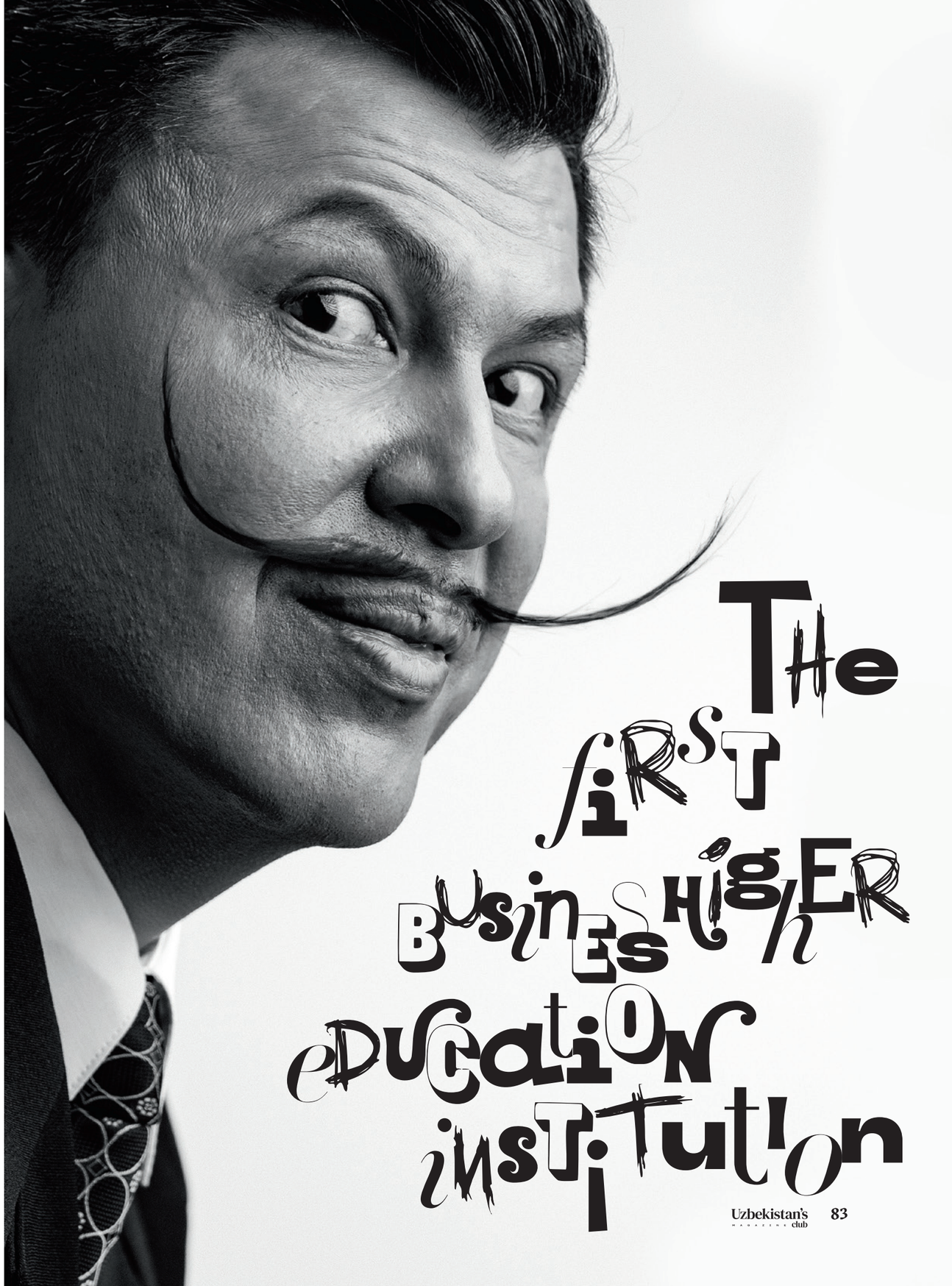
International Beverages Tashkent (IBT) was launched in 2011 and is currently one of the major partners of PepsiCo in Central Asia. It was in 2011 that the production of Pepsi began in Uzbekistan on the modern lines of IBT. The company also produces beverages under the trademark of legendary, world-famous brands such as Lipton, Adrenaline Rush, Rockstar, Mountain Dew, Mirinda and 7UP. IBT has been acknowledged several times as the best beverage partner of PepsiCo. The partnership between IBT and PepsiCo has an important role to play in delivering tremendous opportunities for the beverage market development in Uzbekistan and in meeting the demand for local goods among the rapidly growing young population of the country.



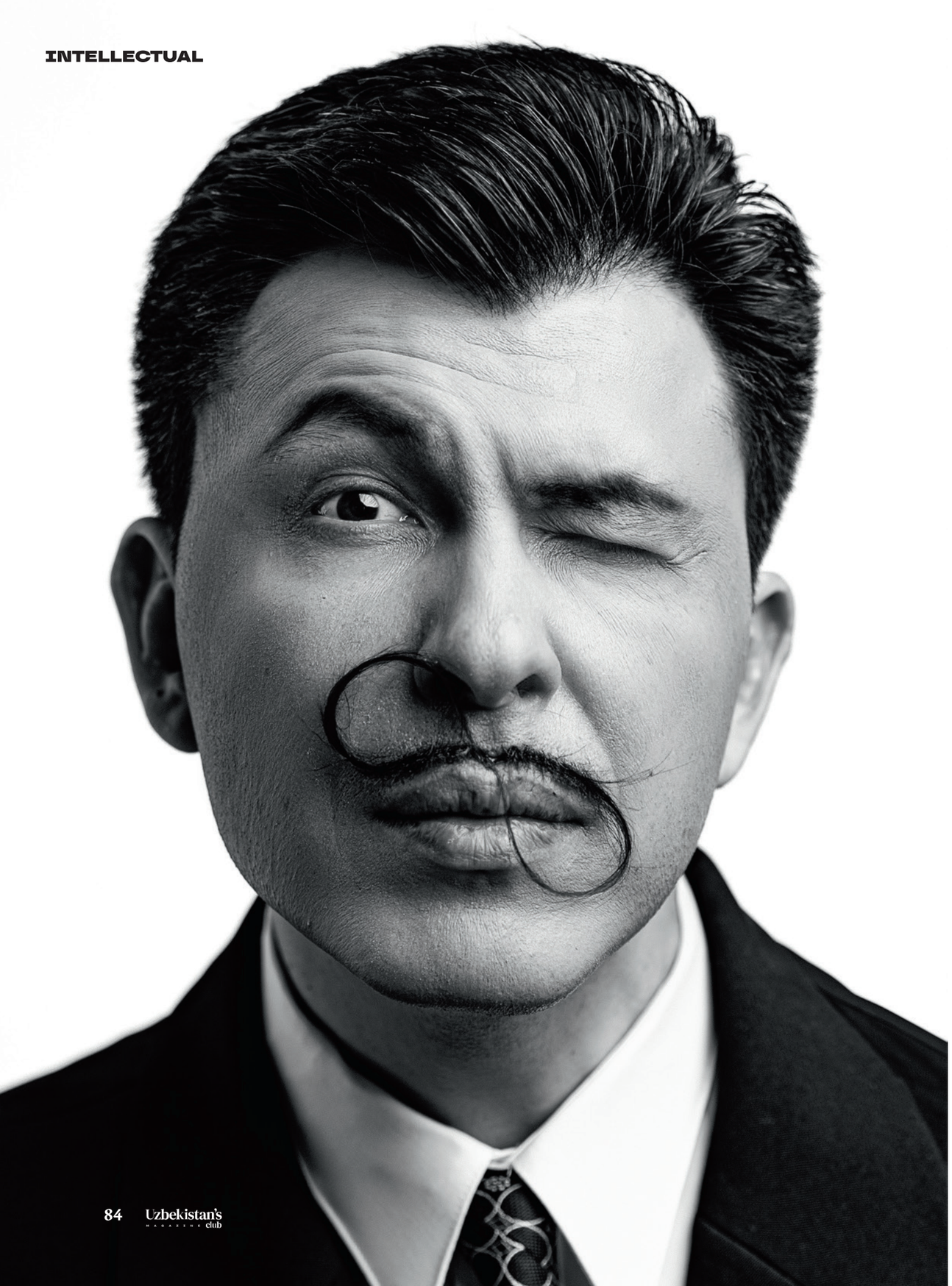
THE UNIVERSITY

HIKMAT ABDURAHMANOV

AS A SOCIAL ORGANISM



The first Business higher education institution



What public good should higher education institutions deliver in Uzbekistan?

– In my life, for example, higher education has always had an unprecedented revolutionary role to play. The University of World Economy and Diplomacy gave me like-minded friends, a confidence in the possibility of achieving everything through academic excellence and in the critical importance of education. Graduate study afforded me new inspiration, enhanced my frame of mind, generated basic knowledge in international business. While eventually attending diverse business schools (Uzbek-Japanese Center, Skolkovo Business School, Independent Directors' Association) I acquired new specialized knowledge and skills built on solid objectives and expectations.

Later on, having studied at courses like How Universities Managed and the Higher Education in the 21st Century, I began thinking over the functions of higher education institution in a contemporary society. By establishing TEAM University in 2020, we, a team of leading businesspeople in the country, aimed to realize our most advanced ideas in this project. The government's resolution to set up a first business university, TEAM, proved rather worthwhile in the sense that it helped implement a novelty hitherto unthinkable in our country as an experiment. Thus, from initially an attendee I went on to become part of the process of understanding, as a co-founder of the university, of what I believe as vital practical issue, namely, how should universities have positive impact on our society. Therefore, we'll try to discourse on this topic together.

"Universities and religious establishments live for hundreds of years". I came across this phrase somewhere, some time ago. Then I stopped to think for a while: indeed, the companies we create and their products will live for 5-10 years; but if the company has operated for 25 years, it is a big event worth congratulating the founder and the team. If one thinks about it, the mission of a university is trans-generational. In 2005-2006, when I was studying for a graduate degree at St. Andrews University, preparations were in full swing for its jubilee anniversary. At that time, it was 592 years old, and in 8 years the institution was to celebrate its 600th anniversary date. When you understand that there are not one or two such universities in your country, you realize that their influence on people and industries is not limited by national or regional borders, they have a global scope. Such long-term planning, realizing the scope of the mission and vision creates a sense of responsibility.



In my opinion, higher education institutions in Uzbekistan should think about their mission and what role they are to play in society.

Co-founders of TEAM UNIVERSITY

Zafar Hashimov
Founder and CEO of *Korzinka.uz*
Hikmat Abdurahmanov
Co-founder of *HM Partners Group*
Muzaffar Kasimov
Co-founder of *HM Partners Group*
Anvar Irchayev
Founder of *Orient Capital Management*, Chairman of the Board of Universalbank
Umid Hakimov
Chairman of the Board of *Asia Alliance Bank*
Alisher Jabbarov
Founder of *Alinfarm*
Maksud Abdusamadov
Chairman of the Supervisory Board of *Kapitalbank*
Arsen Dlyanchev
Founder and CEO of *Unique Present Media Holding*
Khurshid Roziyev
Founder of *Dodo Pizza* trademark, Kimberly-Clark Uzbekistan
Laziz Adhamov
Founder of *TOR-Contact* and *Dalatek*
Murat Mahkamov
Founder of IT company *FOM GROUP* LLC
Founder of *ArzonApteka* pharmaceutical company

ChatGPT And education in the 21st century

Metaphorically speaking, higher education institutions are not 'ivory towers', that is, they cannot exist and function separately from society, industry, and our everyday life. However, that was the case in the darkest days of Uzbekistan's higher education system. I remember that when I went to my first job in the early 2000s, my first supervisor said, "That's enough, you just forget everything taught at the university, we will learn it all again in practice." Any student of any higher education institution in our country would have encountered the same challenge. Above all, it is painful to hear these words after four years of hard work at the uni. Second, it clearly shows how employers used to evaluate the quality of our national higher education in the early 2000s.

In my opinion, the situation did not change for the better for a long time period after that. Uzbek universities were barely competitive in the market, neither had academic freedom, nor any change in curricula, and hardly covered 10% of school graduates (that is, only one out of ten applicants was able to enroll at a higher education institution). They had their faculty with low enthusiasm, archaic management style and no independence in decision-making. Thus, they were lagging behind the realities of life for more than twenty years, not to mention how much more they were left behind their foreign counterparts.

In the 2020s, we witnessed a turning point in the field, when the government realized that it cannot address this task by itself [advance the higher education system – trans.], nor solve the problems the education sector faced. And thus the field saw a liberalization wave. In the last 5 years, more than 100 different higher education institutions have emerged in Uzbekistan. Some of them chose the path of quality education, preferring cooperation with more experienced foreign colleagues. Another part followed the path of mass education, that is, by admitting a large number of students, they sought to meet the demand for diplomas, open and standardized education. That has been the case especially in the regions of the country. In my view, it is a natural situation to observe following a protracted period of bans, closedness to competition.

Based on the experience of more than a dozen nations, including our neighbors, I can suggest that the educational model and evolution of universities will undergo a process of natural selection for about ten years, characterized by enlargement and professionalization of the market. Only those who entered the market with a serious and long-term vision will survive. Operating a university truly is very capital intensive, requiring significant investment in campus, information resources and, crucially, brains. As long as the university aims to act as a hub for knowledge and talents in the 21st century, when ChatGPT writes essays and theses on behalf of students, attention should be paid to the fact that students and faculty work in small groups, and to promote critical thinking abilities of young people. Good universities direct all their efforts to developing soft skills, forming like-minded people, performing the function of social lifts, preparing the young generation for the big independent life.

In conclusion, I would like to stress that I see the role of universities in our life on a more serious scale – in the field of research, innovation, in spearheading entrepreneurial thought, and critically, in raising a competitive generation. Another practical example is the University of Edinburgh, where my daughter is lucky enough to study. It is alma mater for 18 Nobel Prize winners, along with Charles Darwin, founder of the theory of evolution, Adam Smith, a great economist and author of the Wealth of Nations. Such a university can serve as a model for higher education institutions in our country, so that they strive to become hub of knowledge and improve the society we live.



SHAHNOZA SOATOVA

ARTIST WOMEN

WHY WE DON'T KNOW THEM WELL



Today's Uzbekistan has been revisiting the phenomenon of Jadidism [reformist movement in Turkestan in the late 19th–early 20th centuries – trans.], considered an important movement that changed our region's history. To me, Jadidism was a really powerful ideology and an effective campaign.

But for some reason, when the Jadids are mentioned, we refer to mostly male figures like Behbudi, Kadiri, Cholpon, Ibrat, Avloni... We barely see the faces of women, we scarcely hear their names. However, they were there, they were active and enthusiastic. There were many of those who sacrificed their lives for the cause, and those who were persecuted.

Anbar Atin, Khairinisa Majidkhanova, Maryam Sultanmuradova, Tursunoi Saidazimova, Masuma Kariyeva, Rukiya Khojayeva are to name but a few of those Jadidist women.

Unfortunate as it is, the names and images of women, let alone what they did, were rarely mentioned and covered by contemporaries due to the demands of the times. But even during the past hundred years, no serious research has been undertaken to inquire into their activities and personalities. Perhaps it's time to fill this gap?

In order to make a good way out of the thorny situation they happened to be, the Jadidist women turned first to education, then to words (fiction), and then to theater. That was a reason why they chose to become primarily teachers, poets and actresses.

However, at the turn of the 20th century, women were in need across diverse areas: they thus began pursuing education as doctors, chemists, and lawyers. Some of them studied in Germany with the help of the "Komak" (Assistance) Fund. They aimed to become a 'soft power' determined to change the society.

Regrettable as it was, our grannies who studied in Germany were destined to fall victims of Soviet repression; they were banned, arrested, while others were executed... Some of them were still unmarried, others were pregnant, and many others had babies in their arms and had children at home.

"As my mother used to tell us," Maryam Sultanmuradova's daughter Anorakhon Davronova recalls, "on August 30, 1937, two men in military uniform came early in the morning to 13 Uyezdnaya Street beside the present-day Alai Market in Tashkent, and all of a sudden took my mother and me, a 5-6 months-old baby, to prison. Until my mother came out of prison for the first time in 1947, i.e. in 10 years' time, I grew up in the home of my aunt, while my brother Polatbek Ahmadbekov was raised first in an orphanage, and then by my aunt Gulchehra. We both grew up longing for our mother.

That is, the struggle of a woman was not only about sacrificing herself to a cause, but also seriously endangering her family, loved ones, and the surrounding microcosm. They made such sacrifices since they were so brave.

It was not easy to exist as a woman during the period of grave political, social and economic transformation in Turkestan at the turn of the 20th century. On the one hand, views of the Bolsheviks and the Jadids clashed over the question about the future of Uzbekistan, resulting in confrontation and war. On the other hand, the people faced heavy economic situation, religious fanaticism...

Every type of difficulty was first reflected in women's lives.

Call me Anbaratin, who came to this bitter world,
Call me Anbaratin, burdened in thorny grudge.
Who came to this world at a bad time,
Call me Anbaratin who came to the house of witches.
People of manners are humiliated underfoot,
Call me Anbaratin who came as a ray.

Anbar Atin is one of the first Jadidist women. She believed that she was born in the wrong time and the wrong space. That is, she is critical of the era and the system. Check out her Philosophy of the Black. It is an analysis at the level of Diderot, Kant, Montesquieu and Rousseau of the tragedy of social inequality, economic stress, political blindness and domestic backwardness in society. But she was a woman, and thus her voice was not heard...

Jadidist women are people we know very little about. Today's Uzbek women should be grateful to them for their rights. For this reason, I would like the names of our courageous, active and learned Jadidist mothers, who remain hidden behind the curtain of history, to be widely promoted.





TOGETHER LET'S DRIVE

CHEVROLET

Toward High Taste and Quality

SAODAT TURSUNOVA, UZBEKISTANI RESTAURATEUR

The airport bakery, the saved Uzbek pavilion, the two factors of success

Saodat Tursunova is the author of the project Uzbechka (Domodedovo Airport, Moscow, 2006). Winner of the PIR 2009 competition "Restaurant of the 21st Century" in the nomination "Original Concept and Ideal Embodiment" for the concept of the restaurant Chibi.

Ms. Tursunova wields experience in business management for more than 20 years in three countries. Her track record includes success stories in crisis management of enterprises, in launching projects from scratch. She is owner of the company Sati by Saodat Hospitality, which includes Besar u Lali in Dubai and Farш and Sora in Tashkent.

Owner and founder of Farш in Tashkent. The projects Uzbechka, Shara-Bara, Ogni Tashkenta, Farш are successfully functioning to this day.



PHOTO: KAMOLA SALIMBAEVA



***Tell** me please, did you end up in the restaurant business by accident or did you dream about it?*

- Completely by accident. It so happened that my family and I moved to Moscow, where a close friend of mine and I would organize large-scale festivals of Uzbekistan, silk festivals. I found it very interesting, but it was not a very effective time spending. After some time, I was offered the management of a fashion store in Moscow. As it turned out, I can very quickly delve into the topic of business, regardless of the sphere. With the outlet store there was a good result: revenues grew threefold within a short period of time, and we decided to open a second branch. By now my colleague restaurateur and at that time the editor of the Moscow-based magazine Restaurateur, Yekaterina Drazdova suggested that I tell about the Uzbek bread, and Dan Lepard, an Australian baker, culinary writer, photographer, TV presenter and celeb chef, came to my home. During the shoot I talked about how my mother used to make bread and bake it, explaining the intricacies of Uzbek bread baking, what the dough should be like and the role of love in this process. It turned out to be an interesting material for a magazine with a photo session.

Sometime afterwards, that event led me to meet an owner of a restaurant who was having difficulties in management. Word for word, I took on this project. At that time, the enterprise was unprofitable – there were no risks in entrusting it to a newcomer. I started the project in two capacities: as a manager and as a chef. I changed the concept of the restaurant, and its name – Ethno – allowed making changes to the decor, and if previously the restaurant had an Indian cuisine specialization, I turned it into an oriental one with different cuisines, including Uzbek, without spending a penny. It came to be such an interesting mix that it soon became very popular. I had agreed to this offer for one important reason. The condition of the restaurant owners was in the amount of payment: they wanted to pay me thrice the fewer amounts than a man in the same position. When I asked why, the answer was short: because I am a woman, and that I cannot do better than men. This hurt me to the end! I suggested them to come up with phenomenal results, and, if this is the case, I would get the full pay as a man would in the same position. And that's what we agreed on. I had to work around the clock, and now recall how I didn't get enough sleep; actually, there were days when I didn't sleep for 24 hours! Literally in a month, the restaurant secured that very extraordinary result – a several-fold increase in profits. That is, in a month I had to delve into the intricacies of a business completely new for me, wedding two leading roles in the process, change the concept, unite the team and provide for an outcome measurable in numbers. It is worth noting that the staff had already been working in the restaurant for a while before I came, and thus at first I had a tough time. So I had to develop a commanding voice – the work immediately went faster. From a restaurant that was almost always empty, looking for banquets, it turned, within a short time span, into a popular place where we started to look for tables to add to the hall. In six months, revenues grew almost tenfold! In the first month, they paid me like they would for a man – three times the amount they had promised on my candidacy.

***What** was the name of the first restaurant of yours?*

My first project, created in accordance with my concept, was the restaurant Uzbechka in 2006, located at Moscow Domodedovo Airport, commissioned by the company Kofemania. It was the only restaurant with open fires at the airport at that time. We met with Igor Viktorovich Zhuravlev and he told me about the idea of his project, and he drew sketches, and I watched and tried to understand how the Almighty can endow human beings with ideas and inspiration. The thing is that everything that Igor told me and drew was drawn by me 1.5 years ago. And I suggested meeting him specifically to tell him about this idea, but the reason for the meeting was to consult on a completely different project. A dream not only inspires, but also, like a magnet, attracts people to each other, uniting them with an idea that must be realized. I came up with a name for the restaurant, yet Igor jokingly suggested calling it by my name, but I said, "Uzbechka, and that's it!" At the very first meeting, I showed my sketches to Igor, and he asked in bewilderment how I managed to draw so quickly? I told him how I had the idea of the restaurant long before our conversation and the files were made on the computer. Together, we realized an important thing: we were led to the creation and implementation of this project by each of our own higher powers. Thus, in 9 months we made one of my most lovely projects, existing to this day, and now it has moved to Sheremetyevo Airport. I did this project with the architect Alexey Nazarov, of whom I am very proud and grateful to. The scheme was competent and then I predicted a boom and popularity of Uzbek cuisine – in 2006. And so it happened.

The most difficult moment of work on this venture was to build the ventilation correctly. Although Zhuravlev offered me to invite specialists from abroad, I was looking for specialists to whom I could explain my idea in all its intricacies, since it was important for me to speak my language. I am an engineer by education, and we came up with the option that became operational. I remember how I explained the principle of the tandoor, the fireplace, and the ventilation had to ensure the safety of the strategic facility, passing through seven spans of the existing airport. Because the area of the establishment occupied just 200 square meters, we had to very wisely plan every centimeter. It was a phenomenal organizational, engineering, conceptual work that was destined to be successful. A large share of the success story is the work of Rishtan craftsmen, who were able to fit every tile, every jug and every detail to perfection in accordance with our drawings, all my ideas on paper fell into place, every centimeter, every color matched each other.

– Name ***your favorite project. Reasons?***

Tough question. You confuse me. Every project I come into contact with, I focus on it, and I love it unconditionally. I once created a Japanese restaurant called Chibi ***(chibi is a style of drawing anime characters with a small body and a large head, almost proportionate to it; usually, the height is canonically 3-5 head heights, which corresponds to children's proportions)***, for which we received the award "For the Best Concept" in 2009 in Moscow. For this undertaking it was important to deeply immerse ourselves in the Japanese theme, study their culture, traditions, subtleties of life, hospitality. For me, Japan is like a space mission – everything is incredibly exciting. In this scheme, the most difficult aspect was to develop a corporate style. I wanted to set the tone of the project starting with the corporate style, in the end the restaurant was already functioning to the full, while we drew the logo for 9 months! I expected a Japanese representation, not a parody, but an individual, exclusive one. In order to be able to find what suits us, it is vital to be empathetic, to have an open heart and consciousness, to be able to feel and then create what the guest will like. Each venture requires your love, immersion: you fall in love, work long and painstakingly and, as a result of this love, a good project is born, like your child. I really hope to have Chibi in Tashkent somehow renewed.

– How ***do you choose a project for your next restaurant? What do you focus on?***

It's different every time. For example, when we started the Ogni Tashkenta project, they showed me the premises; I started studying global and metropolitan trends, as well as the specific location, and calculating the economics. By the way, even just walking around the city, I always scan the economics: rental rates, which organizations rent more premises, and all this gives me specifics on a given situation. Building on this, I start thinking: is such a story reasonable for this place, at this specific intersection of time. Sometimes it's the other way around. There is information that a specific cuisine is popular, and you look for premises for it. Sometimes people come up with an offer, a specific amount of possibilities, and if the idea resonates with me, as we say in our country, "jiz etdi" (the stars shine properly), then I start working on this idea before agreeing to the project. A certain 'reference point' is essential. Sometimes this point can be my night dream, for example, which inspires me to come up with the idea for the venture.

– What ***project are you currently working on?***

In Tashkent, these are two projects: the Farш restaurant, which has been operating for about two years, and the Sora restaurant, which is in the pre-launch stage. There are also two projects in Dubai: one is being built on Palm Jumeirah, and the second on Bluewaters Island. One is a Spanish restaurant, which is under the attention of the Dubai mayor's office, and the second is an Uzbek restaurant – both are luxurious and gorgeous. The appearance of the Uzbek one is absolutely unique, no one has ever presented an Uzbek restaurant like this before; thus I offer my vision. I am sure that both projects will be successful.

– Were ***there any funny, anecdotal cases where you had to 'sort out' situations with project customers on yourself?***

I'll tell you a story about how I ended up in Dubai. At one of the business meetings in Tashkent, a friend from Dubai flew in and told me about the difficulties in launching an Uzbek restaurant at EXPO, and that they really needed the help of a professional. Since the guys were close friends of mine, I could not refuse them, and literally in 2 days I gathered specialists from Moscow, Tashkent and Almaty and came to 'save' the Uzbek pavilion. In three weeks, we completely redesigned the restaurant, which had been prepared for three years before us. During the entire period of my work in various projects, I never went out into the hall. I watched the entire process on the screens in my office. The restaurant Lali, which we made for the EXPO exhibition, became the place where I had to go out into the hall.

Since we brought our own chefs, it was easy to form a strong kitchen team, and we recruited local staff for the dining room. I didn't even have the time to get to know them well, but there was already a huge flow of visitors, an incredible influx of people every day, not to mention the fact that many high-ranking guests came to us, you understand that this is a big responsibility for a restaurant. Those included government ministers, sheikhs, and other very important people.

There was a case when the head of EXPO came to us for six minutes for an overview visit, and ended up staying with us for an hour and a half, and with him was a large retinue of accompanying persons. This was the day of my debut – I had to put on a silk robe and go out into the hall. To be honest, we were not ready to serve a large number of people at once; however, I am happy that we coped with that sudden mission. My team and I improvised and for the first time I had to go out to an honorable guest as a hospitable hostess. I was embarrassed, as I have no experience as a waiter or hall administrator, but the sheikh was incredibly attentive to me and kindly noted all the strengths of the project, the dishes and the team. Journalists took pictures of us; I smiled and kept up the conversation, simultaneously observing the processes of receiving the delegation. Our photo got into the chronicles of Dubai EXPO, and after this noisy visit, the hall was full of guests in white kanduri every day.

– As the ***saying goes, happiness is a highly paid hobby. Is that about you?***

Good question! My dad once told me, "Never chase money. Instead, chase work, and money will chase you!" I understand it this way: it is essential to bring your skills to a high level by honing and improving them – you become a master of your work – and abundance will flow by itself! This is a rather wise truth that has settled in me and has become my conviction. It is also very important how we are raised in the family – I grew up in a family of educated people with good taste, I was lucky in this regard. For a long time, I did not understand whether I knew how to manage a business, how to build, how to cook, because I did not study this specifically. Now I know the answer to this question for sure: it is not only my upbringing, and many of these things owe to genes. Whenever I lead a project, I am completely and utterly captivated by the topic. The soul must burn – it is the fire in the heart, the energy that gives us the opportunity to achieve all the goals set. Two aspects: when you are talented, when you have the intelligence to work on the topic, and when you are a mature person, you are able to withstand the load to achieve success. During the time of project management, I realized a vital truism for myself: at the moment of implementation of any project, you are under enormous pressure, and you must endure it, simultaneously not losing inspiration to create. It is your métier of spirit, faith in the idea of the project, its mission – all this gives strength to go to the set goal. Your eyes should shine, you should look beautiful, hold an important meeting, build, cook – during the day you must prove yourself in all the roles available to you as a person, and with such a load do not lose the smile on your face, maintain cheerfulness and carry inside yourself every day of your happiness from doing your favorite job. Important conditions when choosing a project: I should feel inspired by it, and I should also be interested in a business partner – a like-minded person who shares values and life principles, because the basis of everything I do is my heart! It is this feeling of happiness from what I do that helps me achieve such results; secure financial success for me and my partners.

MUTOLAA: INTELLECTUAL SUPERAPP



Text by Saidaziz AZAMOV

MUTOLAA, QUALITY AND COMPREHENSIVE PLATFORM OF THE BESTSELLING BOOKS IN ELECTRONIC, AUDIO AND VIDEO FORMAT

YUKLAB OLISH



Operational on iOS and Android systems, the multifunctional intellectual application Mutolaa is created by an enthusiastic team supported by the Youth Affairs Agency in cooperation with Xalq Banki. "How can we take an example from the past to spread science? We thought about it a lot and sought for answers. We noticed that in 1908, Mahmudkhuja Behbudi, a jaded scholar, established a reading room in Samarkand. We named the project Mutolaa and started to popularize reading, acquiring new knowledge and ideas through audio, video, and artificial intelligence technologies," said Alisher Sadullayev, director of the Youth Affairs Agency of Uzbekistan. Sirojiddin Olimov, Master of Arts from the prestigious Edinburgh University, who advocates studying abroad and contributing to the development of the Motherland, just like his jaded ancestors, was invited to run the project. The young writer Javlon Jovliyev, children's writer Sadulla Kuronov, director and actor Erkin Bozorov, as well as all prominent representatives of Uzbek cinema duplication (translation) art were involved in the creation of Mutolaa.

"Our app has attracted about 700,000 users thus far, containing more than 2,000 books of various genres and topics. We want this number to grow by 1 million by the end of 2024," says the head of the project, Sirojiddin Olimov. "Mutolaa is not just a compilation of electronic books. We are creating an interactive, multifunctional application for the modern generation who we now call 'the digital native', that is, children and young people for who the smartphones have been active part of their lives since birth, as well as their siblings and parents. To be sure, it's a big challenge, a big deal. This goal motivates us to work hard every day to improve our products and use our potential to the full."

GASTRONOMIC Silk Road

Alina Tsimerman, founder of Chaykof coffee shops chain, a hallmark of unique taste and coziness for Tashkent residents, talks about her dreams, secret product and integrity.



- When you launched the restaurant business, you were already a renowned theater actress. How did you come to this decision?

- There had been a desire to open a coffee shop well before I did. This dream did not leave me for ten years. But, to tell the truth, I was afraid to believe in myself, and the people around me did not believe that I could do it. When I was turning thirty, I thought: I will start this work now! I dropped everything and went to Mauritius to gain experience at a five-star hotel where a friend of mine, Jerome Rigo, works as a chef.

- How does your experience in the theater help in the daily business management?

- I am greatly helped by the ability to maintain focus, form an opinion and not be afraid of public performances brought up in the theater.

- You are always busy opening new restaurants – branches of Maqom, Moloko, Chaykof. What's the hardest part about opening a new location?

- It is difficult and easy at the same time. I do not remember a single case when opening a new location, we didn't have to work 14-16 hours a day without rest for the first 3-4 months. Preparing food, cleaning floors, washrooms, dealing with financial issues, cooperation with suppliers, relations with employees... You come across a thorny path gathering a team and training like-minded people... It is very exhausting both physically and mentally.

But when you see the fruits of your hard work, you will feel the happiest person and full of energy again!

- What is the most strenuous aspect in personnel management? What are your methods in this?

- Patience, patience, kindness and patience. You should also be honest with your employees. Never ask others to do something you are not ready to do yourself.

- Where do you dream of opening a new coffee shop outside of Tashkent? And why?

- Nowhere. Honestly, when I retire, would like to live by the sea, grow a garden, plant flowers, sit in my garden in the evenings, sip tea, listen to the sound of chirping, and admire the stars.

- Describe Chaykof's guests. Who do you make coffee and panini for?

- Tashkent people.



- What is the most popular dish in your cafe? And what do you think is the reason?

- In Chaykof, it's home-made potatoes, syrniks and Soviet-style breakfast. I think they are popular because they are simple, easy to grasp and delicious, without any extra frills. Most of our guests are conservative in taste, they take the novelty very carefully.

- What is the secret product that attracts people from Tashkent to your coffee shop and distinguishes it from others?

- No matter how fine-spun it sounds, it is love. Love for our guests, love for what we do.

- Your spouse is your major partner. What are the pros and cons of such cooperation?

- Myriads of positive aspects! We have a great time together. I always feel his support, I know that Artyom will save me and help in any situation. And he is my chief advisor and my most trusted person. When I am worried about something, when I feel insecure about myself, he always encourages and inspires me.

- How do you maintain the boundary between work and home?

- I have none. What is the need for this? I ain't much of a fan of borders.

- What is your favorite confectionery made by your spouse?

- I am proud of all the products he creates. I like it when people do what they enjoy most. I am thrilled with his resolve even when something doesn't work out.

- Does your spouse test new ideas on you? How does this process work?

- He always does. The funny side is, I'm not really into sweets. Sometimes this process is like torture. But I understand that my opinion is important to him and I am proud of it. That's the reason I keep trying everything out.



FROM ACTIVITY TO HUMAN RIGHTS PROTECTION

DILFUZA KUROLOVA, HUMAN RIGHTS LAWYER, FOUNDER OF GLOBAL SHAPERS TASHKENT HUB (YOUTH MOVEMENT OF THE WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM)

Today, reforms taking place in Uzbekistan have been extensive in scale, promoted and supported by the government as much as by civil society institutions, activists and human rights defenders. I would like to discuss the activities of these civil society groups who have been courageous enough to raise rather sensitive, sometimes uncomfortable issues.

In Uzbekistan, civic activism or human rights work used to be "underground" for many years, and any such activity was said to be dangerous. And only with the change of the political system in 2016, the situation in the country changed radically, suggestive by the release of so-called political prisoners from places of detention, the emergence of new activists and human rights defenders, the vitalization of civil society and advent of dialogue between the government and the citizens.

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE: CIVIC ACTIVISM

Perhaps owing to the fact that there used to be no discrimination in my family, I did not particularly understand whether I was discriminated on the basis of gender both at school and at university, and inopportunely, I came across this when started working in human rights protection. Still, I have always stood up for my rights since I have zero tolerance for injustice. That was probably the reason why I opted not for a career in law enforcement or judicial bodies, and chose instead the non-state sector.

Until 2017-2018, probably every activist today was afraid or admitted the idea that they should not speak their thoughts. This was the case with me, because my posts in social networks were deleted many times at the request of my employers, saying that "they would get punished because of me". However, as soon as the country's policies changed and became open to opinion and constructive dialogue, people began to ask questions and get answers. I asked myself, "how can I help people? my community? my close ones?" and while discussing this with a friend, the idea was born to provide online free (primary) legal advice to the population through social networks. That was how I started my civic activism.

Moreover, these consultations forced me to constantly search for legal answers, simplify legal norms to the non-specialist language and accumulate practical experience. Analyzing the appeals received, I realized that most of them come from women on domestic violence, discrimination at work, divorce proceedings, as well as institutional negligence, youth unemployment, among other issues. Then I came to believe that the society is sorely lacking in legal literacy and law clinics, and began publishing all my conclusions and generalizations in accordance with national legislation and international human rights law on social networks.





Since I have been working on human rights in practical and academic terms for several years, I was invited to give a big interview for a YouTube project about women's rights in Uzbekistan in mid-2020, for which I received a huge amount of disapproval, even threats and reproach in the internet. This was the first time I experienced hate speech and threats, and was confused recognizing that many actually legitimize violence against women and justify their arguments with various unfounded reasons. Thus, I started to talk about this publicly and wrote about the situation to all relevant authorities, since the judicial system was powerless in this matter. To be sure, I felt a counterbalance to hatred – support from tens of thousands of people, which afforded me confidence in my activist work.

This invaluable and hardly the most pleasant experience is a reason I still help civil society draft alternative reports to the UN treaty bodies, since not all registered NGOs and activist groups can devise such reports as required by those bodies.

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE: HUMAN RIGHTS PROTECTION

The experience I acquired while working as part of a working group under the Senate of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan on the so-called law on "criminalization of domestic violence" proved invaluable, because I understood firsthand what a women's coalition is. I am convinced that without our efforts (a small group of activists from the NeMolchi.uz project, strong and courageous women from UNICEF and the Prosecutor General's Office) and the support of politically influential women, domestic violence would not still get criminalized in the country. This law also bolstered the protection of children from violence. Nonetheless, adoption of the law barely guarantees solution to all problems in this area, and in order to understand how the law works from inside, during the pre-trial investigation, during the court trial and thereafter, and what else we, as civil society and the state, need to do to buttress the protection of rights of violence victims, I decided to get a lawyer's license in criminal administrative cases.

WHAT'S NEXT?

The latest data from the Supreme Court of the Republic of Uzbekistan shows that victims of domestic violence and sexual harassment are gaining courage to file complaints to the judiciary (after all, before the law was adopted, victims could not turn anywhere due to mistrust, pressure and doubts), while law enforcement and judicial authorities, in turn, have manifested sensitivity to this tough topic (according to convictions and imposed sanctions for offenses).

One should note that civic activists and human rights defenders often face various barriers that lead to dead ends, resulting in turn in emotional and professional breakdown. Moreover, it is rather difficult to maintain a balance between work/activism and personal life (work and life balance). I'm not an exception.

Thus, here are my personal recommendations for anyone involved in activism or human rights work:

- Do not hesitate to ask for help from family, friends and professionals, otherwise burnout may develop into apathy or depression.
- It is always good to have a hobby that can take your mind off stress, so being constantly in a negative state can affect how your loved ones treat you.
- You can be toxic to your friends and family, but it should be short-term.
- Remember that where there is a right, there is also a responsibility. This truism is often forgotten.
- Start changing what you have control over and are able to change, then you will have more confidence, strength and support, because often this is what matters most.
- Always remember that everything you write on social networks, newspapers and magazines can be used against you (yes, that sounds like the Miranda Rule). Having a higher legal education, I perfectly understand where the boundaries and red lines are, which in no case should be crossed even today, so I always double-check what and how I write. This sounds like self-censorship, but this is the reality of activists and human rights defenders.

I would like to stress that there are numerous civic activists and human rights defenders in Uzbekistan who care about their homeland and are ready to work side by side with the government to develop the country and advance the course of reforms, where tolerance of government authorities is also incredibly critical. All the difficulties notwithstanding, our work is essential for the nation, for the voice of activists and human rights defenders is the reality on the ground, allowing us to see an alternative picture. Everyone's voice is important, constructive criticism is an opinion of patriots who love their country. Therefore, our voices must be louder and higher.

SELLERS
ASSOCIATION



THE UNION OF LIKE-MINDED PEOPLE

A completely new industry has taken shape in Uzbekistan over the last few years - the national online trade market has taken the lead in Central Asia in terms of growth rate. With the emergence of the Uzum ecosystem and the Uzum Market national marketplace, there is probably no household that has been oblivious to online shopping - today, nine out of ten citizens are familiar with this brand. More than 10,000 entrepreneurs and companies across the country use the marketplace not only for buying, but also for selling. This has triggered the establishment of Association of Sellers, a community of sales representatives helping each other in business development. The Association founders in the person of two couples, Ekaterina and Temur Rashidovs as well as Larisa Khan and Roman Kim, agreed to answer the questions of our publication.



- Brief us about yourselves. Your background in the industry, and crucially, how you went from competitors to partners and found the Sellers Association?

Ekaterina Rashidova: I trade in Uzum Market, try to be first to actively learn all the new services and conveniences of the marketplace, and as founder of ER agency on the marketplace, I help other sellers, and a co-founder of Sellers Club and Association. In general, my current activity is related to all kinds of online sales - I am an analyst of niches of goods and categories, a World Bank speaker, and have lately been helping Uzbek manufacturers to enter foreign markets.

Temur Rashidov: Along with the development of Sellers Club and Association, I run Sell Sklad fulfillment house. Can say I am a "serial entrepreneur"; some time ago I used to own a transport company with 3 thousand automobiles.

Larisa Khan and Roman Kim: We work all the way round together. So we do towards the development of the Association, take part in World Bank projects as speakers. We were among the first to start trading at Uzum Market: we promote the trade in small household appliances and equipment. In addition, we also partner with one another in equipment production.

Competition encourages constant struggle for the market and the customer. Currently, it can be said of traditional trade. The situation in the e-commerce market of Uzbekistan is completely different - it started to develop actively relatively recently, leading to the emergence of national marketplace and the initial sellers.

Temur Rashidov: We, sales representatives, have had to learn quickly and keep up with the novelties. Then we came up with an idea of setting up a sellers club so that people in the industry can help each other. A club based on common interests is a good step. But if you want to have your say, you have to unite. Naturally, we decided to establish an association in order to be able to officially represent the seller community.

R.K.: The club emerged completely unexpectedly. When we started in November 2022, there were about 150 people in the Uzum Market chat. Many were interested in tax issues and registration as a sole entrepreneur.

I asked our friend Yevgenia Son (managing partner of consulting company Yaran Consulting, co-founder of online zooproducts store Charley) to conduct a webinar on tax and ownership forms (advantages and disadvantages). We organized a Telegram chat with the participation of 90 folks. The chat quickly gained in popularity and intensity: people began to communicate, ask questions, share experiences. When we met Temur and Ekaterina, the number of chat participants reached about 200 people. We delivered harmony that moves the process forward. Now the chat unites 3,400 people.

Anyone who wants to trade on the marketplaces can get absolutely free help here. Currently, we are mainly talking about Uzum Market, because it is currently the only website in Uzbekistan with a good turnover, sales and income.

L.K.: I would like to add that we support the development of e-commerce and market expansion in Uzbekistan. This is important for healthy competition among sellers and for the advancement of the market in general. In addition, it is also advantageous for government authorities, with whom we closely cooperate.

- Owing to the progress in e-commerce market, anyone in Uzbekistan has the opportunity to do business. Does Internet trade also help development in provinces?

R.K.: Speaking from the point of view of entrepreneurship, people in the provinces have the opportunity to start a business on the national scale. In traditional conditions, you can open a shop in your neck of the woods. Your target audience does not go beyond your neighbors. By doing business in the internet, it is possible to operate at the national level.

T.R.: You can make money through this infrastructure. Ekaterina and I own a fulfillment house - it is a structure that helps prepare products for sale, pack and send them to a warehouse or to a customer.

Basically, every resident of Uzbekistan can now do business, even with a small capital. To open a store, you need at least 10-15 thousand [U.S. - trans.] dollars, and in e-commerce, you can start a business with a smaller budget.

- What does participation in an ecosystem like Uzum mean in Uzbekistan?

E.R.: E-com is gradually shaping the behavior of buyers. It is especially suitable for young customers. According to our data, about 60 percent of Uzum Market users are between the ages of 18-44.

A number of new professions emerged in the process. A marketplace manager is among others. Seeing that there is a need for such vocations, we started training for them. The second season of trainings will start soon. The development of internet trade has a positive effect on other areas. For example, IT, marketing, analytics, logistics.

L.K.: Uzum has become a driving force of e-commerce market in Uzbekistan. Thanks to Uzum Market, people have learned not only to buy, but also to sell online.

This company truly revolutionized the e-commerce market of this country. And it is really changing the consumption and shopping habits. It is a rather important reality. We all have to live in harmony with technology. Those who pay attention to this and make effective use of technologies will naturally be one step ahead.

Interview by Murad NASIROV

resolve music

AZIZ SHOKHAKIMOV

Conducting concert after concert, throughout the year in Toronto, Seattle, Seoul, Tokyo, Frankfurt, Warsaw, Berlin, Istanbul, Paris, and other cultural and musical capitals of the world with hundreds of musicians... This is an example of being a really global person, a citizen of the music kingdom, not a permanent resident of a country. Music director of the Strasbourg Philharmonic Orchestra, world-class conductor, virtuoso of high smack and mastery from Uzbekistan, Aziz Shokhakimov starred in the much-celebrated documentary O'zbekistonlik" in 2023, a project by Uzbekistan's club team.

The later has talked with the musician about classical music, its importance for the people of our time, especially for the Uzbek society, and how to promote love for music in young people.



PHOTO: JEAN-BAPTISTE MILLOT



PHOTO: GRÉGORY MASSAT

DELIVERY

People can have such sincere feelings, thoughts, and intimate experiences that it can prove rather tough to describe them in words. Classical music, in my opinion, can deliver those passions in a unique way. Classics deliver a unique atmosphere, take the listener to a new reality, allows him to feel as if he fell into another world.

COHESION

When I was young, playing in an international symphony orchestra, I realized that classical music can unite even conflicting nations. Classical music has a unique feature that brings different cultures closer to each other. Languages are diverse on the planet, but the language of music is common to all.

Some classic works require a special way of thinking from a person, which is formed through life experience. Therefore, everyone perceives the works individually, depending on their spiritual and intellectual maturity.

INSPIRATION

The source of inspiration for me in creating music is the beauty of nature, which embodies harmony and fabulous perfection. I am also inspired by great people who make a tremendous contribution to the development of humanity and the expansion of our thinking horizons with their creativity, achievements and ideas in music, literature, painting, science, sports and philosophy. My teacher Vladimir Borisovich Neymar is one of those who inspires me all the time. Sometimes I think that this is a world of reciprocity: my mentor was born in Kiev and was evacuated to Tashkent during the Second World War. Our friendly people accepted his family, saved them from hunger, and, perhaps, as a tribute of gratitude, he decided to devote his entire life to Uzbekistan, and as a loyal citizen of the nation trained until the end of his life numerous specialists to become genuine professionals in their field with many talents.

INGENUITY

Music is not just a collection of notes, rhythm, harmony and melody, but it is a true art that covers the deepest aspects of human nature. Its importance for people is manifest in scientific research results as much as through the personal experience of every human being. Classical music is imbued with a deep philosophical meaning and makes one think about the essence of life and death, the nature of the human soul. Every note, every chord contains a rainbow of emotions: from joy and pleasure to sadness and melancholy. It is with these diverse experiences that classical music is important for people. It is this art with which we experience the deepest feelings and open new horizons for our inner world. As a source of eternal inspiration and high human qualities, classical music is essential for us.

ALLEGIANCE

We need talented and knowledgeable people who can talk about classical music and explain why it is important. The government and patrons should encourage musicians to devote themselves fully to music without working multiple jobs at the same time.

First of all, we need to take care of the young plants in the music garden. I remember, when we worked as practicing conductors in the National Symphony Orchestra of Uzbekistan, we used to often lecture schoolchildren. Unfortunately, there is no such tradition now.

In my view, one can expect only good behavior from young people who grow up listening to classical music and realizing its beauty.

EDUCATION

I cannot say that the level of music education in Uzbekistan is high since there are no great teachers among us anymore, and young people are trying to get a diploma and go to countries where their work is well-paid. Besides, the Soviet school of music, which is still the fundamentals in our country, no matter how wonderful it was, is already obsolete.

It is clear that the system of music education requires reform. First of all, I believe it is crucial to boost remuneration for the work and reputation of teachers. Next, to deliver a new education system, it is essential to attract foreign specialists or expats working abroad. It requires a major investment, to be sure, but it will pay off in the long run. Unfortunately, the strategic vision in Uzbekistan is not sufficient in this regard.

HONORARIUM

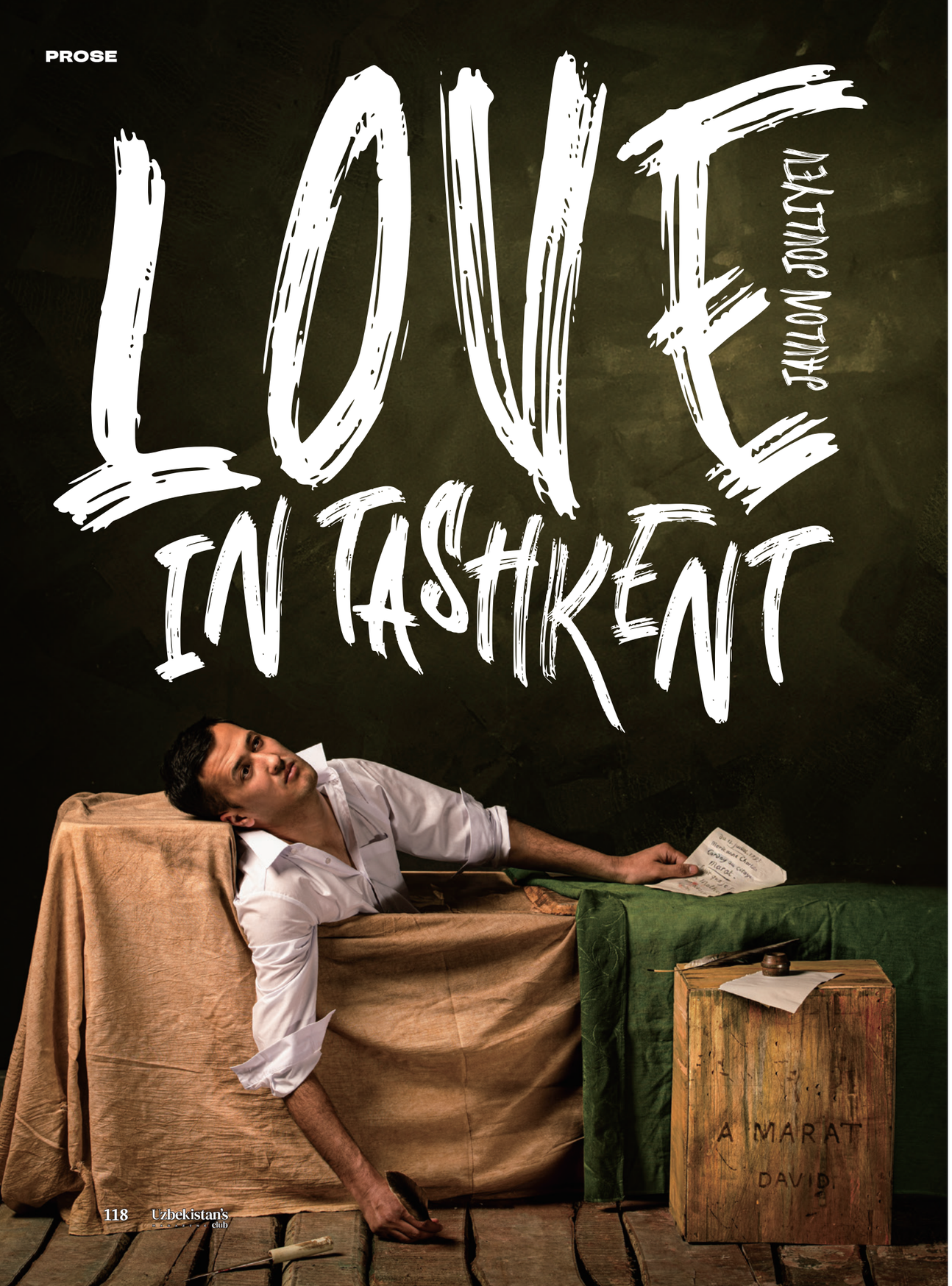
In Europe, orchestras are usually well paid for their service and do not need to look for additional sources of income. Yet musicians in Uzbekistan are regrettably forced to work several jobs to support themselves, which negatively affects the quality of performance and reduces the motivation to engage in artistic creativity. In addition, orchestras in the West have a clear schedule for the coming year, as seasons are carefully planned well in advance by qualified management. It should be admitted that sometimes orchestras in Uzbekistan cannot even imagine what repertoire they will perform in 2–3 months. In other words, we do not have enough qualified administrators to plan the season carefully.

UPBRINGING

In addition, concerts featuring light music or mixed with classical art or rock music have been growing in popularity. Personally, I don't mind, provided that such shows are held several times a year rather than on a regular basis. I think it is critical for the audience to listen not only to music that suits their current taste, but also to works that shape their taste.

LOVE IN TASHKENT

JAVLON JOVLIYEV



I DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU, BUT I GO TO THE THEATER TO DREAM ABOUT MY BELOVED.

No idea about what you go to the theater for, but I do it to think about and dream about someone who I love. It is hard to find a better place in Tashkent to spend hours thinking about someone. No one and nothing will keep me company except for half a liter of cold coke and the memories of my bitter, futile love for four years and eight months.

Tashkent is a rare capital city where you can buy works of art for almost free. Take, for instance, today's theatergoing: I spent just 35 thousand soums or 3 U.S. dollars for the ticket. The price is ridiculous, and more than a hundred people sweat on stage. Awkward, isn't it? I feel sorry for the theater team – some of them have a life worse than that of our teachers: without a house of their own, nor a car, they earn little except for wedding party tips, while the salary dries up like the Aral Sea before the tenth day of the month. They work in theater just because they love arts or with bright dreams of fame in the future. And some of them hang around the stage since they have little ability to do anything else and get old without much earnings. They would not go even if you beat them. Sad fates.

Well, today I'm here not to discuss actors, but indulge in sweet thoughts about the person I love. Nowadays, it is a miracle to keep one's attention in one place for an hour.

Aidin is 22 years old. I love her.

It was a love at first sight. The truth is this: Once I saw her, I realized in my heart that my previous orderly, pleasant life would be a matter of history.

Before blindly falling in love with Aidin, I did not have any experience in relationships. I thus had never been ready to 'die' for someone else, and yet this could be the key reason for my insanity, because this world loves to make fun of the inexperienced.

Even after nearly five years, Aidin has stubbornly managed to not give a grip. And I feel that I am growing in nerves and angriness; in a word, my life is proving unbridled and skimpy. In four months, my unrequited love will turn five, and these five years have turned me into a completely different person, a new and unhappy copy of previous me. I have become a new chap, the one who looks like the previous one, but only in the passport. I hate the new guy, but there's no way back to the old days.

I write to Aidin every day on Telegram, but get short answers, that's it. She sends me mock greetings, i.e., smileys in molds. I hate those who just press a like to something that someone wrote... The source of this hatred is not just the unreciprocated love. Another reason is my neighbor, who borrowed 8 million soums and has not paid it back for three and a half years, and who sends me a congratulatory photo with the same words every Holy Friday. I wanted to buy a car with the money I gave him. I had saved one million soums from my monthly salary on my bank card, but now I have forsaken this dream. I came to be buried in his excuses like "I'll give back tomorrow, or the day after tomorrow, I will sell the house, I will sell goods, I will..."

THE GIRL SAYS NEITHER YES, NOR GIVES US A CHANCE

Now I feel tired of everything and am afraid that nervousness will finish up my heart. I think of not much that the money has gone 'into a bin', but that I can't bear to drive a car on the streets of Tashkent. Let's say my neighbor pays off his debt. Will I struggle again to save money and eventually buy a car only to go out into the street and face trouble at every step? No, no! For some reason, ninety percent of our drivers are always in a hurry and are angry, complain about something, drive over each other, and are impatient. Do I join this gang? Nope!

Seems that it is better for me if my neighbor fails to give my money back. In the past three and a half years, I have made walking around the city a priority. I completely refuse to buy a car; it is for this very purpose I wanted to save money. So, now he does not need to repay his debt at all. The day I made this decision was one of my happiest days.

When walking around Tashkent, one will see incredible beauty, notice a harmony in the chaos, come across narrow shacks along with courtyards planted with basil, pass through magnificent mosques to end up in charming and enchanting bazaars. Cityscapes groaning with grandeur and eccentricity will remind you of the scenery of a great work of art.

I once saw Tashkent in the morning shedding tears without a voice. What a horror! The unique Tashkent, crying voicelessly in a corner, covering its mouth with its hands.

That is why I can't remember anything but my unreturned love giving me despairing answers when the debtor neighbor sends me greeting texts every Friday. The girl says neither no, nor yes to me, to my love... She neither marries someone, nor me... Perhaps I am falling for her even sturdier given the myriad questions and puzzles.

Even when we meet, she keeps always silent, her lips keep trembling, she wants to say something, but ultimately does not say anything. Gives a cold smirk and runs away to her red car waiting for her.

Sometimes, out of nervousness, I get eager to go into her life. I know it's bad, but what can I do? After all, I can't keep living with Telegram smileys!

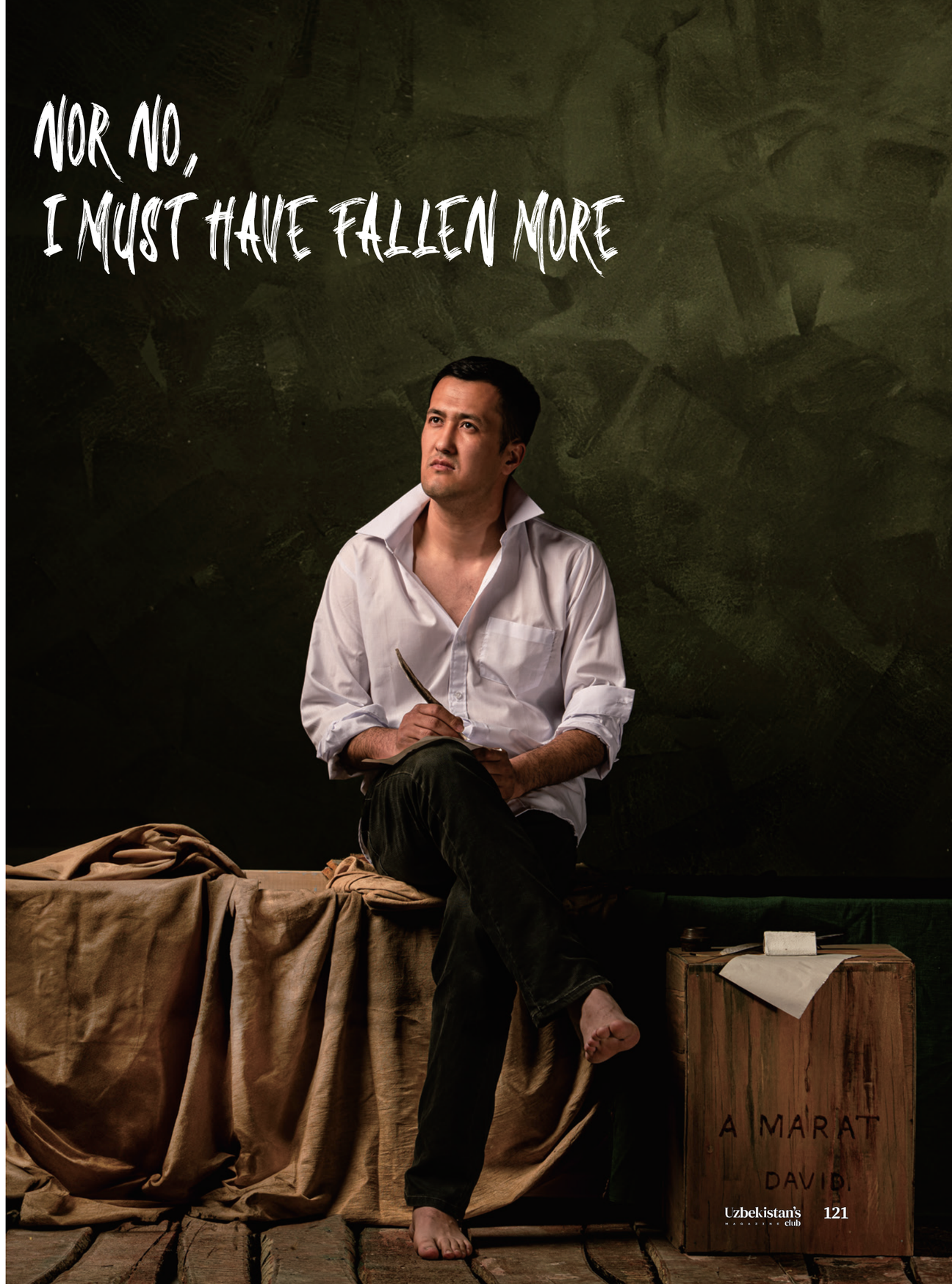
That is the reason behind my putting cameras in the parking lot Aidin uses. I love watching her switch off the engine or light it up. She gets nervous when someone pulls up to her space – she gets more beautiful. She waits for a bit; in those moments my dear movie gets a little longer and it makes me feel better than watching Neftlix series. It sounds like a lot of fun.

Yet I still have very little clue about her feelings as to who she waits for, who she trusts, who she loves, who she will belong to in the end – I desperately love her with these questions in mind.

Today I came to the theater again to think about her, but still had little idea about what was waiting for me here.

(Excerpt from story)

NOR NO, I MUST HAVE FALLEN MORE



THE SUZANI AS IMPORTANT AS MONA LISA

Text by Said FOZILOV

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THE IMAGE OF A PERFECT WOMAN

In Uzbekistan, intelligent, enterprising, kind-hearted woman content with her life, with modern world outlook and her own style has been perceived of as an ideal woman. Women of which nation can she be compared to? No idea. I think she is peerless, probably unique.

Our girls strive for beautiful lifestyle from childhood. Have you noticed that? Everything should be perfect like that in the legend: from the house one lives, the table one eats through to the places for evening walks and fun... That is the reason why we are witnessing now is the Renaissance of Women's Art. This is a time when a woman creates aesthetic masterpieces with her mind and her own hands. I believe one day such works will rise to the level of art and be acknowledged as such.

Uzbek designers have been surprising the world by delivering innovations even in an age when one thinks almost everything has already been invented. Skilled hands are coming up with gorgeous patterns, using artificial intelligence to convey their ideas in their drawings. Look around, you can see it in the world of fashion, from simple knitwear to challenging trends!

What pleases me is the focus on women's crafts in Uzbekistan's club. We know there's a trend, but we hardly talk about it because we're so focused on the world of sports and pop culture. Products created by our women, for example, deserve greater attention and inspiration.

It would be rather suitable to compare the value of these products with art. After all, should the entire world know of the secret of Mona Lisa's smile but not that of suzani by the Uzbekistani woman?

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top MOVIES about women's fate

AYUB SHAHOBIDDINOV

NIGORA KARIMBOYEVA

Uzbekistan's MAGAZINE club



The woman and her inner world have been the subject of but a handful of masterpieces in the world cinematography. This can be due, on the one hand, to the cultural and political values of peoples around the globe, while on the other, to the oft byzantine nature of any endeavor bent on revealing the woman's spirit, her soul and life experiences. No less crucial a fact is that the success of national motion picture in the world cinema is directly related to the audience's taste characteristics, along with current trends in the art and cinema industry.

Text: Iroda NASIMOVA

1. **L'Eclisse** *(Eclipse)*. A 1962 movie by Italian director Michelangelo Antonioni telling the story of a complicated relationship between Piero (Alain Delon) and Vittoria (Monica Vitti). Itself a classic magnum opus of world cinema, the film seeks to inquire into the nature of loneliness and the complexity of relationships through female psychology.

2. **In the Mood for Love** *(Fa yeung nin wah)* is a film directed by Hong Kong director Wong Kar-wai. It is renowned for its original plot and adroit performance of its characters, as much as its visual style and the director's exclusive skills. For her main role in the motion picture, actress Maggie Cheung was awarded Cannes Film Festival prize in the "For the best actress" nomination.

3. **Cranes Flying** *(Летят журавли)* is a 1957 Soviet movie directed by Mikhail Kalatozov. In the central plot of the work, a woman named Vera longs for her beloved man to return from the war only to receive a condolence letter from behind the frontline, following a thorny period of separation. The work is considered one of the most unforgettable motion pictures about the war.

4. Uzbekistani director Ali Hamrayev's film, **Stork, a Sign of Summer**, tells the story of an Uzbek family living in a village, a love between a young man and a young woman facing social and cultural challenges and confrontations. The work proved a great success both in Uzbekistan and abroad.

5. **When We Leave** *(Die Fremde)* is a 2010 drama by Austrian director Feo Aladag. Umay, a Turkish woman living in Germany, is portrayed as a character forced to confront her family's traditions and culture in the modern German society. The plot of the film looks into pressing issues pertinent to migration, cultural adaptation, family relations as well as internal conflicts in the woman's heart.

6. **Three Faces** *(Se rokh)* is an Iranian film industry masterpiece created in 2018. Director of the motion picture, Jafar Panahi, skillfully reveals the experiences of three female characters who face challenges related to values and customs and embark on a trip to a village to solve problems.

7. **Ayka** *(Айка)*, a 2018 drama by Kazakh director Sergey Dvortsevoy, gained much popularity in the Russian cinema world. The life and spikey experiences of a young Kyrgyz woman working as a 'surrogate mother' in Moscow are covered with themes of migration, social inequality and human dignity.

8. **Relatives** *(Родня)* is a Soviet tragicomedy directed by Nikita Mikhalkov in 1981. It explores the social and political problems of Russia through the character of an ordinary village woman and her family.

9. **Osama** is a motion picture from the Afghan director Siddiq Barmak. It has been widely celebrated and awarded at film festivals around the world. The plot is about the fate of a young girl named Osama who lives in Afghanistan during the Taliban rule.

These films have been awarded the most prestigious awards for their direction, plot and character performances. We recommend watching them for a proper understanding of women's will and psyche.

KARINA MAVLYANOVA

BRING HAPPINESS TO WOMEN





Older women wish girls from the very birth a women's happiness. Mass media and movies show that a woman's felicity consists of a fortunate marriage, good children and cozy home.

In this way, full of hopes and dreams, a girl creates an image of women's happiness and lives in pursuit of it. Until her pleasant dreams of a family and a loving life come true, she lives in fear and worry about her future.

But as I have experienced in my practice, a woman does not always feel happy even after she has reached her dreams in such an ideal picture. One day, faced with an insurmountable difficulty in relationships, she wonders where her happiness lies, because she did everything 'right': she married well, gave birth to perfect children, and made a home sweet home.

WHAT DO WOMEN SUFFER FROM?

1. Nonacceptance of their unique feelings and nature. One of the most critical things that we are not taught from childhood is the way to understand our own nature. We, women, are directly sensitive and dependent on hormonal changes in our body. Our emotions also depend on it outright. But many women think that something is wrong with them and attribute their frequent mood swings to this. In most cases, such a notion is reinforced by men's misunderstanding and accusations of women.

2. A thorny way of achieving a commonly accepted image of a successful woman. This is the image of a super housewife, a super mother, a super wife, a super model, a super woman who has secured her fair place in society and earns her own money. Women look at this image from outside, and in fact, they do not take into account what this 'success' costs, what should be sacrificed to accomplish that. Comparing herself to such a super woman image, a regular woman naturally feels inferior.

3. Misinterpretation of the laws of relationships. A woman paints an image of an ideal relationship, where there are no conflicts and disagreements, and when she encounters them, she suffers from the belief that either something is wrong with her, and therefore she does not have a happy relationship, or her partner is unfair to her and that there is something he doesn't give her enough. Few people know that relationships undergo their own stages of development, from fusion to separation and from separation to adult love.

4. Childish perception of the world whereby a woman expects that the world will play by her rules: she entertains dreams, fantasizes about a prince who comes over and saves her from all the difficulties of life, makes her dreams come true. And when this does not happen, the woman becomes disappointed in herself, gets pinched and begins to suffer from the complexes that she creates for herself. She stops living here and now, enjoying what she has, and instead lives with deferred expectations and dissatisfaction.

5. Working hard to please everyone: her husband, relatives, children, ultimately leaving to a state of mind when the woman loses her self. She ceases to perceive of her abilities, her needs, eventually turning from a personality into a function. In a relationship, such a woman, trying to please her beloved one, forsakes her individuality, zest, and over time loses her partner's interest. This is a very common story in my practice, when in therapy we work on returning a woman to her authenticity, to self-acceptance and sensitivity to her abilities.

SIMPLE STEPS TO HAPPINESS:

Women! Learn to notice not only your flaws, but also your strengths, that will boost your self-worth.

A relationship, children and fabulous home are wonderful, but do not forget about yourself, don't expect someone to guess what your needs are, instead take care of them by yourself. Remember, when a woman feels well, then everyone around her is well, with a healthy atmosphere reigning in the house.

And if you live in harmony with yourself, then it will be much easier for you to maintain a harmonious relationship with your partner.

My vision is that happiness for a woman is not an end in itself or a permanent state. Happiness is a process that you need to learn to create and cultivate within yourself.



Uzbekistan's UC club

Tens of thousands of miles on the highways of the United States of America. Hundreds of hamburgers eaten, thousands of gallons of gasoline burned, countless sunrises and sunsets seen. But crucially, it is the dozens of Uzbekistanis we met along the way. Incredible, talented and fascinating. Every one of them with their own story they are eager to tell about.

All this is the brand new American season of Uzbekistan's club. The organization's creative team spent three months in the United States, traveling across states and devising new content. We went freezing in the gusty winds in Chicago. Went through -16 °C on the shores of Boston Bay. Almost died from the heat in Washington. Argued with the highway police in Kansas. We dined in student cafeterias in Virginia. Filmed on the rooftops of Manhattan. We've been everywhere we could be! We believe this is the largest media project in the history of Uzbek-American relations. And we teamed up everywhere with members of our ecosystem: Ucell, Chevrolet Uzbekistan and Uzbekistan Airways. It was only thanks to their support that we were able to carry out such ambitious filming.











For the new American season, we have prepared two large full-length films “O’zbekistonlik”. The first of them tells the stories of Harvard University doctoral student Botir Kobilov and US Department of Health officer Farogat Eshbekova. And the second one will host one of the most celebrated Uzbekistanis, the pianist Behzod Abduraimov. His inner world and achievements are so rich that they required a separate film. It will premiere toward the end of 2024.

O‘ZBEKISTONLIK





CHICAGO GUSTY WINDS







STUDENTS

Our presenter, the popular blogger Timur Alikhanov traveled across all coasts of the United States, visiting the most prestigious universities in America and communicating with our compatriots. These conversations can be seen in the series “O’zbekistonlik.Students” posted on YouTube and broadcast on our partner TV channels: My5, UzReport TV, Zor TV, Milliy TV, Renessans TV, Yoshlar and Mahalla. This is the second season of the series. The first one covered British universities.











PODCASTS

In March, we launched a new podcast show on TV, YouTube and all streaming platforms. In a studio in Manhattan, the celeb Uzbekistani, the hero of the first film O’zbekistonlik, Askarali Karimov, gathered motivating expats all over from the USA and Canada. The partakers talked about migration, family life, artificial intelligence and other pressing issues. The show became popular, and this format will definitely be continued. We thank our partner, the Uzum digital ecosystem, for their support in creating national content.













And for sure, the new issue of our Uzbekistan’s club magazine you are holding in your hands. There is little need to describe it. Just flip through it and take aesthetic and intellectual pleasure.

An important milestone for us was the organization of the latest international forum O’zbekistonlik, hosted this time by the hospitable New York, following Berlin, Paris and London. We hope our forums will continue to be the major networking events for expats around the globe, and help fulfill the principal mission of our club to unite Uzbek citizens all over the Earth!

LONDON FORUM

O'ZBEKISTONLIK

2023





O‘ZBEKISTONLIK FORUM LONDON





The 18th of October 2023. London, one of the financial, cultural, art and science centers of the world, capital of the United Kingdom. The Old Royal Naval College campus of the University of Greenwich. The breathtaking Painted Hall from the 18th century. 6.00 p.m.

To its subsequent international event, the O‘zbekistonlik Forum, the creative team of Uzbekistan's club has brought together residents of the club, expats, students from the native land, London dignitaries, businesspeople, the celebrated and popular opinion leaders of Uzbekistan. One of the esteemed guests of the Forum, Odile Renaud-Basso, President of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, delivered a keynote speech at the occasion.



















As it had been the case in Berlin and Paris earlier, the Forum was for anyone who considered themselves to be from Uzbekistan: compatriots, their (sometimes foreign) family members, business owners and investors interested in the development of our society, our culture, and the possibility of doing business with us, and it came to be a convenient networking event with the participation of media personalities.

The earlier, Paris-hosted Forum in the spring of 2023 was about "Generating Ideas" for Uzbekistan. While this time around in the British capital city, we wanted to reveal the outcomes, achievements, and the state of implementation of the ideas generated at the previous forums. The London Forum thus included presentations of

- the first issue of Uzbekistan's club glossy magazine

- club's master residents – GulfCA Corp. founder Alisher Jumanov as well as founder of Uzbex.com platform and Business Diplomat program director Mirshod Shokirov's new projects inspired by "O'zbekistonlik" films and forums

- O'zbekistonlik.Students series

- the complete functionality of Uzbekistans.club online integration platform.











To complete the festive spirit of the O'zbekistonlik Forum, as the tradition of such forums goes, the occasion also hosted the premiere of the latest, 4th episode of the high-quality eponymous documentary. Kamola Mahmudova, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development country head for Azerbaijan, and Timur Yunusov, a biologist at the University of Cambridge, DSc, were chosen to act as subject heroes of that episode. This time, the film discussed topics of education, human capital, environmental issues, climate change and ecological migration on a global scale through the moving and inspiring stories of the characters.

Uzbekistan's club
MAGAZINE

TO BUILD A NATION OF TALENTS



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