

President Shavkat Mirziyoyev's speech at the Independence Day central festive event in Tashkent



Dear compatriots!

Distinguished guests!

Ladies and gentlemen!

Let me earnestly congratulate you and – in your person – the entire multiethnic nation of Uzbekistan on the great holiday – Independence Day.

Twenty-eight years ago, the First President of the country, Islam Abduganievich Karimov, announced the state independence of Uzbekistan to our people and the world community.

Within a fairly brief historical period, Uzbekistan has passed a difficult and at the same time glorious path of independent development.

And today we have every reason to say with great pride: our courageous and perseverant people, despite the thorniest of trials, have shown unbending will and faith to the chosen path of independence.

Currently, Uzbekistan has decisively entered a new stage in its development. In the process of modernization of the country, ensuring human rights and freedoms, the rule of law, a new, democratic face of Uzbekistan is emerging. The guiding force for us on this road is the priority idea “From national revival to national progress” embedded in the Actions Strategy.

We believe that securing national progress envisages raising the country to a new, higher level of development, radically improving the quality of life.

Relying on the abilities, strength and prowess of our people and state, rationally using the natural wealth of our land, we are confidently moving towards our goals.

Dear meeting participants!

I would like to stress that no matter what reforms we carry out today, no matter what new projects we implement – all of them seek to further our only, most critical objective. It envisions to ensure decent living standards for our noble and hardworking people, to meet the confidence of compatriots by sequentially addressing all the pressing challenges.

Meanwhile, we all understand that it is impossible to achieve such lofty goals with pompous words alone. Such important tasks are solved only by persistent, difficult and selfless work.

In recent years, extensive efforts have been undertaken to improve public administration and the judicial system, bolster the country's defense power, and switch to a real market economy.

Wide opportunities are created for the development of entrepreneurship and private property. Macroeconomic stability is being provided for.

Fundamental agricultural reforms are underway. This year, adverse weather conditions notwithstanding, our skilled farmers and dehkans have displayed impressive results in many directions.

I consider it my duty to use this opportunity to cordially congratulate agriculture representatives on the high achievements that contribute to growth in the welfare of the population.

Dear friends!

A unique system of social development is being created in our country. Actively participating in the implementation of programs like "Obod Qishloq" and "Obod Mahalla", "Youth Are Our Future", "Five Initiatives", our people begin to think and work in a new way. Thanks to this, the appearance of hundreds of districts, towns and villages is radically changing.

You are also well aware of the great positive changes in the fields of science, education and enlightenment, healthcare, culture and sports.

The system of 11-year school education has been restored. The advancement of school education is becoming a nationwide task, a nationwide movement.

Today, the sphere of higher education is dynamically developing in the country. In the last three years alone, 35 new higher education institutions have been opened, their total number has reached 112. Worth noting is that 13 of them are branches of prestigious foreign universities.

Our focus is on boosting the material and technical base and human resources of the healthcare sector. A lot of new medical institutions, family clinics, medical centers, including private ones, are being created across Uzbekistan.

In recent years, social protection of low-income families, persons with disabilities, youth, women and the elderly has become a priority direction of government policy. For this purpose, the Medical and Social Services Agency and the Foundation for the Support for Persons with Disabilities were set up.

One of the most critical challenges for us is to ensure employment of the population, especially youth and women. It is this task that underlies all our economic and social programs, major investment projects, as well as measures taken to promote the services sector.

It would not be an exaggeration to say that a new stage has begun in our country in solving the problem of housing, which for many years had remained quite acute for us.

Enormous transformation is also taking place in the cultural life of our nation. The first International Forum of Maqom Art was successfully held in Shahrisabz as well as the International Bakhshi Art Festival in Termez. Held recently in Samarkand, the Sharq Taronalari International Music Festival once again demonstrated to the world our unique classical art. Along with this, the International Festival of Applied

Arts will be held in September this year in Kokand for the first time.

For us, work in the field of spirituality and enlightenment is inextricably linked with patriotic education and is a matter of honor. One who has high moral qualities always lives with love for the Motherland. After all, such vivid human qualities are primarily manifest in selfless service to their country and people.

The broad support by the public, especially young people, for our practical efforts on this front shows how much spiritual education is gaining momentum today.

Esteemed friends!

Uzbekistan has been steadfast in its policy to ensure human rights and freedoms, and it is receiving recognition from the world community.

The country introduced the institution of pardon for persons serving sentences. Over the past three years, it has been applied 7 times. About 4 thousand convicts who sincerely repented their deeds and firmly embarked on the path of correction were released from jail.

The other day I signed another decree, in accordance with which 65 citizens serving sentences are pardoned.

Everyone who sees on television the joy of these people who have returned home to their loved ones, the tears of happiness of their parents and children, is once again convinced that this is truly a good and gracious cause.

Another manifestation of humanism on the eve of Independence Day was the closure of a specialized penal colony in the village of Zhaslyk in Karakalpakstan.

This significant step indicates that ensuring human rights and freedoms in our nation is not a temporary campaign, but a consistent government policy.

Today, Uzbekistan is a country capable of protecting the rights and interests of its citizens, regardless of their location in the world.

Relations with compatriots who study or work abroad are built up, with the provision of legal support for them. Essential conditions are created for those who wish to return home and continue their work or study here.

This year, 156 of our compatriots – mainly women and children – were returned to their Motherland from the zone of armed conflict in Syria, their civil rights were restored.

Undoubtedly, such noble qualities as generosity and mercy are pleasing to the Almighty and glorify our bighearted people.

Distinguished compatriots!

Uzbekistan is currently pursuing active and fruitful foreign policy. Our cooperation with the countries of near and far abroad and international organizations is becoming increasingly strengthened and expanded.

First of all, good neighborly relations were established with the nations of Central Asia, mutually advantageous bonds are being consolidated. Everything has been created so that thousands of ordinary citizens can freely pass through checkpoints at the borders, calmly move around the region, and visit relatives.

Uzbekistan is actively involved in implementing measures to ensure regional security, including the organization of dialogue with a view to establishing peace in Afghanistan.

All this contributes to growth in the international authority of the country, in the number of our friends and partners.

Taking this opportunity, I would like to express my sincere respect and gratitude to the ambassadors of foreign states participating in today's celebration, representatives of international organizations, our overseas partners, all friends of Uzbekistan who support us in carrying out democratic reforms.

Dear friends!

In our society, peace and harmony, interethnic friendship and interfaith accord are robust. This is a direct result of all our reforms, and at the same time an important guarantee of their continuation.

The ongoing large-scale transformations, primarily the fact that we have raised the dialogue with the people to the level of state policy, contribute to even greater transparency and freedom in the country.

Our citizens are more active in taking the initiative and together with government bodies address issues of not only personal, but also of public nature.

As you know, I often travel to regions of our country. Visiting remote areas and villages, I study the realization of socio-economic projects, try to enquire into how people live, their mood, strive to help in solving pressing issues.

As a result of such open, sincere talks, we together seek solution to many important problems, which in turn strengthens people's faith in tomorrow, inspires them to new accomplishments. This is precisely our main achievement.

Today, on this festive day, I bow low to our courageous and strong-willed people, who, in spite of severe trials and difficulties, remain faithful to the idea of independence, strengthen the power and potential of our native country, and ensure its stable development.

Dear compatriots!

To be sure, as long as there is life on Earth, it will always put serious requirements and acute problems before us.

For their effective solution, first of all, the unity and cohesion of society is crucial. And decision makers are required to have great intellectual potential and high moral qualities.

In this regard, our well-known principle "Enlightenment against ignorance" acquires special meaning. It is vital not only in religious education and enlightenment works, but also in all areas of life.

We, the leaders of all levels, should not allow ignorance, callousness, bureaucracy in our work, and regard the solution of every problem – no matter how complicated it may be – with careful thought, with special respect for people, their opinions, based on the principles of legitimacy and justice.

Today, life is changing dramatically. We all need to learn to work in new conditions – in an environment of freedom, openness and publicity. All advanced nations live in such a way; this is the way the world community lives.

In order to keep up with the times, we all need to work on ourselves, constantly enrich our knowledge and raise our professional level.

We are heirs to great ancestors, which means we are obliged to be deserving followers and continuers of their splendid deeds and glorious traditions.

Love and devotion to the Motherland, to our people require us to be a model for the younger generation – to be audacious and courageous, selflessly work in the name of the prosperity of our native land.

These days, in the capital city as well as in regions, ceremonies are in full swing to present high state awards to compatriots who, through their creative work, make worthy contribution to the development of Uzbekistan and have attained fine reputation in our society.

Let me sincerely congratulate them on your and my own behalf.

Dear friends!

Today, the democratic processes in Uzbekistan, I would like to underscore, have become irreversible.

I consider it essential to firmly state: in the name of the memory of our ancestors, who gave their lives in the struggle for these bright days, in the name of our 33 million people, our children and grandchildren – we will never turn from the path of independence!

We will certainly achieve our goals – together we will build the great future of our native Uzbekistan!

Esteemed meeting participants!

As you may know, an important political event will take place in our country this year. In December, elections to the parliament and local Kengashes of people's deputies will serve as another practical step towards the consolidation of national independence and Uzbekistan's joining the rank of developed democratic nations of the world.

I am convinced that the forthcoming elections will reflect the hopes and aspirations of our people, especially the youth, and will open new horizons for them.

Today, we see thousands of highly educated people who have studied at the best foreign universities, who speak foreign languages and command modern methods of managing young people. They are our hope, our future.

Therefore, the focus of attention of the state and society will continue to be issues of providing young people with extensive opportunities, meeting their needs and interests, realizing their abilities and talent, helping them gain their place in life, and promoting them to important positions.

I feel confident that our dear children will be worthy of such attention and care of the people. Relying on their intellectual potential, strength and energy, commitment to the national idea, they will glorify our native land, and I wish them happiness and good luck along the way.

Dear compatriots!

Once again, I sincerely congratulate you on the twenty-eighth anniversary of state independence of Uzbekistan.

I wish you all good health, every success in your endeavors, prosperity to your families!

May the lives of our children and grandchildren be happy!

May peace and harmony always reign in our country, may the sky above our Uzbekistan be clear!

May our independence be eternal!

Source