

Tuesday, January 20th 2026

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## Uzbekistan Marks 34th Independence Anniversary in Doha, Celebrating Strong Bilateral Relations with Qatar



Published on October 5, 2025

Document Date: Tue, Jan 20 2026 01:07:09 am

Category: ,Embassy Enclave,English,Snippets

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By Haroon Rashid Qureshi

Doha, Qatar – 29 September 2025 – The Embassy of the Republic of Uzbekistan in Doha hosted a grand reception at a leading hotel to celebrate the 34th Anniversary of Uzbekistan's Independence. The ceremony was attended by senior officials of the State of Qatar, members of the diplomatic corps, cultural figures, business leaders, and representatives of the community.

The evening commenced with the national anthems of Uzbekistan and Qatar, performed by Uzbek musicians, setting a solemn yet festive tone. Guests were welcomed by His Excellency Ashraf Khodjaev, Ambassador of the Republic of Uzbekistan to the State of Qatar, who delivered a keynote address recalling the vision of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev and reflecting on Uzbekistan's achievements since independence. He emphasized that independence is not merely a historic milestone but an enduring source of identity, pride, and reform-driven progress.

Quoting President Mirziyoyev, the ambassador said independence lives in the hearts of the people, and through reforms for the “New Uzbekistan,” citizens truly feel the rights and freedoms they have gained.

The ambassador praised the remarkable achievements of Qatar under the leadership of His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, commending the country's global role in diplomacy, economic diversification, sustainability, and innovation. He expressed gratitude for the strengthening bilateral ties between Uzbekistan and Qatar, noting that relations had reached

their highest level in recent years. He recalled the exchange of three high-level visits in 2023, the signing of the Strategic Partnership Agreement in 2024, and the inaugural Coordination Council meeting in August 2025, which laid the groundwork for further cooperation. He also noted the launch of direct Qatar Airways flights between Doha and Tashkent, which have boosted tourism, trade, and people-to-people links.

The ambassador reaffirmed Uzbekistan's solidarity with Doha following recent attacks on the city. He emphasized Uzbekistan's position at the emergency summit was clear: strikes against civilian areas are violations of sovereignty and international law, and Uzbekistan stands firmly with Qatar in its call for justice and stability.

Guests were then invited to explore Uzbekistan's identity and progress. The ambassador spoke of ancient cities such as Samarkand, Bukhara, and Khiva, which serve as crossroads of civilizations and attract millions of tourists annually. He noted that Samarkand will host UNESCO's General Assembly this year, further highlighting Uzbekistan's role in cultural diplomacy. He described the nation's economic achievements, citing consistent growth rates above five percent, a doubling of GDP since 2017, and foreign investment exceeding \$100 billion. He also pointed out that despite being one of only two double landlocked countries in the world, Uzbekistan has become a hub for connectivity and trade.

Turning to culture and heritage, the ambassador mentioned the preservation of crafts and maqom music, as well as the forthcoming opening of the Center of Islamic Civilization in Tashkent, which will display rare manuscripts including the historic Quran of Uthman. He highlighted Uzbekistan's national dish, plov, inscribed by UNESCO as intangible cultural heritage in 2016, and noted its role as a symbol of friendship and cultural diplomacy.

Education and youth were also central to his message. With over sixty percent of Uzbekistan's 38 million citizens under 30, the country's youth drive reform and innovation. He acknowledged the contributions of Qatari institutions such as Education Above All and Qatar Foundation in expanding educational opportunities. He also emphasized Uzbekistan's growing role in technology and innovation, with the IT Park initiative targeting \$5 billion in exports and complementing Qatar's Vision 2030.

The spirit of sport was another theme, with the ambassador highlighting Uzbekistan's rising Olympic champions and football team, while voicing full support for Qatar's bid to host the 2036 Olympic Games.

The cultural program of the evening featured traditional dances, live music, and an elaborate presentation of Uzbek plov prepared by chefs from Tashkent. Guests also enjoyed an exhibition of handicrafts and visual presentations highlighting Uzbekistan's natural beauty, cultural

treasures, and economic opportunities.

His Excellency Ambassador Ashraf Khodjaev expressed appreciation to Qatar's leadership, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and numerous partners for their support. He also thanked Her Excellency Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani for her role in the restoration of the historic Bibi Khanum Mosque in Samarkand, symbolizing cultural exchange. He extended gratitude to Rosewood Doha, Armasite Group, UltraDecor, Darwish Travel, Mannai Travel, UpDive, and others whose partnership ensured the success of the evening. Special acknowledgment was given to Bekirova's Orchestra, whose music infused the event with authentic Uzbek spirit.

In closing, the ambassador extended greetings to the Uzbek diaspora in Qatar, wishing peace, prosperity, and happiness for every family. He reaffirmed that Uzbekistan and Qatar are bound by a shared journey of partnership and friendship, and that the bonds between the two nations will continue to strengthen in the years ahead.

The celebration concluded with warm hospitality, networking, and cultural exchange, leaving participants with a lasting impression of Uzbekistan's heritage and the growing friendship between Doha and Tashkent.