2025 | #3

Uzbekistan's club

MAGAZINE



UZBEKISTAN:
LAND OF TALENTS

TOP 7
UZBEKISTANI INFLUENCERS

HARD WORK PAYS OFF

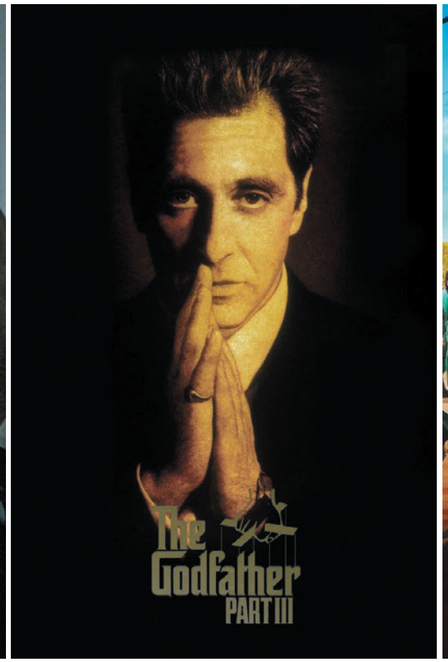
ABDUKODIR KHUSANOV

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CONTENTS

ABDUKODIR KHUSANOV 6
HARD WORK PAYS OFF

UZBEKISTAN: 12
LAND OF TALENTS

OYBEK KASIMOV 20
SUPPORT + EFFECTIVE SELECTION = SUCCESS

YULDUZ RAJABOVA 26
HAPPY WITH MY LIFE

TIMOTHY SMART 36
NATION WITH HIGH HOPES

SHUKHRAT KHUDAYKULOV 42
FLIGHT OF DREAMS

ZAFAR KHASHIMOV 50
ENTREPRENEUR IS A STRATEGIST

IZZAT SHUKUROV 56
LADDER TO THE FUTURE

OTABEK NAZAROV 64
THE CUSTOMER IS KING

ADIZ RADJABOV 70
CRISIS OR MATURITY?

DORA OTAJONOVA 78
A WOMAN'S PERSPECTIVE: AGRICULTURAL REFORMS IN UZBEKISTAN

SHAKHRIYOR 86
I AM PLOV COOKED IN MELTING POT

UMID GAFUROV 94
A PERFECTIONIST WITH ZERO TOLERANCE FOR LIES

TOP 7 UZBEKISTANI 100
INFLUENCERS

SAIDAZIZ AZAMOV 116
WE LIVE ONLY ONCE

ERIC SEILER 122
FIRST-RATE HOSPITALITY

FIVE PORTRAITS OF MOHIRA MULLAJANOVA 126

ABOUT 134
US

Uzbekistan's
MAGAZINE club

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HELLO, DEAR READERS

We're excited to bring you the third issue of our magazine at a particularly joyful moment. In June 2025, our team is launching a long-term global campaign called Uzbekistan: Land of Talents. The goal is to craft a new national brand–one that reflects Uzbekistan's identity and growing role in the modern world.

But before we share this message with the world, we believe it must first resonate at home. It should speak to our own society, our own talents, and to ourselves. We're doing that by sharing the stories and perspectives of Uzbekistan's most successful individuals–people who inspire with both their achievements and insights. Alongside our video content and international forums, Uzbekistan's club magazine plays a key role in this mission. It's a space where the values, ideas, and refined thinking of leading Uzbekistani voices come together.

The idea for this campaign started with the Uzbekistan Football Association. We're kicking things off in sync with our national team's renewed push toward the World Cup. Among the many talented Uzbekistani figures we spotlight, our athletes–and especially the players chasing a dream 34 years in the making–hold a special place.

This magazine reflects all of our goals and ambitions. As you turn its pages, we hope you'll be reminded once again of the remarkable potential of Uzbekistani people–and just how much our society is capable of achieving.

As always, each issue follows a cohesive visual concept. The first focused on metaphors; the second drew inspiration from famous works of art. This time, we've imagined our featured personalities as iconic characters from popular films.

You've probably noticed the cover star–one of Uzbekistan's most celebrated figures, Abdukodir Khusanov. We've portrayed our rising football star as Jon Snow from Game of Thrones–a powerful symbol of strength, humility, grit, and trust. His victories are more than personal milestones; they mark a new era for Uzbekistani football.

Can you guess which movies inspired the other characters in this issue? Enjoy the journey through these pages!



Not long ago, mentioning you were from Uzbekistan in a Paris, Istanbul, or Dubai taxi might earn you a polite smile and a nod. Today, the reaction is more curious–and specific:
“Uzbekistan? Khusanov?”

Every nation has its edge. To thrive globally, countries must identify and cultivate their strengths. For Uzbekistan, that strength is human capital: talented, determined, and hardworking people.

One of the clearest examples is Abdukodir Khusanov, a 21-year-old who may well be the most internationally recognized Uzbekistani today. Across professions, many look to him with admiration. He’s more than a footballer–he’s a symbol of possibility.

HARD WORK PAYS OFF

Text by Saidaziz AZAMOV



ROOTS AND EARLY DRIVE

Biographies often focus on grades or accolades, but it's what happens beyond the classroom that reveals true character. For Abdukodir, that journey began early. At just six years old, he set his sights on becoming a footballer. Soon after starting school, he joined the Bunyodkor Football Academy–and when not training, he was in the stands, watching his father, professional player Hakimjon Hoshimov, in action.

Still, from the start, he was taught to forge his own path. Despite his father's stature, Abdukodir was instructed never to say, "I'm Hoshimov's son." Respect and opportunities had to be earned. To keep a low profile, his uncle Rahmatjon Hoshimov handled drop-offs and pick-ups from the academy.

He stayed with Bunyodkor through his school years, impressing coaches with his natural ability. Known for his speed, he regularly trained and played with boys two years older –and more than held his own.

TURNING POINT: BEFORE 20

In 2022, Abdukodir was told he wouldn't yet be promoted to Bunyodkor's first team. Rather than wait, he took a bold step–moving to Belarus to join Energetik BGU. At just 18, he was adjusting to life abroad, navigating a new culture, and building strength through rigorous training and match experience.

Two months in, on May 2, he scored his first goal in a match against Neman Grodno–adding two assists. By the end of the season, he had been named to the Belarusian Premier League's symbolic team.

In 2023, he joined Uzbekistan's U-20 national squad, which went on to win the Asian Championship. Later, the team qualified for the FIFA U-20 World Cup in Argentina. Despite exiting in the Round of 16, their performance turned heads among global scouts. One of the standout names? A strong, fast 19-year-old with the composure of a seasoned player: Abdukodir Khusanov. Among the clubs that took notice: RC Lens, a top-tier French side.

SETBACKS AND RESILIENCE
BELARUS, ENERGETIK BGU
U-20 ASIAN CHAMPION
FIFA U-20 WORLD CUP, ARGENTINA



TOTAL LOOK
TOM FORD

A BREAKTHROUGH IN FRANCE

In the summer of 2023, Khusanov signed a four-year deal with RC Lens, becoming the first Uzbekistani to play in Ligue 1. Then, on November 29, he made his Champions League debut against Arsenal–earning another distinction as the youngest Uzbekistani ever to appear in the tournament.

His breakout moment came in early 2024. In a league match, he scored his first Ligue 1 goal, rising above defenders during a corner to head the ball into the net. His celebration–a chest salute–symbolized focus, grit, and pride. The moment resonated with fans, teammates, and coaches alike.

During the Paris 2024 Olympics, French fans were seen cheering for Uzbekistan's Olympic team. Why? Because of Khusanov. By that time, he had been featured multiple times in Team of the Week selections, and even earned a spot in the Ligue 1 Team of the Season as a central defender.

THE MANCHESTER CITY LEAP

On January 20, 2025, Khusanov signed a four-and-a-half-year contract with Manchester City in a deal worth €40 million. The move made him the first Uzbekistani to play in the Premier League.

Just five days later, he made his debut against Chelsea. Though he stumbled early in the match, he quickly found his footing and delivered a composed performance. On February 8, he scored his first goal for City in a match against Leyton Orient. His speed, confidence, and defensive reliability quickly made him a fan favorite.

– RC LENS & LIGUE 1
– UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE
– PARIS 2024
– MANCHESTER CITY & PREMIER LEAGUE
– EARLY TALENT RECOGNITION
– DISCIPLINE AND HUMILITY
– A STRONG FATHER FIGURE
– FAMILY SUPPORT
– SELF-BELIEF



uzum KAPITALBANK Ucell

JUNE 5–10

TOSHKENT SHAHAR HOKIMLIGI

2025

2025 marks four years since the launch of the Uzbekistan's Club initiative. To celebrate the milestone, our team has decided to launch a wide-reaching, long-term global promotion campaign for Uzbekistan. We've named the initiative Uzbekistan: Land of Talents.



UZBEKISTAN
LAND OF TALENTS

WORLD CUP 2026

Building a new brand for Uzbekistan starts at home–with helping our own people believe they are worthy of this vision. Only then can we share our country's full potential with the world. It's a bold and demanding mission, and it's not one that can be carried out by a single organization or team. It calls for a united effort, with professionals, companies, and institutions working together toward a shared goal.

Uzbekistan's Club has focused on creativity and media as tools to spark this kind of synergy. Through powerful, high-quality projects, we've brought together a community of like-minded compatriots who share our vision.

Now it's time to take this campaign to the next level–in both reach and impact. *Uzbekistan: Land of Talents* aims to spotlight just how much potential lies within our people. Across every field–finance, technology, medicine, education, and science–Uzbekistan's human capital is our greatest driver of progress. Our campaign is about showing the world that Uzbekistani talent can thrive and lead on a global stage.

We're launching this campaign in tandem with our national football team's pursuit of the World Cup. As the team pushes toward this historic goal, we're supporting them with a series of uplifting initiatives–projects that not only energize the players but also lift the spirit of our people.

Our lead partner in this global campaign is Kapitalbank. We're also proud to have Uzum and Ucell joining the effort. These sponsors–whom we call the "Friends of the National Team"–are playing a key role in supporting the campaign, each with their own motivations and contributions. You'll learn more about them in the pages that follow.

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KAPITALBANK

NURTURING YOUNG TALENTS INVESTING INTO POTENTIAL FUTURE OF THE NATION

"Supporting and empowering talented young people in Uzbekistan is one of Kapitalbank's top priorities.

We're actively involved in social initiatives, we back educational programs, and we invest in the growth of both amateur and professional sports.

Today, Kapitalbank is one of the largest employers in Uzbekistan and the first national company to receive the prestigious Top Employer international certification. Over the past two years alone, we've created more than 1,000 new jobs–with a strong focus on staff training, professional development, and youth engagement.

When it comes to football, we look to our national team with both pride and hope. The team is showing its full potential and confidently moving toward victory.

Uzbekistan: Land of Talents is an important movement–not only supporting sports initiatives but also helping to create platforms that unlock young people's talent.

It's no coincidence that Kapitalbank is serving as a main partner and co-organizer of this project. This is more than just a philanthropic gesture–it reflects our commitment to fostering a healthy, competitive environment where young people can thrive.

Major companies can and should play a meaningful role in developing initiatives like this. At Kapitalbank, we are proud to be part of this important moment. We'll continue to support ideas that expand opportunities for young people and help them reach new heights. We truly believe that efforts like this lay the foundation for growth, progress, and the future of our country."



DJASUR DJUMAYEV
CEO & FOUNDER

uzum

TALENT, ENTHUSIASM, ZEAL NATIONAL TEAM, NATIONAL PRIDE EVERY YOUTH IS PIECE OF PUZZLE

"Together with the rest of the country, we take pride in the achievements of Uzbekistani people–and we're committed to helping our nation grow by sharing its story with the world.

To me, Uzbekistan is a land of talents–a place where I grew up, and a country I deeply believe in.

We've made incredible strides in our economy, sports, science, and technology. Behind every success are talented, driven, creative people–and, of course, an extraordinary amount of hard work. In recent years, we've seen Uzbekistan's first national IT unicorn emerge. Our athletes are winning medals at top international competitions. Our students are winning scholarships at the world's leading universities.

Today, it's more important than ever not just to find talent, but to create the conditions for it to thrive right here at home.

Uzbekistan: Land of Talents is about believing in our youth and building bridges–across generations, sectors, and regions. This vision aligns perfectly with Uzum's values. We grew up here, we've built a team of thousands across the country, and we continue to grow alongside those who believe in Uzbekistan.

Why are we supporting this initiative? Because programs like this help shape the kind of ecosystem that fuels technological progress. They also foster a cultural, intellectual, and human-centered environment–one where you want to live, work, and create."

Ucell

DISCOVERING RARE TALENTS

"For Ucell, taking part in the *Uzbekistan: Land of Talents* initiative is an investment in the future–one where talent is discovered, and people achieve bold ambitions.

We firmly believe that Uzbekistan's greatest strength lies in its people: passionate, resilient, and driven to build. They are the ones shaping a new, digital era.

As a leading telecommunications company, our role is to support them–by expanding their opportunities, keeping them connected, and inspiring them to go further."

OUR GOAL IS TO SUPPORT TALENTS. DEVELOPMENT, PRODUCTIVITY, SPEED AND EXCELLENCE FOLLOW THE APPRECIATION OF HUMAN CAPITAL.



ANDREY SHISHKOVSKY
GENERAL DIRECTOR

SPORT

SUPPORT

+ EFFECTIVE SELECTION

= SUCCESS



THE YEAR 2024 IS ETCHED IN UZBEK SPORTS BY HISTORICAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS. AT THE PARIS OLYMPIC GAMES, UZBEKISTAN'S SPORTS DELEGATION RECORDED ITS BEST EVER PERFORMANCE, SECURING 13TH POSITION IN THE WORLD RANKING OVERALL. WITHOUT ANY DOUBT, COUNTRY'S SPORTS INFRASTRUCTURE AND THE FAVORABLE CONDITIONS PROVIDED HAVE PLAYED A CRUCIAL ROLE IN THIS SUCCESS. TO GAIN INSIGHT INTO THE PRESENT AND FUTURE OF UZBEK SPORTS, WE ENGAGED IN A CONVERSATION WITH THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE NATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEE, OYBEK KASIMOV.

– WHAT CONCLUSIONS HAVE YOU DRAWN FROM THE RESULTS OF THE PARIS 2024 SUMMER OLYMPIC GAMES?

– The Paris 2024 Summer Olympic Games will be remembered as a historic milestone for Uzbekistan. Our delegation earned an impressive total of 8 gold, 2 silver, and 3 bronze medals in fiercely contested competitions with top athletes from 206 countries. With the final results, Uzbekistan ranked 13th place globally in the overall standings, fourth in Asia, and among the countries of the CIS, Central Asia, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, and the Turkic States Organization, achieved the first place. Our female athletes had last reached the podium during the Summer Olympic Games in Beijing-2008, when Ekaterina Khilko won a bronze medal in the trampoline event. In Paris, judoka Diyora Keldiyorova became the first Uzbekistani female athlete to be crowned champion of the Summer Olympic Games due to her victory in Paris. Additionally, taekwondo athlete Svetlana Osipova won a silver medal, while three of our athletes earned the prestigious title of two-time Olympic champions. Our national teams in judo, boxing, and taekwondo recorded their best-ever performances in Olympic history.

With the support of our government, best conditions have been provided for our national teams throughout the preparations for Paris 2024. As a result, we have secured an Olympic qualification in team sports for the first time– in football. Following the Olympics, President Shavkat Mirziyoyev received the members of our delegation and outlined the tasks for the new Olympic cycle. Currently, the Ministry of Sports, alongside athletic federations and associations, has initiated work to implement these assignments. Achievements are on their way; yet this Olympic Games has also highlighted areas that need strengthening and further development. In particular, refining training methodologies, developing modern sports infrastructure, enhancing the qualifications of coaches, and promoting sports among the youth are among the priorities we need to address.

**8 GOLD,
2 SILVER,
3 BRONZE!**

**4TH IN ASIA,
1ST IN ISLAMIC WORLD,
1ST IN CIS!**



GOVERNMENT SUPPORT, SPONSORSHIP, FINANCIAL AID, CONDUCIVE ENVIRONMENT, GOOD SELECTION, CONTINUOUS TRAINING, QUALIFIED SPECIALISTS

– IN WHAT WAYS IS THE STATE'S PARTICIPATION MANIFESTED DURING THE THOROUGH PREPARATION PROCESS FOR THE OLYMPIC GAMES?

– Our government strives to provide all necessary conditions to ensure our athletes can compete honorably in major multi-sport events. The core aspects of preparation include financial support for federations, selection of talented athletes, systematic Olympic-level training, recruitment of qualified specialists, and the organization of continuous training camps. The Presidential Decree issued on November 5, 2021, titled "On the Comprehensive Preparation of Uzbek Athletes for the 33rd Summer Olympics and 27th Paralympic Games in Paris (France) in 2024" served as a framework for this endeavor.

It is also noteworthy that we possess a distinctive system for incentivizing athletes. For example, during the previous Olympic cycle, not only were the Paris 2024 medalists rewarded, but also the license holders and their coaches. Most importantly, this system was implemented for the third Olympic cycle.

– WHAT ARE THE PRIMARY SOURCES OF SPORTS FUNDING IN OUR COUNTRY?

– The Decree, mentioned above set out to define the medium- and long-term prospects for developing sports and educational institutions, establishing necessary conditions for nurturing a reserve of Olympic and Paralympic athletes. Under this decree, a program was approved to support the development of sports and educational institutions until 2025.

In addition to state budget funding, sports financing is also supported by sponsoring organizations. Within this system, funds are distributed to sports federations and associations via the Ministry of Sports and the National Olympic Committee. Furthermore, the federations and associations themselves often have their own sponsors who play a vital role in further developing of certain sports.

The state places a significant emphasis not only on professional, but on mass sports also. Events such as the "Five Initiatives Olympics" competitions among youth, physical fitness assessments for the general population, and mass competitions like the "Government Cup" for employees are all state-funded. This focus on mass sports development is also critical for identifying talented youth for elite sports in the future.

FEDERATIONS AND ASSOCIATIONS, SYSTEM, TRANSPARENCY, UNANIMOUS VERDICT, AUDIT

– WHAT MECHANISMS ARE IN PLACE FOR MONITORING TARGETED AND TRANSPARENT EXPENDITURES OF FUNDS?

– In this regard, a dedicated system is in place for collaboration with the National Olympic Committee, the Ministry of Sports, Republican High Schools of Sports Excellence for specific disciplines, and the respective federation. The funds allocated to the national teams are based on the needs and requests of the federations and the recommendations of experts. This process is thoroughly reviewed multiple times by the aforementioned organizations. Ultimately, a decision is made collectively based on consensus-driven outcomes.

Additionally, the National Olympic Committee regularly publishes quarterly reports on its website. In addition, the financial activities are constantly verified by independent auditing firms.

Interview by Azamat MURODOV.



HAPPY WITH *my* LIFE

YULDUZ RAJABOVA



At this stage in my life, I am truly content. There is no hesitation or dissatisfaction within me. I have reached a point where I can distinguish between what truly matters and what is insignificant. Yes, there were times when I would stress, overthink, and shed tears over problems and pains. But today, my heart doesn't waver, and my mind doesn't ache anymore. The thought that brings peace to life is the ability to value only the things that truly hold meaning. Everything else should be tossed aside into the "unnecessary" bin. This realization is what has been aiding me. I have matured, and now I draw strength and happiness from the simple joys of having my loved ones around me, hearing their voices in the morning, and feeling the trust they place in me. These are the sources of my energy and contentment now.

DO I HAVE PLANS?

It depends on specific situation. For instance, I have an immense passion for my profession. Regardless of any plans in my career, I approach them with bright enthusiasm and take it very seriously. When it comes to work-related challenges, neither laziness nor lack of motivation ever becomes an issue for me. I am highly disciplined and make every effort to excel.

However, my approach to life plans is somewhat different. It is very easy for me to devise a plan and then casually dismiss it, depending on my surroundings and circumstances. If someone upsets me, I lose the drive to act. The people around me and the environment significantly influence me. Moreover, I am quite sensitive. I can be easily discouraged. Perhaps that's why I'm distancing myself from individuals with negative energy. I acknowledge that I am not particularly resolute in my life plans. However, I deeply admire those who meticulously plan their every step. It is undoubtedly challenging and requires a great deal of focus. I believe that those who succeed in life are precisely those individuals. Every moment is a treasure; one must cherish it and make the most of it.

I ACCEPT THE CHALLENGE

It's not easy for a person to reconcile with themselves, their surroundings, or their emotions. Everyone struggles with this, and I am no exception. However, I am consistently working on my mental well-being. For instance, when a problem arises, my first step is to accept it. Only after acceptance can I detach from the insecurity born of my discontent, and feel the need to regain my footing and return to life.

Of course, I can't always bounce back on my own. The support of a friend, close companions, or understanding loved ones is invaluable. A single well timed kind word or piece of advice can significantly alter one's perspective. Moreover, thoughtfully chosen book or film leave a lasting impact; they confront you with your own reality. It is only after reflecting on these experiences that I try to address and correct myself without self-blame or internal conflict. As you can imagine, it is not a simple process...



JACKET, PANTS
ALEXANDRE VAUTHIER
SLINGBACKS
LE SILLA



GLAMOUR AVENUE | PODIUM

NECKLACE
ALESSANDRO RICCI
DRESS
SELF-PORTRAIT

EVEN WITHOUT A PATH...

Indeed, even if a person finds themselves without a path, they must not walk without guide–these are the words of my mentor, Bahodir Yuldashev. Many of his teachings remain deep-seated in my heart. Throughout life, I continue to reflect on their essence. They carry profound meaning, and the understanding I derive from them empowers me.

Even when one feels lost, it is essential to have a confidant, a mentor, or an advisor. A true companion or advisor is capable of propelling you toward discovering your path and your true self. Without someone to open their heart and appreciate your feelings, a person can feel profoundly isolated. No one should be left alone. As the poem states, “Loneliness is indeed akin to death”.

THE INSECURITY WITHIN ME

Yes, it exists. There is insecurity, and at times, fear as well. Life is indeed fascinating. During moments of despair, when you look back, you can feel how exhausted you are and how depleted your strength has become. When you look forward, it seems as if life is just beginning, and everything appears to require immense effort. It is precisely at that moment that fear creeps in. You find yourself wondering, “Am I strong enough?” However, fear is simply fear; it is not an insurmountable mountain. Overcoming it is entirely possible, and the power to do so lies within us.

THE FACETS AND ASPECTS OF MY ROLES

In the characters I embody, my identity is revealed, even to the point of complete exposure in some instances. Yet, there are still numerous aspects of me that remain unexamined. This is a process–a process that I believe is progressing in the right direction. To play that one role that will fully reveal me, one must also allow themselves the time to grow. Therefore, for now, everything feels right. As time progresses and the process unfolds, I will continue to reveal more of myself. I must say, much like my life, I am content with the roles I have portrayed thus far; my heart is at peace.

Keep your chin up

DRESS
ZIMMERMANN
SLINGBACKS
LE SILLA



PODIUM

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IRO	JACQUEMUS	JWANDERSON	LATORRE	LESILLA	Lorena Antoniazzi
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TIMOTHY SMART

WHEN I FIRST VISITED CENTRAL ASIA, A HOPE AND A SENSE OF DIRECTION WAS MISSING... TODAY I FIND MYSELF WITNESSING A NEW UZBEKISTAN THAT IS INCREASINGLY ASSERTING ITS PRESENCE AND CONFIDENCE ON THE GLOBAL STAGE. THIS IS THE PERSPECTIVE OF BRITISH AMBASSADOR IN UZBEKISTAN, TIMOTHY SMART, WHO, IN A RECENT INTERVIEW WITH UZBEKISTAN'S CLUB, ELABORATED ON THE POSITIVE TRANSFORMATIONS HE HAS OBSERVED WITHIN THE COUNTRY AND SHARED HIS SUGGESTIONS FOR ENHANCING THE CAPITAL CITY.



NATION WITH HIGH HOPES

A TRANSFORMATION, ANTICIPATED FOR OVER 160 YEARS

I first visited Central Asia in 2000. At that time, the region appeared fragmented, with economies stagnating, widespread corruption, and the goal of free democratic societies felt like a far off dream. I recall inquiring, "How can we assist the region in thriving and reclaiming its rightful position within the rules-based international system?" It was challenging to envision. Fortunately, eight years after President Mirziyoyev assumed power, it is wonderful to observe how "Yangi O'zbekiston" is engaging with its neighbors. Today, the Central Asian republics are collaborating more closely than ever, celebrating their shared histories, heritage, and cultures. This connection had tragically been absent for over 160 years. It brings me great joy to witness Uzbekistan becoming increasingly confident on the world stage, taking pride in its rich culture, language, and economic accomplishments.

As an ancient historian, I find it thrilling to explore ancient cities like Khiva, Bukhara, and Samarkand. Observing how you are rediscovering your Silk Road heritage–that historical trading hub of the world, and understanding its significance for your economic development and place in the world is remarkable.

Ultimately, the warm welcome, the aromas in the market, the cuisine, and the genuine interest in discussing your culture while seeking opportunities for practical collaboration are all aspects that I find captivating.

FROM TEA TO SPORTS: SHARED PASSIONS OF THE BRITISH AND UZBEKS

Indeed, let the "choy" be our starting point. Both Brits and Uzbeks enjoy a meaningful conversation over a cup of tea. We also share a profound appreciation for history, a love of family, and a passion for cuisine. We Brits enjoy discussing food, dining out at restaurants or pubs, and socializing. However, you take it to an entirely new level here! The warmth of your "Xush kelibsiz" and the heartfelt generosity of your meals are truly impressive. I also admire the respect you have for elders and the close-knit intergenerational family units. It is heartwarming to see "buvi" and "buva" (grandparents) alongside their grandchildren–all living in close proximity.

We also share a passion for sports. Uzbekistan has achieved remarkable success, both in the Paralympics and the Olympics, ranking 13th on the medal table–accompanied by a strong desire to accomplish even more in the future. Similarly, in Britain, we have a deep appreciation for the Olympics, which was particularly evident in 2012. Additionally, there is a significant mutual interest in football among many people!



UZBEKISTANIS ARE PUTTING THEIR COUNTRY ON THE WORLD MAP

My perceptions were somewhat influenced by my visit to Central Asia in 2000, as I mentioned earlier. At that time, a sense of hope and direction seemed to be absent. Today, the situation is drastically different. The emerging sense of national purpose and growth is truly inspiring. The “O‘zbekistonlik” project exemplifies this confidence across various sectors, encompassing the arts, science, literature, and theater. It showcases Uzbekistan to the world, celebrating your identity and accomplishments.

After over 160 years of suppression of your history, culture, and language, you are rightfully celebrating your independence, history, and culture today–working towards building a country that is stronger, fairer, and more prosperous for future generations. This is truly a wonderful development. In support of this, we wish to share the best of Britain while also learning from the talented and bright individuals in Uzbekistan. Our goal is to be partners in shaping a more prosperous, fairer, and kinder world–one where all countries uphold the UN Charter and where “might is not right.” A world in which we collaborate on the significant challenges of our time, such as climate change and the pursuit of Sustainable Development Goals, particularly concerning poverty, education, and gender equality. Daily, I witness and celebrate the strengthening of friendship between our peoples, businesses, and governments.

I have already highlighted the highly skilled workforce in Uzbekistan, particularly in initiatives like “O‘zbekistonlik” where your talented labor force emerges as natural partners across various fields, including finance, science, education, the creative industries, and agriculture.

But impressively, thousands of migrant workers travel to the UK, and upon their return, many invest the money they earned to enhance opportunities for their families. This is enabling Uzbekistanis to have increasingly more options for overseas employment.

There are numerous outstanding universities worldwide. However, if you examine the rankings of the top 10 universities globally today, three or four of them are in the UK: Oxford, Cambridge, Imperial College London, and UCL. Additionally, there are many more within the top 100. Studying at UK universities often means learning from some of the world’s leading experts in your chosen field. Consequently, your peer group will likely consist of future leaders in your field from around the globe. You will enhance your English language skills while immersing yourself in Britain’s rich culture and history.

PROPOSALS FOR IMPROVED TASHKENT

I. Go electric–this would be my initial suggestion. It’s impressive to see the progress in electric initiatives, but further advancements would be beneficial.

II. Enhance air quality–this would provide a quick improvement for the health and overall well-being of the population.

III. Enforcing traffic regulations will lead to improved road safety and reduced congestion.

IV. Establish a consistent rule for roundabouts and ensure enforcement. Introducing more roundabouts will enhance traffic flow once everyone understands the rules.

V. A new airport is necessary. With increasing tourist numbers each year, the airport must expand to accommodate them. Britain is a world leader in airport design, construction, and operation, and we would be pleased to collaborate on this.

VI. I love the metro–it is excellent. However, I believe there is potential for modernization to encourage more people to use it instead of cars. You could explore ways to increase passenger numbers and improve the overall passenger experience as well.





FLIGHT OF DREAMS

NOVEMBER 7. 16:40. TASHKENT INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT. AIR TEMPERATURE: 7°C– BITTERLY COLD. THE MANAGEMENT OF UZBEKISTAN AIRWAYS, JOURNALISTS, AND AIRPORT STAFF DRESSED IN GREEN UNIFORMS ARE ALL GATHERED, THEIR GAZES FIXED ON THE HORIZON. THEY ARE SEARCHING THROUGH THE DENSE CLOUDS FOR SOME SIGN OF WHAT'S TO COME... FINALLY! THE ANTICIPATED AIRCRAFT'S FUSELAGE TOUCHES THE GROUND.

FIREFIGHTING VEHICLES HAVE POSITIONED THEMSELVES ON EITHER SIDE OF THE RUNWAY. THEY STARTED SPRAYING WATER UPWARDS, CREATING A MIST. THE ARCS CONVERGE, FORMING A RADIANT, ALMOST MAGICAL ARCH OF WATER. THE NEW LET L-410 AIRCRAFT PASSES BENEATH THIS SYMBOLIC RAIN CURTAIN AND COMES TO A STOP AT ITS DESIGNATED PLACE. CHEERS, CONGRATULATIONS, FLOWERS, INTERVIEWS, PHOTOS... THE NEWEST ADDITION TO THE FLEET IS WARMLY AND CEREMONIOUSLY WELCOMED.

Text by Saidaziz AZAMOV

L-410 DOMESTIC FLIGHTS PARTNERSHIP GLOBAL COMPETITION

The Chairman of Uzbekistan Airways, Shukhrat Khudaykulov, is rushing back to his office from the airport. Our conversation begins on the road:

– This is the third L-410 for our fleet. Previously, we had purchased two aircraft of this model. These planes make it easier for passengers traveling to remote areas such as Muynaq, Zomin, and Shahrisabz. Today, our people are flying more than ever. The local air travel market has several airlines besides us, including Silk Avia, one of our subsidiaries.

– To clarify, Uzbekistan Airways is no longer a monopolistic company. There is now competition.

– Yes, but we are not direct competitors to our local airlines. The majority of their leaders and specialists are former colleagues of ours from Uzbekistan Airways. We maintain strong ties and collaborate closely with them. For instance, when a private airline faced delays after purchasing new aircraft, we stepped in and leased those planes under short-term agreements. In short, we are allies, and our relationships represent mutual support.

Upon entering the office, we began discussing about transformation over coffee.

– The entire process is the result of the large-scale reform program that began in Uzbekistan after 2017. Under the President's leadership and a special decree issued in 2018, our company was relieved of several of its functions and restructured as a separate airline. Airports were transferred to a separate entity, and a new regulatory organization was established. In my view, this marked the beginning of both our company's transformation and the broader modernization of the civil aviation sector as a whole.

How did it all begin? After returning from abroad, I took on the role of commercial director of the airline. There were over 40 representatives like me working overseas. We brought them back to Uzbekistan and encouraged them to implement the knowledge and experience they had acquired overseas. We lowered ticket prices, increased the frequency of flights, and have been steadily expanding our fleet by adding 7-8 new aircraft annually. As the fleet grows, so too does the demand for more personnel–pilots, flight attendants, ground staff, and maintenance crews. We developed a training system for all our employees, aligning it with international standards while considering the national specifics. Even the latest aircraft models are serviced not abroad, but at our very own Uzbekistan Airways Technics facility.

– This summer, when Uzbekistan Airways underwent a rebranding, it adopted the slogan "Central Asian Wings." Does this imply that competitors need to be viewed from a regional perspective?

– Not just from a regional perspective! It's a message aimed at the entire world. You see: previously, the airports were owned by the Airline Company. Foreign carriers also had freedom to decide whether to fly to our cities, essentially, they provided "slots", using aviation terms. Now, we have a contract with Uzbekistan Airports, and foreign airlines are entering Uzbekistan under conditions that similar to ours. That's where the real competition lies! We operate flights to Turkey, so Turkish Airlines does as well. We also have flights to Korea, and so does Korean Air. This new market-driven reality is forcing us to think differently and implement significant changes within various parts of the company. The market now sets the ticket prices and demands further improvements in service quality and catering.

In fact, by a range of criteria, we see Air Astana as our competitor. However, under the "Central Asian Wings" slogan, we mean that passengers heading to our region from various cities around the world should choose us first. Uzbekistan Airways is the only airline in the region offering a direct flight to New York, and the same goes with Tokyo. We are seeing a growing trend where passengers from neighboring countries fly into Tashkent first before traveling to other destinations.





TRANSFER FUEL PRICES IFRS NINETIES PAST FUTURE

– Isn't the goal of turning Tashkent into a meeting point for East and West, like Istanbul, a bit too ambitious?

– Yes, it is, but we are located in a geographically unique position. We're in the heart of the destinations with a large volume of passengers, connecting Asia and Europe. In fact, we're already seeing positive growth in transfer passengers. By the end of this year, we aim to increase the share of transfer passengers among our total customers to 10%. Our team is aiming to exceed this by more than 30% in the coming years.

– Which specific routes are being connected, then?

– For instance, passengers can fly from Delhi to Tashkent and then continue onward to London via Uzbekistan Airways. Similarly, travelers can connect from Korea to Europe through our airline. To fully transform Tashkent into a hub that links international flights, we must broaden the geography of our destinations. We are also set to reinstate the Tashkent-Lahore-Tashkent route soon. Pakistan represents a significant market for us as well.

However, we face a substantial challenge–aviation fuel. Currently, local supply meets only about 50% of our aviation fuel needs. This means that the remaining amount must be imported, and the cost of imported fuel is approximately 30% higher. Given the current geopolitical climate, fuel prices are likely to keep rising, which will inevitably impact our operational costs and, in turn, ticket prices. Transfer flights tend to be more affordable, and competing in this space is particularly tough.

Despite these challenges, we remain determined to push forward. Our business optimization department, which consists of some of the finest experts in the field, is working to align our financial practices with international standards. In the near future, we intend to raise capital either through an IPO or by selling equity in the company. We are currently 85% ready for this.

My respondent spoke with great enthusiasm about the progress, including the successful implementation of online sales platform and the introduction of new software solutions.

When asked, "Isn't this goal a bit too ambitious?" the response was as follows: "Striving to live up to the name ***"Wings of Central Asia"*** is what drives and motivates us every day as we come to work."

I glanced at my watch–it was already past 7:00 PM. Naturally, the question arose:

– How late do you usually work?

– The earliest I leave is 10:00 PM. Just look at all the letters I still need to go through

The chairman pointed to the piles of folders on his desk. I quickly counted about 15.

– You see, this particular folder was used in our airline in the 1990s. I found it in the office and use it on a daily basis. Why? Because it serves as a source of inspiration. In 1993, Uzbekistan Airways purchased an Airbus A310, "a cutting-edge" aircraft for the country at the time. They painted it in the colors of the Uzbek flag and launched international flights. At that point, no one in the CIS had such a plane–only we did, not even Russia. We didn't have a national currency, and there was a severe shortage of qualified specialists. This is just one small example. Looking back, the achievements of that time were incredible.

Our conversation didn't end there; we discussed the challenges facing the company and the fact that, despite everything, the work was incredibly engaging. Eventually, the conversation concluded.

As I left the office, I reflected on the biography of Shukhrat Khudaykulov: he graduated from the Aviation academy in St. Petersburg in 2006 and has spent his entire career at Uzbekistan Airways. Heading a team that serves 5 million passengers annually, this professional is not only responsible for fulfilling the dream flights of you and me, but also for the aspirations of hundreds of employees.

Ucell

The Whole Neighborhood is Talking about It

Now Oyposhsha herself is with Ucell!

COMMENT

ENTREPENEUR is a strategist

ZAFAR KHASHIMOV



In 2016, the supermarket chain Korzinka had 18 retail locations. "At that time, we held back and said, 'We've grown too fast, let's stay away from the evil eyes,'" recalls Zafar Khashimov, the company's founder and chairman of the supervisory board. By 2019, the number of Korzinka stores across Uzbekistan reached 50. Today, that number is approaching 200. If you ask the company's ambitious team, they have no intention of stopping there.

The company attracted funds from institutional investors for expansion, modernization, and alignment to international standards as well as for building the largest logistics center in Central Asia, covering an area of 49,000 square meters.

Thus, we reached out to Zafar Khashimov, the founder of this company, the biggest taxpayer and employer in retail and inquire about the secrets behind the business's expansion.

EXPANSION
CORPORATE
GOVERNANCE
EDGE
ESG
CSR
EBRD
IFC
DEG
KORZINKA
MAHALLA
STRATEGY
TECHNOLOGY
LOGISTICS
DISTRIBUTION
NATIONAL
PRIVATE
SECTOR
CHAMPION

VISION

Entrepreneur should be able to anticipate the future and have a definite perception of the kind of business they want to create, as well as its potential role in the society. For those entrepreneurs who aim to construct big companies and broaden their trading and operational range, this is particularly indispensable.

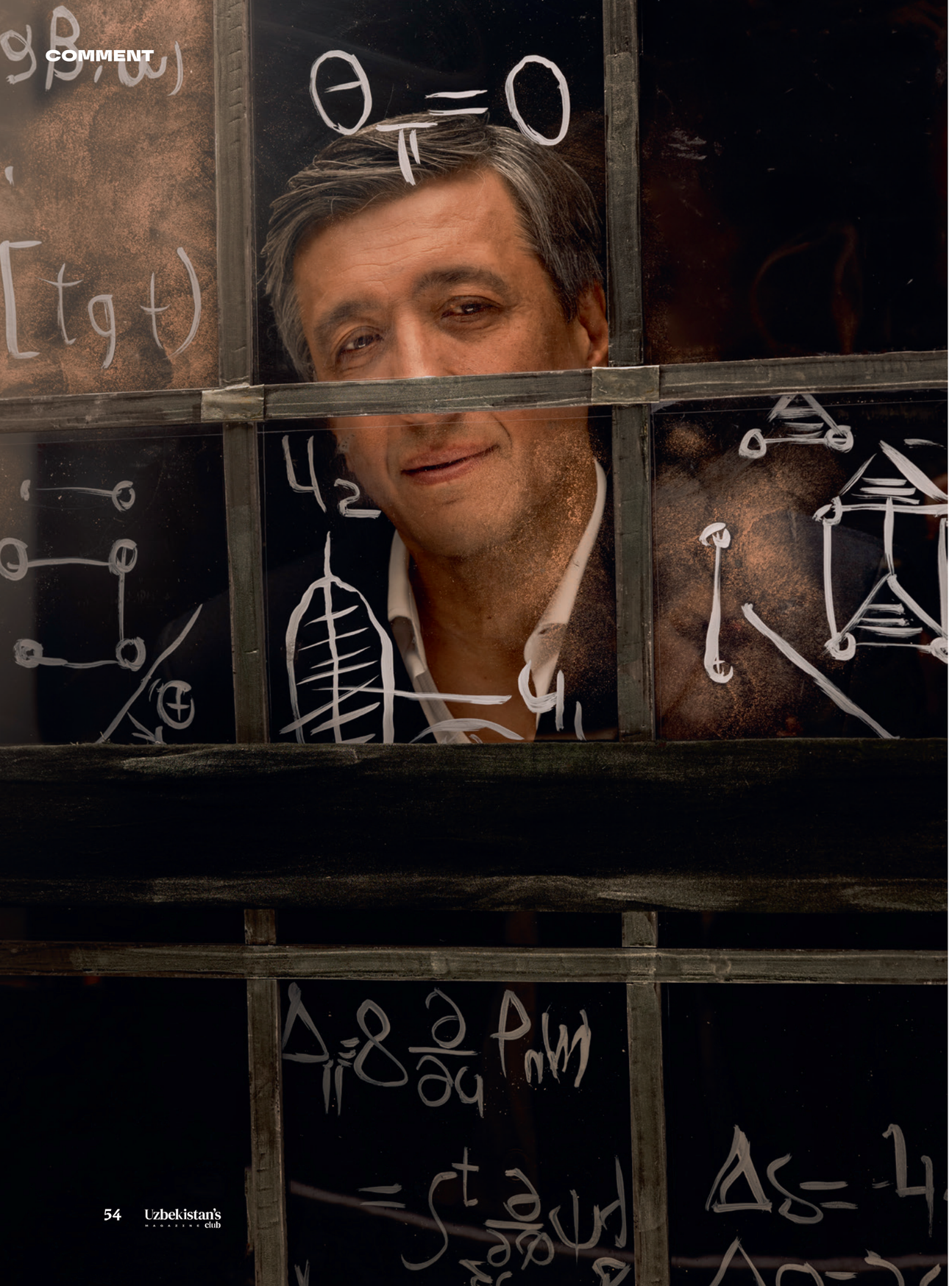
ASPIRATION

I contend that genuine entrepreneurs are, in some way, visionaries. They live immersed in their aspirations for the future.

Business owners must reflect on how the goods they produce or the services they offer can fundamentally transform people's lives, allowing the thought of "How can I introduce innovation and ease into people's lives?" to propel them forward. Only then, they will be able to cultivate a necessary drive to establish a thriving and lucrative business, attract dedicated and talented individuals to their teams, and, undoubtedly, ensure that their customers consistently value their products.



SHIRT
TOM FORD
TURTLENECK,
BOOTS
BRIONI
PANTS
BERWICH
SOCKS
BRESCIANI



INVOLVEMENT

When comparing business management to the filmmaking process, the entrepreneur does not merely occupy a role akin to that of a producer or director. The specific role they play depends on the phase, at which their venture currently stands. Entrepreneurship is an exceedingly dynamic endeavor. At the outset of your business, you assume multiple roles –operator, director, costume designer, makeup artist, screenwriter, and potentially even the lead actor. As your business evolves, you assign tasks to experts responsible for specific functions within the process.

DYNAMIC
PROCESS
OPERATIONS
MANAGEMENT
INTERNATIONAL
STANDARDS
INVESTMENTS
CERTIFICATIONS
SUPERVISION
DELEGATION

GUIDANCE

A successful entrepreneur, capable of soaring with open arms, must undoubtedly be a strategist. They are required to adopt a bird's-eye view of the entire organization, which encompasses various business processes, guiding their team towards the most optimal outcomes.

However, as I have previously mentioned, the natural stages of business development dictate that in the early phases of a company's existence, the entrepreneur is directly involved in the operations of all departments. This hands-on experience enables them to gain a comprehensive understanding of what transpires at every step in the complete chain of processes.

As the business evolves, its primary objective will be to provide the necessary resources and conditions for specialists, along with thorough monitoring. Not merely control; it suffices to place the right specialists with strong management skills in the appropriate positions. Do you wish to grow? Step away from day-to-day operations and focus on long-term strategies and the subsequent steps for the business.

LADDER TO THE FUTURE

Uzbekistan is poised to become a new hub for technology and entrepreneurship, asserts Izzat Shukurov, the head of Yandex Uzbekistan. The company believes that its mission extends beyond merely inspiring a new generation of IT specialists; it also aims to contribute to societal advancement through technological innovations and business support.

IT HUB
PURPOSE OVER PROFIT
SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

I do not believe in a business that merely sells. It is essential for me that it creates value. If you consider, "How can I make the city more accessible? How can I assist a mother with a stroller?" Then it is a different matter. It is about responsibility, about connecting with people. True value emerges when a product simplifies, enhances, and makes life more accessible for people. When you build an ecosystem rather than merely selling a service, you create something enduring—something that outlives you. With such a mindset, you develop an entirely different business. It is no longer about "buy-sell." It is about how you influence the world.

When Yandex Uzbekistan began marking accessibility features on Yandex Maps, it was not a top-down initiative. It emerged from within the team. Someone noticed how mothers struggled to carry strollers up the stairs and decided that this should not be the case. Now, in partnership with the National Agency for Social Protection, we are enriching the map with data: where ramps are located, where they are absent, where entrances are wide enough for wheelchairs, and where elevators are available. Additionally, at the Agency's initiative, a pilot project for social taxis has been launched in three cities across Uzbekistan. Children with disabilities can now travel to and from school via taxi, funded by a monthly transportation budget provided by the government. These rides can be booked through the Yandex Go app, with no service fees, ensuring that all government compensation goes directly to paying the drivers.

I believe that the youth of Uzbekistan is capable of competing with the best in the world. Our talents are persistent, ambitious, and eager for knowledge. I witness this every day in our company. The opportunities are immense, and we are on the brink of a breakthrough. My task? To ignite a spark and allow it to grow. Today, the country is witnessing the emergence of both governmental and private venture initiatives, with an increasing influx of capital. However, the number of startups remains relatively low. This is understandable: our risk appetite is still developing, and there are few high-profile success stories so far. Yet, this is merely a matter of time. The more IT companies and market expertise we cultivate, the greater the opportunities for aspiring entrepreneurs to test their potential. It is crucial to demonstrate that technology is not merely a profession but a chance to transform the world around us. It is an environment where learning is engaging, surrounded by like-minded individuals. Therefore, we are inundating the market with opportunities: from programming schools and development programs to internships and initiatives for educators, as well as competitions like the Yandex Cup.

INCLUSIVITY
YANDEX MAPS
COMPETITIVE EDGE





NEW GENERATION TECHNOLOGIES MAKING WORLD BETTER PLACE

It is essential for young people to perceive IT as an opportunity to create something tangible and meaningful that people truly use. The magic happens when a young coder sees their code in action–a button that thousands click on. To make this a reality, a comprehensive approach is necessary: from initial steps in schools to professional development in companies. The solution? Continuous education that brings together schools, universities, businesses, and the government. This concept is at the core of how we develop projects at Yandex Uzbekistan–step by step, in collaboration with our partners and team.

Mentorship is our trump card. When expert practitioners work with students, the effect is staggering. Add access to modern tools, like AI, and you are not just growing coders, but innovators. The hackathons we organize in several cities show that students are capable of developing prototypes solving real-world issues within a single day. Starting from November 2024, we have launched free online courses for computer science teachers in collaboration with the National Institute for Pedagogical Excellence, which will enable the training of up to 10,000 educators. The goal? To ensure that the entire ecosystem keeps pace with the speed of technology.

PRIORITY TECHNOVATION GIRLS MENTORSHIP

STEM
MOTIVATION IS IMPORTANT

Equality. Women and men. Capital and regions. I do not categorize people based on these distinctions. In our team, women hold top positions. However, I recognize that society has yet to fully accept this, which is why support is crucial. Sponsoring the international STEM program Technovation Girls in Uzbekistan serves as an excellent example. Our team is assisting thousands of girls across the country in taking their first steps into the field of IT, helping them build self-confidence. This is the most important thing. Kids from the regions are not any less capable than those from the capital; it's simply that opportunities are less frequently available to them. I want every boy and girl in Urgench or Nukus to know: "I can do it too." The key factor is desire.

A mistake is not a failure; it is a stepping stone. If you did it wrong, try again. That is how competence grows. The most important thing is to not be afraid. We once built a startup from scratch. I remember the first time I saw a moving arrow on the map–because it was drawn by our specialist. It felt like a pure magic.

So many years have passed, yet I still see our country evolving. We have the opportunity to become a hub for IT, to provide the world with talent, while building all of this right here at home. I have friends who have moved abroad. They are working on impressive projects overseas. Some will return, while others will invest here–all of this is part of a larger process. The key is to ensure there is room for growth. I cannot say whether tomorrow will be perfect, but I am certain of one thing: we have made an effort to make it at least a bit better than yesterday. And therein lies the significance.

POSITIVE
DO NOT FEAR FAILURE
OPTIMISM



THE CUSTOMER IS KING

Today, insurance companies are not only a guarantee of financial security but also play an increasingly important role in ensuring social stability. In Uzbekistan, GROSS has quickly established itself as a trusted partner for its clients. The company has become a leader in marketing effectiveness and has earned high rankings both locally and internationally. Uzbekistan club magazine took a closer look at the company's operations and sat down for a conversation with the Chairman of the Board, ***Otabek Nazarov.***



OTABEK NAZAROV

RELIABLE

COMPANION, PARTNER, ALLY

INSURANCE - SECURITY
CARING - SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY
RISK MANAGEMENT - NATURE
REINSURANCE - UZBEK LANGUAGE
FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS
TRAFFIC - CULTURE
HAYOT SOCIAL PROJECT

Insurance is a Document of Trust

As I have led GROSS over the years, I end each day with a question: "Whose life did we manage to ease today? To what extent did we resolve our clients' issues?" We don't just provide services to our clients; we listen to them. They are our partners, and any sustainable partnership is built on trust.

Currently, GROSS has established reliable partnerships with insurers in 79 countries worldwide. In Uzbekistan, we have consistently held the top position in marketing effectiveness over the years. Fitch Ratings, one of the world's leading agencies assessing financial stability and reliability, has awarded our company a B+ rating. This signifies our status as an organization capable of fulfilling its obligations on an international scale, with a stable structure. However, it's important to note that our company measures its performance not by numbers but by its impact on people's lives.

Based on this approach, we've implemented several social initiatives. One such project is "Xavfsiz Harakat" (Safe Mobility), aimed at enhancing road safety culture across the country. Since 2023, our company has been implementing this initiative in collaboration with the Tashkent City Department of Internal Affairs, the Youth Affairs Agency, Uzum company, and other socially responsible organizations.

Within the "Xavfsiz Harakat" initiative, GROSS has not only raised driver awareness through visual warnings but also developed measures directly impacting various segments of society. LED road signs, reflective shoppers designed for children, motivational greeting cards and discounted policies for law-abiding drivers–all these efforts have contributed to fostering a culture of road safety. A social video featuring rapper Konsta and pop-star Anvar Juraev called "Yashagim kelar" (I want to live) served as the emotional climax of the project. Additionally, during the Tashkent International Marathon, special starts were organized for "Kids Run," "Nordic Walking," and athletes with disabilities.

Today, GROSS is recognized in Uzbekistan as a brand that has introduced innovative insurance approaches, prioritizing human health and safety. Online policy orders, a 24/7 support center, travel insurance covering 160 countries, and a medical partnership network comprising 300 clinics and 500 pharmacies are all evidence of this commitment.





HAYOT SOCIAL PROJECT IS A PRACTICAL SOLUTION FOR PERSISTENT AND LONG-STANDING PROBLEMS

FITCH RATINGS - ROAD SAFETY
SHOPPERS - KIDS RUN
NORDIC WALKING - WANT TO LIVE
SAFE TRAVEL TO SCHOOL

All of this is aimed at improving our lives!

In 2024, we decided to elevate GROSS's social activities to a new level. To this end, the HAYOT social project was established. We initiated this foundation to find practical solutions to longstanding societal issues that have often been overlooked.

This foundation is committed to addressing various unresolved issues through systematic and long-term approaches. For instance, in our "Nature Life" direction, we strive to preserve Uzbekistan's rich natural heritage and pass it on to future generations. Initiatives such as creating ecological infrastructure in reserves, national parks, and natural monuments, developing health trails, visitor centers, and promoting ecotourism serve to protect natural resources and cultivate ecological awareness among citizens. In this endeavor, we are collaborating with Russia's "Zapovednoye Posolstvo" foundation, working together on international ecotourism programs, scientific research projects, ecological diplomacy, and IT solutions.

Through the "Cultural Life" direction, we are committed to strengthening the Uzbek language, folklore, and national culture in the digital environment. Under the project named "Living Language," we are developing a portal for Uzbek dictionaries, proverbs, fairy tales, idioms, dialects, and their annotated database. Additionally, advancing language resources based on artificial intelligence and supporting the Uzbek language through new technologies are among the project's objectives

In the "Human Life" direction, we support people's safety and healthy lifestyles. Through the "Safe Road to School" initiative, we are working to make the paths to school more convenient and sustainable for children living in remote areas. In Uzbekistan, especially in remote regions, thousands of children traverse hazardous routes daily to reach school. In some areas, they are forced to cross temporary bridges over rivers or navigate busy highways. In winter, there's snow; in summer, intense heat; and in certain places, there are no roads at all. We decided to address this issue with a practical solution. After studying the regions, special buses are being allocated to schools. These buses pick up children from their homes in the morning, transport them to school, and return them safely home after classes.

Overall, today, the HAYOT social project has become a tangible expression of our confidence in the future. GROSS has now evolved from a conventional insurance company into a modern brand that has found its place in society, embraced social responsibility, and remains attentive to every individual's fate.

Interview by Iroda Nasimova.

ADIZ RADJABOV

Crisis or maturity?

FACING 40

The art of acting is imbued with unique complexities, particularly as one reaches middle age. During this stage, actors often reassess their professional journeys: the necessity to create fresh portrayals emerges. For a middle-aged actor, this period is often accompanied by both internal crisis and external changes. Confronting these challenges compels each creative individual to reflect anew on their aspirations, capabilities, and future prospects.

Thus, for the middle-aged actor, this phase can be perceived not only as a crisis, but also as a stage of maturation and creative evolution. Uzbekistan's club magazine shares the personal and artistic reflections and insights of the beloved actor Adiz Radjabov.



time to review your life

– As you approach middle age, what changes have you observed in yourself? What are you feeling? How significant is this? Or is this merely a conventional life phase for you and others of your age?

– As one approaches middle age, there comes a profound realization that time is an irreplaceable resource. I find myself re-evaluating my perspective on life. In place of the impatience and recklessness of youth, I now feel an imperative to contemplate each action, relationship, and professional direction more deeply. Reflecting on my accomplishments, I consider how they align with my inner mission and how beneficial they have been to others. Many of my peers are undergoing a similar process, marked by a reassessment of old values and a quest for new meaning. This is not a mere phase but a significant time demanding new decisions that carry considerable responsibility. Middle age is not a crisis; rather, it is a period of heightened accountability towards oneself, one's time, and loved ones. This is a crucial juncture, as one begins to grasp that time cannot be regained and thus should not be squandered on trivial pursuits.

– It is often said that after turning 40, time seems to accelerate significantly. Do people experience a growing sense of unfulfilled goals as they reach this age? How should one navigate this feeling?

– Yes, this feeling indeed manifests itself. As individuals reflect on their lives, they come to recognize that they have not accomplished many of their goals. This realization can evoke anxiety and a sense of missed opportunities. However, it is crucial to overcome these thoughts. In such moments, it is beneficial to focus on the present and reassess one's objectives. Instead of lamenting what has not been achieved, one should ask, "What can I do now?" Time is indeed passing swiftly, yet emotions can become more vivid and profound.

This is the age of wisdom; you no longer allow yourself to get distracted by trivial matters, but rather prioritize what is truly essential. The feeling of having missed out on various experiences may always linger, but it should not lead to stagnation. On the contrary, it should serve as motivation to make the most of every moment.



never back down to fight

– How does the midlife crisis manifest among actors? At this stage, an actor is neither a parent nor a student, nor a young man nor an elder... What thoughts occupy the minds of professionals working in cinema and theater during this period?

– For an actor, midlife is a distinctive phase as you find yourself on the threshold of various roles. You can no longer portray the young man, yet you are not quite ready to embody the elder either. This can undoubtedly evoke feelings of insecurity: "What kind of actor am I now?" However, it is precisely during this time that the opportunity arises for a deeper interpretation of roles.

That is to say, many begin to contemplate how profoundly they understand their characters at this stage. It is a period of reassessing not only your roles but also your place in life. I believe this is the time for actors to redefine their creative endeavors and explore new means of self-expression, embracing these opportunities without fear! This exploration can extend beyond acting to include directing, screenwriting, or education.

– What further insights can you offer regarding midlife and the various stages of life in general?

– Each stage of life is a blessing bestowed by the Creator, and it is essential to accept it along with its challenges and lessons! Midlife is when you come to fully comprehend your values and strengths. Today, there is energy for new pursuits, but wisdom is also needed to prevent its reckless expenditure. Life's stages are akin to the seasons of the year, each possessing its own beauty. Autumn may seem like an ending to some, yet it is, in fact, a representation of life's richness, a manifestation of personal growth, and a preparatory phase for new opportunities.

Interview by Iroda NASIMOVA.

JACKET
MANDELLI
TURTLENECK
GRAN SASSO
PANTS
BERWICH
GLASSES
ZILLI
LOAFERS
SANTONI

@INTERIORS_49

midlife is not a crisis



TOTAL LOOK
RICK OWENS

A WO MAN'S perspective:

DORA OTAJONOVA–FOUNDER OF COMPANY "TEODORA GOODS" AND A CO-FOUNDER OF THE AGRICULTURAL PLATFORM "DALATEK". TO GAIN INSIGHTS INTO THE STATE OF AGRICULTURE IN UZBEKISTAN, WE HANDED THE ANALYTICAL KALEIDOSCOPE TO DORA, ONE OF THE FEW LEADING FEMALE SPECIALISTS IN THE FIELD. LET'S SEE WHAT IMAGES THIS KALEIDOSCOPE WILL REVEAL FOR US!

AGRICULTURAL REFORMS in UZBEKISTAN

FROM MALAYSIA TO AN EXPORT COMPANY

At the age of 19, I left Uzbekistan where I was born and raised, and moved to Malaysia. During my fifth year in Malaysia, my friends and I decided to venture into business with the aim of improving the lives of “struggling students.” We began importing nuts and dried fruits, with my responsibility being to sell batches of 200-300 kg to modest retail outlets. In 2017, I briefly returned to Uzbekistan to renew my visa and decided to temporarily join an export company. To my astonishment, I discovered approximately 200 unread emails containing requests for the export of agricultural products, often in entire truckloads. I realized this was my chance. While in Malaysia, I struggled to find buyers for 200-300 kg, in Uzbekistan there were queues of foreign companies eager to purchase the same products in volumes of no less than 20 tons. I ended up working at that company for nine months, during which I completely forgot about returning to Malaysia.

FOUR MONTHS? NO, TWO WEEKS!

Business often reaches a point where you outgrow your current position and seek new horizons. Eventually, my personal goals and objectives no longer aligned with the company’s philosophy where I was employed, so I resigned and established my own business. With no savings to invest in this endeavor, everything was built from scratch, with focus on minimizing costs. For instance, for six months, my office was simply a cafe on Shevchenko Street.

While developing my business strategy, I set myself a four-month timeline to receive the first order. However, the reality proved to be much brighter–I received my initial order just two weeks later. “And then everything took off.”

Nuts and dried fruits in Uzbekistan significantly differ in flavor, and in a positive way. They are more robust in taste. However, the processes for harvesting dried fruits and nuts leave much to be desired. Unfortunately, we are far from fully utilizing our high potential in this promising sector. Our farmers and suppliers often lack the knowledge of correct technological processes for preparing and storing these goods, resulting in a haphazard approach. This significantly diminishes the product’s quality and their shelf life. A low level of knowledge and competence prevents us from effectively harnessing this high potential.

NOT USING OUR POTENTIAL FULLY



TOTAL LOOK
RICK OWENS



IS IT HARD TO BE A FEMALE ENTREPRENEUR? OF COURSE, IT IS!



FREE PUBLICITY

Is it difficult to be a female entrepreneur? Certainly! It is equally challenging for both women and men. Speaking of my entrepreneurial journey, the minor difficulties often arise from people's perceptions. For instance, when a farmer on our first meeting starts discussing order details with the driver instead of me. Though these are hardly obstacles. On the other hand, the advantages are quite noticeable. I believe that because I am a woman, my achievements attract significantly more attention in the media space. I am confident that today, within close circles, many know of me as a specialist, thanks to interviews, articles, and public speaking engagements. We have been featured on BBC and CNN, and have become the subject of online publications across the CIS, as well as on dozens of news platforms in Uzbekistan. I have never paid for any of these features. Such an amazing effect of free publicity. And it is not certain that if it were a man, he would receive the same level of attention as I do.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE, MEDIA, TRAINING, REFRESHMENT, PROGRESSIVE TECHNOLOGIES

PROPOSALS

The reforms I proposed are linked to a systematic education framework tailored for each type of farmer and household enterprise. It is essential to continuously enhance knowledge and skills. It is essential to enrich the media space by creating more informational and educational content. Investment in the development of educational programs and mobile applications is crucial, with integrated assistance available for every aspect of agricultural production and processing.

As a second proposal, I would create roadmaps for each product. For example, figs are very delicate fruits with a very short shelf life. Consequently, fresh export is highly challenging and risky. The most viable approach is through agricultural processing. I believe that each product–whether it's tomatoes, lemons, melons, or nuts–should have a roadmap outlining its production and sales strategy, along with accessible and clear processing technologies. This way, everyone would have access to essential information that they can practically apply.

Interview by Murad NASIROV.





I AM PLOV

COOKED IN MELTING POT

THOUGH LIFE'S WHEEL SPINS ABOVE YOUR HEAD
ONE NEVER STAYS IN PLACE INSTEAD

My arrival in America was not a mere coincidence. This country is the birthplace of rap; this genre has its origins right here. Every individual involved in rap and hip-hop has long cherished the dream of visiting America at least once in their lifetime, much like wushu masters who aspire to visit the Shaolin temple. I have made several short trips to the United States, but one day I found myself pondering what it would be like to remain there for a whole year–just a year, nothing beyond that. Following my dreams without a concrete plan, I took a leap of faith and went. I visited friends in Florida, New York, and Pennsylvania. Ultimately, I decided to settle in Chicago. With the help of acquaintances, I landed a job in an office and began working for a logistics company. I had initially envisioned myself working for a year and then returning back.

I found America almost as I had anticipated. If you diligently labor and apply your intellect, it is indeed possible to achieve something significant. This phenomenon is known as the “American Dream”– the opportunity for anyone to become who they aspire to be. Many of my friends have accomplished far more than they initially expected, while some could not. Actually, this reality exists throughout the world: if you strive and work hard, you will find your place. A person must possess self-belief and maintain relentless perseverance in their endeavors.

COAT
TOM FORD
T-SHIRT,
PANTS
VALENTINO
SHOES
SANTONI

“I WORK LIKE AN OX, I TOIL LIKE CATTLE TO EARN MY BREAD FAIR, WITHOUT BATTLE”

“DOES MY SOUL NOT ACHE WHEN I MISS MY HOMELAND SIDE...”

My journey has taken on a deeper spiritual significance for me. I hadn't planned to sing; I did not approach it as an artist. I embarked on an adventure in search of a new beginning. You know the ascetics of the past–I was much like them. I set off with the desire to start life anew. I found everything delightful: new friends, new life, new challenges, and joys, as if I were not living my own life but rather part of a cinematic experience...

JACKET,
T-SHIRT,
JEANS
OFF-WHITE

BOOTS
SAINT LAURENT

“THOUGH FATE HAS SCATTERED MY WORLD FAR AND WIDE...”



The most unexpected difficulty was the COVID pandemic. I was planning to return home, but the virus that engulfed the world halted flights. Alone in my small apartment in Chicago, I faced the unbearable anguish of being separated from my children, unable to hold them close or indulge them as I wished. I suffered from loneliness. Many have experienced this, so I won't dwell on the details. However, as they say, “what doesn't kill us makes us stronger.” Confined to my apartment, I began working on a new album to keep myself sane. This album was not about cars, money, or women. Suddenly, everything faded into the background. My emotions intensified, and the album emerged as something entirely different from what I had recorded in Tashkent up until that point. I had the time to reflect on myself, my loved ones, and concepts that had once seemed ordinary. I cannot yet explain why my new album feels somewhat heavier than its predecessors–whether it's the impact of the lockdownor a new stage of maturity. The only thing I know for sure is that everything eventually comes to an end. I could wallow in endless suffering, but I could also learn from it. As it has been said, grief is a choice. You choose whether to suffer or to heal. The best choice I made was to emerge from all these challenges with a beautiful album.

To me, the concept of motherland has never appeared as an elevated or distant notion. Regardless of how lofty it may sound, my homeland has always been an intrinsic part of me. Instead of discussing this here, it would be more enlightening for you to listen to my song “O'zbekiston jism-u jon aro” from my new album, wherein you will grasp the essence of what I wish to convey.

Interview by TILLANISO.

“I SAY: DON'T GRIEVE, MY FRIENDS AND KIN, FOR UZBEKISTAN LIVES WITHIN!”



He is sharp-tongued. No problem or painful issue escapes the venom in his words. Behind the bitter truths interspersed with his critiques and mockeries lies a desire to envision a better, greener, and more prosperous Uzbekistan. We are speaking of the chief "Troll" of Uzbekistan's media space—Umid Gafurov.

Regarding his personality, well..... We shall hear more about that from him directly.

CHILDHOOD

My childhood dream was to become an artist. Those around me tried to talk me out of it, questioning where an artist could go and how much money one could earn. Today, my work still involves creativity, yet that original dream remains unfulfilled. And even if I wanted to return to it now... where would I find the time? My advice to those on the cusp of making a choice is to stay loyal to your dreams; otherwise, you will live with regret.

The Adventures of Tom Sawyer by Mark Twain, which I read as a child, left a profound impression on me. Back then, I may not have fully grasped the essence of the novel. However, the book contains deeply philosophical insights about the essence of life.

THE NIGHT OWL'S CUP

Coffee or tea? For me, both have their place. Naturally, my day starts with coffee. However, throughout the day, I lean more towards tea. Although tea is superior from a health perspective, for me, it's a matter of mood.

I admire those who can wake up early in the morning. No matter how hard I try, I have not managed to make this a habit for myself. I'm a night person; my creativity flourishes late at night. Everyone has their own productive hours.

Now that I have children, I do have some early rising days. However, breaking old habits is no easy feat–I still end up being a "night owl."

WANDERLUST

For me, the perfect day is one spent with my family in a new location. Breathing in the fresh air deeply and letting go of all worries feels truly blissful. The specific country or location doesn't matter much.

I'm most at peace in nature, whether by the sea or in the mountains. I strive to clear my mind of any thoughts during such moments. Daily life is already filled with constant thoughts and concerns, and sometimes it is essential to give the mind a break.



AN UNCOMFORTABLE TRAIT

In my professional life, if someone fails to live up to my trust, I say goodbye. I always give a second chance, of course. But if the situation repeats itself, it means our perspectives and paths are different. There's no benefit to holding onto conflicts, grudges, or hostility. This cannot be a solution. Those who do not deserve your trust should simply be removed from your life.

I am a perfectionist. In the past, I considered this to be a crucial trait, something everyone must possess. My view has changed now. This trait can disrupt business. Risk and speed are essential in business, while a perfectionist might find it challenging to exhibit such qualities. Therefore, sometimes I try to "switch off" the perfectionist within me.

TURNING POINT

The most transformative experience of my life was my years studying in Italy. The country's climate and its people had a profound effect on me. Their approach towards life, their enjoyment of living, and how they are so distant from materialism in comparison to us left me astonished. Italians savor each moment and live fully. You won't see them in a rush; while this can sometimes be a disadvantage, they truly live. Whether rich or average, they all share a love for life.

VALUABLE QUALITIES

A vital quality for every person in life is resourcefulness. While it might not always please those around, only an enterprising person can achieve their goals.

The qualities I value most in people are–humanity and sincerity. I have zero tolerance for lies.

LOVE

When talking about love, I first think of my parents. However, during my childhood, they weren't often by my side, as they worked far away. I grew up under the care of my grandfather and grandmother in Bukhara. I was the youngest and most beloved grandchild. I even learned to cook from my grandmother; she had poor eyesight, so she would tell me what to do, and I would carry out her instructions. From these people, I have experienced both scoldings and affection, just like with my parents.

For me, the best parents are those who respect their child's desires from an early age, see them as individuals, and do not burden them with the weight of their own unattained dreams.

FATE

Sometimes, I find it hard to believe in fate, yet at other times, I have no choice but to trust it. I think a person can create their own destiny to some extent. One should not just sit back and leave everything to fate; action is necessary. I am an optimist, so attributing everything to fate does not align with my principles in life.

INSPIRATION

I can draw inspiration from anyone–from my parents to strangers. From Steve Jobs to our chess champions, even ordinary people striving to make a living can inspire at times. There is no perfect person; the desire to be perfect itself is a mistake.

OTHERS

I would be lying if I said other people's opinions don't matter to me. Every person is curious about what others think of them. However, this doesn't mean you should seek their approval or live by their opinions. It's merely a measurement. For instance, if I post something and receive more criticism than support, it indicates that I need to work on myself. I must have made some mistakes, and mistakes are a normal part of life.

I try to read the comments left on my messages in order to understand how well the essence of my post has been perceived. However, I often lack the time and patience to read everything. In the past, I would take every comment to heart. Now I realize that with 8 billion people in the world, there are 8 billion perspectives. It's impossible to please everyone. Trying to fit into everyone's expectations would take a lifetime–and even that wouldn't be enough.

LIFE

The most desired, yet unattainable thing for me is–time. As I grow older, it feels like time passes more rapidly; it's as if I'm living not for 24 hours but for 14-15 hours a day. It's hard to keep up with planned tasks. I am currently 33 years old. Not long ago, this age seemed like a far-off destination...

Time is the most valuable thing; you cannot buy it. Another wealth that cannot be measured by anything is health. This is also related to time because, as time goes on, health issues begin to make themselves known.

Interview by Tina IMAMJAN.





UZBEKISTANI INFLUENCERS

Uzbekistan's MAGAZINE club

CONTINUING ITS TRADITION OF CURATED RANKINGS AND “TOP” LISTS, WE NOW TURN OUR SPOTLIGHT TO CREATIVE CONTENT MAKERS—BETTER KNOWN TODAY AS INFLUENCERS.

UZBEKISTAN’S LEADING INFLUENCERS ARE GUIDING A NEW GENERATION IN A LANGUAGE AND STYLE THAT RESONATE.

BUT REAL THOUGHT LEADERS DO MORE THAN ATTRACT ATTENTION—THEY RAISE IMPORTANT TOPICS, OFFER SOLUTIONS, AND LEAD BY EXAMPLE.

THE CREATORS FEATURED ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES ARE, IN OUR EDITORIAL TEAM’S VIEW, AMONG THE MOST INFLUENTIAL VOICES ACROSS VARIOUS FIELDS.

OUR SELECTION WAS GUIDED BY SEVERAL CRITERIA: RELEVANCE, ORIGINALITY, AUDIENCE SIZE, AND ENGAGEMENT.





| @ZIYOKHONOV |

| SOCIAL |

KHUSNORA SHADIEVA

| @KHUSNORIK |

| TRAVEL |

AZAM KAKHRAMONI

| @TEACHERAZAM |

| EDUCATION |

SADULLA ABDULLAYEV

| @TEXNOPLOV |

| TECHNOLOGY |



NADIRA ABDURAKHMANOVA



| @NADI_UZ |

| FASHION |

SHAHZOD BAHODIROV



| @THOMPSONINSIGHTS |

| BUSINESS |

MUTABAR KHUSHVAKTOVA

| @URIKGULI |

SAIDAZIZ A'ZAMOV

WE ONLY LIVE ONCE

The sky had cleared, and the sun finally took its place on the grand stage above. The snow began to melt, though the heaps that had piled up along the streets after days of relentless snowfall still stood untouched. Only the pathways where people walked and cars passed had turned dark, revealing the wet asphalt beneath. Even the sidewalk at the entrance to our apartment block had emerged from under the snow–its surface now gleaming like a sheet of white paper, smudged with streaks of grime and rust-stained slush, resembling some abstract sketch of clouds. The same kind of "cloud" was now forming in front of the next building's entrance. Ah, so they were finally hauling away the garbage bags that had been piling up there for weeks.

The sun also cast its warm smile upon the brick-clad, brownstone buildings of Brooklyn's Midwood neighborhood. Yet, the people remained as colorless as ever–dressed in dark, muted tones of gray and black, rushing about with hurried steps, their eyes glued to their phones. Some wore wired earphones.

That's enough–I've had my fill of staring out the window. The cold air creeping in numbed me, so I pushed the window shut with force. Sliding my hand under the crimson blanket nailed over the frame, I twisted the handle tight. Once the chill sets in, it's a struggle to warm the place back up.

When I first moved in, I was impressed by the spaciousness of the room. But then, there was the smell. Naswar. Yes, naswar. Yes, in America. Turns out, the previous tenant–a fellow countryman–was quite the naswar enthusiast. His habit? Spitting the remnants onto the floor before drifting off to sleep. To rid the room of that pungent stench, I kept the window open for five to six hours a day. Eventually, the smell faded–but so did the warmth, and that became a whole new problem.

The city's usual hum had died down, replaced by the lively clamor echoing through the apartment. "Bacheem! Injo biyo!.."

After living with a family from Samarkand for over two weeks, I had started to pick up bits of Tajik. Not much–just the most frequently repeated phrases: Turn off the light, close the door, put away the dishes, hurry up, do you understand? But my favorite one? Ziyod gap nazan–don't talk too much. Hospitality runs deep in their blood. Even when they absentmindedly switched to Tajik while offering me something, I had learned to understand it instinctively.





“Saidjooon!”

A knock on my door.

“Come, have some warm, fresh bread.”

I step into the kitchen.

“Oh wow, this looks amazing. So, you don’t buy bread from stores at all? Too many additives, is that it?”

“Saidjon, if I bake a batch like this, it lasts us a whole week. Buying from the store? Too expensive! We just can’t keep up with the costs. Come, sit, sit.”

The mother seats her two Uzbek-American sons beside me–one is 13, the other 16. The younger one hums a rap tune under his breath, lost in his own rhythm. The older one is playing soccer. I pull out my own phone, scrolling through something to read. It’s my day off, after all.

The boys dive into their usual chatter–video games, soccer, cars, and the latest internet memes. No matter the topic, one word dominates their conversation: “Bruh.” Impressed? Bruh. Annoyed? Bruh. Frustrated? Bruh. It’s their universal expression, fitting every mood, reaction, and sentence.

“Man, if we ordered two large pizzas and some Ginger Ale right now, that would hit the spot,” I interrupt their conversation.

“Facts!” Sheroz, the older one, immediately backs me up, nodding.

Amir, the younger one, says two words in Uzbek and two in Tajik, furrowing his brows and shaking his fist to emphasize that his mother will be furious.

Amir has been speaking English at school and with his friends ever since he arrived in the U.S. three years ago at the age of ten. At home, he switches to Tajik. Now, having to speak Uzbek just for me is an extra burden he doesn’t want.

We agreed that on a day when both their mother and father were at work, we’d finally indulge in pizza and a delicious ginger-flavored drink. After all, in this household, extra expenses, especially eating out, were out of the question.

The boys headed out, leaving me alone in the kitchen. I stayed behind, engrossed in my reading.

From the next room, I could hear Kelinoyi speaking on the phone, her voice tinged with concern. Initially, her words were muffled, blending into the background, but soon, her tone grew louder, more urgent.

As she walked into the kitchen and sat down on a chair beside me, I caught the tail end of the conversation–“Xo‘sh, Nafis, xo‘sh. Salomat bosh.” That was enough to tell me her caller was another Uzbekistani living in America, a neighbor just two blocks away.

“Saidjooon, you are good at these technologies, aren’t you? Can you help me figure out who’s been messaging me?”

I put my phone down. “Who’s texting you? What’s going on?”

“Well, ukajon, someone’s been sending me messages on Telegram… They say, ‘Keep an eye on your husband, I’m telling you this for your own good. Your husband is dating someone.’”

“What? That’s ridiculous. Where did they even get that from?”

She sighed. “I just spoke to Nafisa, and she says it’s probably a scam.”

“Yeah, yeah, that makes sense. There are so many of them these days. I guess they got your contact from one of those Telegram groups.”

She shook her head, exhaling sharply. “Oh, just think about it… How am I able to sustain our family without my husband?”

The younger son, Amir, happened to walk past the kitchen door.

“Amir, injo biyo, bachem…”

Kelinoyi called him over, her voice laced with unease. She murmured something to him in Tajik–something about what if your father has another wife? What if he leaves us? I only pieced it together from Amir’s casual, half-English response:

“Biyi, in scam ast. Parvo nakuned.”

“Scam? Scami chist? Ibiii…”

She let out an exasperated sigh, confused by the foreign word, as if this new reality of online deception troubled her just as much as the message itself.

Kelinoyi let out a cry and called for her older son as well. A heated exchange ensued–frantic words flying back and forth in Tajik. Meanwhile, I sat there fidgeting with my phone, a creeping worry settling in. Could it be? Had Farhod aka really gone astray?

Kelinoyi works as a caretaker for the elderly and so does her husband, Farhod aka. After finishing his shifts as a “xomaten”–his own way of pronouncing home attendant–he drives Uber in his Toyota Camry. For a man whose English doesn’t extend beyond yes and no, the simplicity of the ride-hailing app has been a blessing.

Honestly, I had never met anyone who worked as hard as they did. Both husband and wife clocked in 60 to 70 hours a week, tirelessly juggling their endless shifts.

BROOKLYN, MIDWOOD
HOMEMADE BREAD
DARRO MAHKAM KUNET
ZIYOD GAP NAZAN
GINGER ALE
PIZZA, BRUH



SCAM, TOYOTA CAMRY XOMATEN, UBER 60 HOURS PER WEEK CREDIT, MORTGAGE SAMARKAND A WEDDING GIFT

Once, Farhod aka didn't come home for three days straight–lost in the grind, managing two jobs back-to-back. When he finally walked through the door, Kelinoyi greeted him with an ironic round of applause, exclaiming, "Vot moy muzh! Kakoy molodets. Net slov!" (How amazing my husband is–I'm speechless!)

I had drifted into thought, lost in my own worries, when Kelinoyi returned. But this time, instead of seeking reassurance, she was the one comforting me.

"Saidjooon, hey, don't overthink it," she said with a lighthearted chuckle. "My husband? He works from morning till night. And honestly–this man has a bath only once a week!" She burst into laughter. "Who in the world would want him out there? And who would he even want? He loves his kids too much."

I nodded. "You're right, Kelinoyi. Don't assume the worst. Whoever sent that message just wanted to stir trouble in your heart."

First, she made me and then her sons worry, later she comforted us. Now it was time for her husband to ride this emotional roller coaster: she grabbed her phone and called him.

Telling him about the messages, she demanded to know who this other woman was and why he was cheating. Her voice was sharp, cutting, needling at his patience.

An hour later, she called again.

"Where are you? What are you doing?"

From the other end, a frustrated shout burst through the speaker, loud enough to fill the entire room:

"What do you want?"

Kelinoyi clenched her teeth, smirked, and then, in an effort to regain control, wiggled her fingers in the air and blocked her mouth to avoid laughing. Then, slipping seamlessly back into her role as the distressed wife, she softened her voice and sighed:

"If someone tricks you, how will I live? What will become of me?"

Though he couldn't see it, she batted her eyelashes dramatically.

His response was blunt and irritated: "Is this woman insane?"

But Kelinoyi wasn't done. She turned up the theatrics, letting out a sigh heavy with mock sorrow.

"If you leave us, what will I do? I'll be ruined. Who's going to pay off our debts? The mortgage in Samarkand? The credit bills?"

Her words weren't just a plea; they were calculated, mischievous. She wanted him to know she was playing a game.

Farhod aka had had enough. "I'll come home and show you exactly who's paying for what. I'm not fooling around–I'm working. What a day!"

The call cut off, but the battle was far from over.

In just half an hour, the mystery was solved!

It turned out that the same account had also messaged an Uzbekistani lady residing in Brighton Beach. Desperate to uncover the truth, she had willingly parted with $500, only to realize–too late–that she'd been scammed. What could I say? In America, con artists knew exactly how to prey on people's fears, weaving lies to squeeze money out of them. It happened all the time. With that revelation, everyone finally breathed a sigh of relief. Peace was restored.

The television flickered on in the living room. Soon, a wedding video from Samarkand completely captivated Kelinoyi. She leaned in, enthralled, and before I knew it, she was recounting, in vivid detail, how spectacular her younger brother's wedding had been last year.

I watched the footage with genuine curiosity. A lavish banquet hall, elegantly dressed guests, a gleaming convoy of luxury foreign cars parading through the streets. Only one thought crossed my mind–utterly breathtaking.

And I found out that Kelinoyi paid a couple of thousands of dollars for her favorite singer to perform at the wedding.

To my question that slipped out of my mouth: "Isn't it too expensive?", she replied: "Saidjooon, we only live once, we have to savor the moments!.."

I headed to my room and pushed the window open once more. The streets had come to life, glowing with fresh energy. At the car washing stations, vehicles queued up one after another. Cars whizzed by in both directions, people exchanged hurried words, dogs barked, birds sang, and the stores were bustling with customers. Mexican laborers–the tireless amigos–unloaded crates of goods from delivery trucks, their movements steady, relentless. Brooklyn, as always, was performing its usual symphony.

Thinking about how impossible it is to keep my high-ceilinged room warm, I shut the window again, sealing off the crisp Brooklyn air.

And I unwillingly repeated the words that I heard earlier: we only live once, we have to savor the moments...

** Kelinoyi– a respectful Uzbek term used to address an older woman, especially the wife of an older man in the community.*



First-rate HOSPITALITY

What does a guest expect from a five-star hotel? Certainly, they anticipate experiencing a high-class service that meets international standards, alongside feeling the essence of national cultural spirit.
In a conversation with Uzbekistan's club, Eric Seiler, Area general manager at InterContinental Hotels Group, shared insights into process of creating an atmosphere of exceptional hospitality in one of the country's leading hotels, striving for such harmony in his work.

GUEST = FAMILY MEMBER

Uzbekistan possesses a rich culture of hospitality. According to Uzbek customs, a guest is welcomed as a family member. This unique approach is referred to as “mehmondo'stlik.” From the warm greeting of guests to the thoughtfully planned gestures of our team, every aspect of customer interaction reflects this spirit of hospitality.

We subtly yet memorably incorporate national cultural elements, such as locally inspired design, traditional Uzbek culinary offerings at breakfast, upon check-in or in-room amenities. This approach allows guests to connect authentically with Uzbekistan's heritage while enjoying luxury.

UNFORGETTABLE MEMORIES = LUXURY

One of the crucial elements for the high-level service expected from a five-star hotel lies in its staff. When selecting personnel, the factors I pay attention to include their appropriate attitude towards their responsibilities, enthusiasm, and a strong commitment to delivering exceptional service. We seek team members who are naturally hospitable and understand that luxury is about creating memorable and incredible experiences.

We invest in comprehensive training programs for our staff, which not only refine their service skills but also build an understanding of luxury expectations and our brand values. Retention is achieved through a supportive work environment, opportunities for growth, and recognition of outstanding service, fostering a sense of pride and belonging in our team.

What drives motivation? Purpose and recognition. I prioritize open communication and daily feedback, celebrating achievements of our staff while encouraging continuous development. To this end, we have implemented various programs, ranging from appropriate service incentives like the “Employee of the Month” award to opportunities for cross-departmental experiences. Furthermore, we cultivate a strong team spirit through shared goals, hosting regular team-building events, and creating an environment where everyone feels empowered to go the extra mile.

QUALITY = LOYALTY

The guest expects a personalized approach, seamless impressions, and a meaningful connection with local culture. Our aim is to exceed these expectations through attention to detail, offering personalized interactions, and providing unique impressions that highlight Uzbekistan's beauty and heritage.

Consistency in delivering on promises is crucial, as is the ability to surprise and delight guests in ways they didn't anticipate. A deep commitment to quality and service excellence fosters customer loyalty, often leading to positive word-of-mouth recommendations.

In creating lasting impressions for guests, the key is to integrate Uzbek elements thoughtfully, so they complement rather than compete with global luxury standards. We maintain rigorous quality control to ensure brand standards are met across all areas–from housekeeping to dining. At the same time, we blend Uzbek design, flavors, and customs into these offerings. For example, rooms feature locally crafted picture frames, and our dining options include traditional Uzbek dishes prepared with premium ingredients, creating an experience that is luxurious yet uniquely grounded in Uzbek heritage.

HOSPITALITY
SERVICE
A MEMORABLE
EXPERIENCE
NATIONALITY AND
MODERNITY





FIVE PORTRAITS OF MOHIRA MULLAJANOVA

MOHIRA MULLAJANOVA IS A YOUNG ARTIST FROM UZBEKISTAN WHOSE WORKS ARE EASILY RECOGNIZED AT EXHIBITIONS AND ON THE WALLS OF FORWARD-THINKING COLLECTORS' HOMES. THE WALLS, ILLUMINATED BY A WARM YELLOW GLOW, AND THE WHITE COLUMNS OF BUILDINGS ALONG SHOTA RUSTAVELI AND NUKUS STREETS BY HER HAVE BECOME ICONIC AMONG ART ENTHUSIASTS IN TASHKENT. THE ETHEREAL IMAGES AND SURREAL THEMES BOLDLY CAPTURE ATTENTION IN EXHIBITION SPACES.

Uzbekistan's club grew curious: who is the individual behind the paintbrush? What insights might we uncover by looking deeper into the artist's world? To satisfy this curiosity, we decided to craft our own portraits of Mohira. We asked her to reflect on five of her most striking childhood memories–those experiences that occur once but stick in your mind forever. It raises the question of why these specific memories? Dive into our portraits, and then take a moment to close your eyes and call forth your own "stuck pearls,"–those cherished fragments from your childhood that remain etched in your memory.

#1 THE HONEY RENAISSANCE.

I have always had a passion for creativity. It is wonderful that my parents consistently provided me with stationery and art supplies. Do you remember those watercolor paints from the brand "Gamma" that could be found nearly in every school? Everyone seemed to have them. They were always labeled as "honey." I could never quite grasp why they were called "honey." This curiosity gnawed at me throughout my childhood, making me restless. Eventually, I resolved to satisfy my curiosity and tasted them. To my surprise, they were indeed sweet–honey-like. That was a closure of sorts for me. Yet, I still find myself wondering what they are made of and whether they actually contain honey.

DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA?

#2 PORTRAIT PINK TASHKENT.

This is my earliest and most vivid childhood memory. It is of the pink sky during winter in Tashkent. As a child, you don't fully comprehend whether it's cold outside or hot. You simply dress as your parents instruct you. However, I distinctly remember the sky, the setting sun. It was twilight–not yet night. The sky was a brilliant shade of pink, almost aflame. Snow was falling as I walked along the street, everything around me was blanketed in white. There was only one path, next to the hot water pipeline, which usually remained snow-free. Yet that day, it was covered too. I realized it was incredibly cold outside, but I felt a sense of magic within me beneath that vivid pink sky.

ARE YOU HAPPY NOW?

#3 PORTRAIT VHS COMFORT.

This is my second most vivid memory. One evening, my sister and I started watching cartoons on VHS-tapes. It felt like such a marvel to us! But besides the cartoons themselves, or perhaps even more than that–what enchanted me was the smell of the tape. We had this bulky, unattractive black player. And when you pulled a tape out of it... it would practically spit it out. The scent would hit you immediately. The scent of warm film. I loved it! That heated plastic smell. I also enjoyed the sounds of that player, especially when you fast-forward or rewound. It was a whole world that is now irretrievably lost.

WOULDN'T YOU LIKE TO REWIND YOUR LIFE LIKE YOU COULD WITH THOSE OLD VHS-PLAYERS?





#4 PORTRAIT ASK ME.

This memory isn't particularly pleasant, but it's very strong. I grew up in the '90s and early 2000s, and back then, the concept of respecting personal space was almost non-existent! Not just for children, but even for adults. It drove me absolutely crazy! Whenever we visited someone's house with my parents, or when people came over to ours, all these unfamiliar adults would just swoop in to hug and kiss without asking. Of course, I appreciated the love and care from those I held dear. But with many people, I wasn't comfortable with that kind of contact. I felt it very acutely. I deeply respect cultures where it's customary to ask for permission. "May I give you a hug?" I believe all children should be taught to protect their personal space from a young age.

DID YOU EVER FEEL UNCOMFORTABLE IN SUCH SITUATIONS WHEN YOU WERE A KID?

#5 PORTRAIT MOM'S DINNER.

My mother dedicated her entire life to our family–us, the kids. I also have a younger sister, just two years apart from me. Every evening, mom prepared us a fresh dinner. We never reheated food. I have to come to realize that this came from a deep sense of love. I understand now that cooking for a family every day is a significant luxury. I can't manage it myself. I try to cook for a few days at a time. But our mom would cook no matter what the circumstances were. We would all gather together as a family for dinner, discussing the day's events. Now I understand what a luxury it is to see every family member around the table each evening. It provides you with a sense of support, inner strength. It lights a spark within you. You know that at home, you are awaited and loved. They say that a woman creates the atmosphere in a home, and now, as I reflect on my mom, my grandmothers, and my aunt, I realize that all their efforts were worth it. I learned so much from them.

DO YOU REMEMBER THE TASTE OF YOUR MOM'S DINNERS?

Interview by Nikita MAKARENKO.

The yard of the iconic Trilliant complex in the heart of Tashkent. September 26, 2024. The flags of various foreign nations before the entrance to the InterContinental Hotel are replaced by the ensign of Uzbekistan's club NGO.

O'zbekistonlik International Forum is taking place inside of it. The fourth in a row, the has previously welcomed Uzbekistanis in Berlin in 2022, and in Paris and London in 2023.

TASHKENT FORUM
O'ZBEKISTONLIK 2024

THE AGENDA OF THE O‘ZBEKISTONLIK INTERNATIONAL FORUM UNFOLDED AS FOLLOWS:





- LAUNCH OF UZBEKISTAN’S CLUB MAGAZINE #2 ISSUE
- OLTIN CHINOR (GOLDEN SYCAMORE) NATIONAL ESG AWARD CEREMONY
- UNVEILING OF THE TOP 10 UZBEKISTANI SCHOLARS BY UZBEKISTAN’S CLUB MAGAZINE
- VIDEO REPORT OF THE QONIMDA G‘ALABA (VICTORY IN MY BLOOD) PROJECT
- NETWORKING BREAK
- PREMIERE OF THE EPISODE 5 OF O‘ZBEKISTONLIK DOCUMENTARY

MAGAZINE PRESENTATION



The process of creating content for the magazine and formatting its layout is both extensive and complex. However, working on its cover is a far more intricate task, requiring special attention and a refined sense of style.

Our magazine’s covers have displayed some of the most gifted individuals. However, within the dynamic community of Uzbekistanis, selecting just one person for the cover always leaves us with a sense of unfulfilled aspiration.

If only we could feature all the nation’s intellectuals and Uzbekistanis on the cover!

To partially fulfill this intention, we installed a mock-up of our cover at the entrance to the hall hosting the magazine’s presentation.

We also organized an interactive presentation about the bold experiments we introduced in the previous issue.



THOUGHTS
IDEAS
INTERESTING
PERSONALITIES
MASTERPIECES
FINE ARTS







In the magazine's first issue, Hot Topic rubric included an article about CSR and we announced a ranking of the TOP 7 socially responsible companies. By the second issue, this initiative had evolved into the Oltin Chinor (Golden Sycamore) National Award.

So, during the forum, we handed the awards to its first-ever winners.

We believe that establishing and publishing these rankings will inspire a new generation of entrepreneurs and companies to engage in initiatives benefiting society and the environment. Therefore, in collaboration with the Center for Progressive Reforms, we identified leading companies in Uzbekistan actively implementing ESG and CSR practices for the second issue of our magazine.

At the forum, we also introduced the TOP 20 Uzbekistani scholars, selected by our editorial team. A video presentation showcased the "Qonimda G'alaba" ("Victory in My Blood") project, which has reached millions, along with our innovative efforts to support Uzbekistan's Olympic football team at an even higher and creative level.

OLTIN CHINOR



BUSINESS
C-SUITE
SCHOLARS
PUBLIC FIGURES
ATHLETES
SHOWCASE
ARTS
MEDIA
NETWORKING
PREMIER



O'ZBEKISTONLIK: EPISODE 5



A cherished tradition of the O'zbekistonlik forums is the premiere of the documentary film series of the same name. The fifth episode featured Botir Kobilov, a Harvard University doctoral candidate, and Farogat Eshbekova, a cybersecurity expert at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.



Uzbekistan's club
MAGAZINE

TO BUILD A NATION OF TALENTS

UZBEKISTAN

LAND OF TALENTS