

Expert: The summit in Khiva will give additional impetus to strengthening the strategic partnership and alliance between Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan



The visit of the President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev to Uzbekistan the day before and the negotiations with the President of our country Shavkat Mirziyoyev in Khiva once again confirmed the firm determination of Tashkent and Astana to comprehensively build up relations of strategic partnership and alliance, to fill them with concrete content.

The working format of the meeting, the specific nature of the agenda, the hearing directly by the heads of state of reports from Deputy Prime Ministers, co-chairs of working groups under the intergovernmental commission on the promotion of joint projects indicate the high interest of the parties in the further development of multifaceted Uzbek-Kazakh cooperation, the mutual desire of the leaders of our countries to achieve practical results, designed to bring bilateral relations to a qualitatively new level and give them an even more progressive character.

It should be noted that meetings in this format at the beginning of each year have already become an established practice of informal interstate communication and are turning into an effective political and diplomatic tool for promoting common interests. In particular, in March last year, the heads of state held a working meeting in Shymkent, during which the leaders coordinated joint actions on current issues on the bilateral, regional and international agenda.

During the current meeting in Khiva, which took place in a warm and friendly atmosphere, the presidents of the two countries reviewed the progress of the practical implementation of previously reached agreements and synchronized plans for the near future.

At the same time, special attention was paid to promoting joint projects in such areas as mechanical engineering, energy, transport and logistics, mining, textile and food industries. An agreement was reached on the development and adoption of a long-term industrial cooperation program.

Of course, putting cooperation on a long-term program basis in these strategically important sectors that form key factors in the economic well-being of countries testifies to the high level of mutual trust achieved between our states and the desire to continue to combine efforts for the fullest joint development of the potential of Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan.

Moreover, industrial cooperation, based on complementarity and the use of the competitive advantages of countries' economies, will undoubtedly entail even more active cross-border movement of goods, services, capital and people, will contribute to the creation of a more capacious and interconnected regional market, increased labor productivity and the formation of reliable value chains.

This, in turn, will create conditions for the production of competitive products, saturating the local market with in-demand goods and replacing expensive imports with domestic products, increasing the efficiency of common efforts to bring joint products to the markets of third countries, and in general will strengthen the self-sufficiency and sustainability of our economies.

The ultimate beneficiaries of such cooperation will, of course, be the citizens of Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, since additional jobs and sources of income will be created, and new reserves will appear for domestic investment in economic growth.

Today, a solid foundation has been developed in this direction; investment cooperation is on a trajectory of progressive development. According to some estimates, the parties are currently implementing 60 projects totaling US\$2.6 billion, which has already created more than 13 thousand jobs. Another 43

projects were recognized as promising.

Mutual interest in mutual investments is also evidenced by the growth dynamics of joint ventures, the number of which in Uzbekistan alone over the past 7 years has increased more than 5 times, exceeding 1 thousand units. At the same time, the absorption of Kazakh investments in 2023 doubled compared to 2022, reaching US\$232 million.

Thanks to this cooperation, today Kazakhstan is one of the top three trading partners of Uzbekistan; over the past three years, the volume of mutual trade between the two countries has consistently exceeded US\$4 billion, showing a two-fold increase since 2016.

There is no doubt that the International Center for Industrial Cooperation "Central Asia", as well as a joint foreign trade company, the launch of practical work of which was also the focus of attention of the leaders in Khiva, will add even greater dynamism to trade and economic cooperation between our countries.

Special attention should be paid to the fact that the leaders thoroughly exchanged views and agreed on positions on the development of regional cooperation, the situation in Afghanistan, and interaction within international and regional organizations. This, in turn, testifies to the readiness of Tashkent and Astana to jointly promote mutually beneficial cooperation, peace and security in Central Asia, take responsibility in solving the most important tasks of the regional agenda, and speak from coordinated positions in the international arena.

In general, there is every reason to assert that the summit in Khiva will give additional impetus to strengthening the strategic partnership and alliance between Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, and will also make an important contribution to ensuring sustainable development and stability of the entire Central Asian region.

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