



15th Annual Trainer's Retreat

'Education – Key to Development'

April 19 - 25, 2013
Uzbekistan
Tashkent | Bukhara | Samarkand



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Human Resource
Development Network

Introduction

15th Annual Trainers' Retreat (ATR) of HRDN was organized in three cities of Uzbekistan including Tashkent, Bukhara & Samarkand. In this International trip we have experienced almost all medium of transportation i.e. Airplane from Islamabad to Tashkent & Back), local Taxies, Local Train from Tashkent to Bukhara, Luxury Buses from Bukhara to Samarkand & finally Bullet Train Afrosiyob from Samarkand to Tashkent back). It was indeed a traveling trip as we visited 3 cities of Uzbekistan in 7 days. The total participants of the 15th ATR were 110 including 18 women that was highly encouraging.

For much of Central Asia's history, the cities of Bukhara and Samarkand dominated the region, while Tashkent was a minor commercial town. Bukhara was an important site of Islamic learning, and Samarkand was a political, economic, and cultural center on the Silk Road trade route. Samarkand also served as the seat of the Timurid Empire, ruled at the peak of its power by Amir Timur (or Tamerlane, 1369 – 1405). Both Samarkand and Bukhara have strong Persian influences in language, culture, and ethnic makeup, a fact that is reflected in their Soviet and post-Soviet populations. The Islamic architecture in Samarkand, with its main square (Registan), the astronomer Ulug Bek's observatory, and madrassahs on the Registan, became symbols of the Timurid Empire's power and scientific achievements. Samarkand later served as an important comparison point for Soviet artists and building designers when creating 'Soviet-Uzbek' architecture.

Tashkent – Day 1

We reached Tashkent in the afternoon, the weather was very pleasant. All the participants went around the city to explore. We had food at the local restaurant and stroll around the Oloy Bazaar - The Oriental Market on The Great Silk Road. It is a beautifully laid town city and the capital of Uzbekistan.

Tashkent / Toshkent is the capital city of Uzbekistan. It is an ancient city on the Great Silk Road from China to Europe. Little remains of the ancient city after the 1966 earthquake and earlier modernisation work following the 1917 revolution. Tashkent is a very Soviet city that has little remaining from its ancient Central Asian past. The city has a mixture of modern new office buildings, hotels, parks and crumbling Soviet style apartment blocks. The streets are generally clean and there are not too many potholes in the city center. Further out, the infrastructure is not so good.



Bukhara – Day 2 and 3

On day 2, in morning started our journey to Bukhara by train that was a 7 hours long ride. During this travel we could witness the beautiful terrain and people's living. Some of the area was mountainous, rest was more like pastures, barren land, fields and we also saw grazing sheep. We passed by Navoiy that is called free land, where govt. gives free land to people for investments. We also witnessed long queue at the CNG stations. It was told that the country has abundance of CNG but since the CNG stations are in shortage, people have to



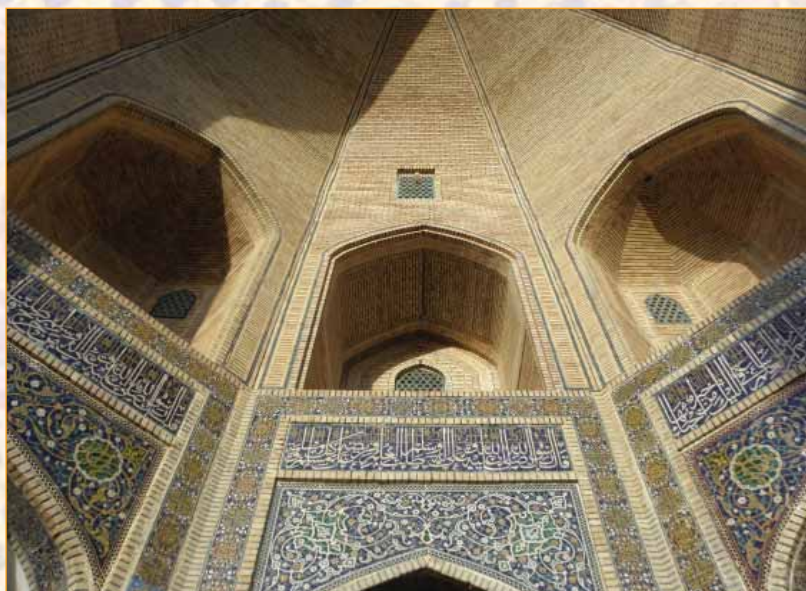
queue up. On the way to Bukhara, we also passed by Samarqand. During this travel we also went around the train to see all sections, including little kitchen, sleeping section, VIP section etc.

Bukhara very well known as "**The Holy City**" due to the richness of religious history. It is the hometown of the great Sheikh Bahautdin Nakshbandi. He was a central figure in the development of the mystical Sufi approach to philosophy, religion and Islam. While Unesco, which has granted its historic centre World Heritage status, regards Bukhara as "the most complete example of a medieval city in Central Asia, with a fabric that has remained largely intact", a labyrinth of lanes of mud-brick houses, punctuated by caravansera, mosques, madrassas and mausoleums, with turquoise-tiled domes, immense mosaic arches and towering minarets.



On reaching Bukhara we started the tour from the Architectural Complex and saw magnificent and historic architecture built on the famous Silk Road. We saw historic centre of Bukhara-UNESCO World Heritage site. In Bukhara we saw the following famous places;

- ✱ **Kalyan or Kalon Minor (Great Minaret):** Uzbek Islamic architecture at its most perfect.
- ✱ **Poi Kalon / Kalyân Mosque (Masjid-i Kalân):** Uzbek Islamic architecture at its most perfect.
- ✱ **Madrasah Mir-i Arab and Abdullah Khan:** Of all the madrasahs, these have perhaps the most beautiful mosaic facades.
- ✱ **Bahouddin Naqshbandi Complex:** Baha-ud-Din was born in 1318 in the village of Qasr-i-Hinduvan (later renamed Qasr-i Arifan) near Bukhara, and it was there that he died in 1389. Most of his life was spent in Bukhara Khwarezm and contiguous areas of Transoxiana, in keeping with the principle of "journeying within the homeland" (a practise mentioned in "The Sacred Words"), and in Omar Ali-Shah's: "The Rules or Secrets of the Naqshbandi Order", and the only long journeys he undertook were for the performance of hajj on two occasions. Concerning his life much information



is lacking. This is not surprising since he forbade his followers to record anything of his deeds or sayings during his lifetime, and writings composed soon after his death, such as the *Anis at-Talibin* of Salah ad-Din Muhammad Bukhari (d. 1383), concentrate upon matters of spiritual and moral interest.

- ✱ **Emir's Summer Palace:**
- ✱ **Mausoleum Ismail Samani:** Exquisitely decorated, domed mausoleum of the founder of the Samani dynasty, the Persian rulers who held sway here in the ninth and 10th centuries. Ismail Samani mausoleum is one of the oldest preserved monuments in Bukhara. This 10th century mausoleum, marks a new era in the development of Central Asian architecture, which was revived after the Arab conquest of the region.
- ✱ **Chor Minor:** Description About Welcome to in Bukhara. Here you will find information, view photos and read tourist reviews of in Bukhara. Chor-Minor Madrassah is a 19th century charming and picturesque structure situated northeast from Lyab-i Hauz. The name means "four minarets" in Tajik.
- ✱ **The Ark - Bukhara Fortress – Regional Studies Museum:** Monumental and apparently impregnable brick fortress with great curving walls, thought to date back to the fifth century. The Ark Citadel in Bukhara, Uzbekistan is a massive fortress was initially built and occupied around the 5th century AD.
- ✱ **Bolo Hauz Mosque:** An 18th-century mosque, its roof supported by slender sycamore columns, with a substantial reflecting pool along its west side. Bolo-Hauz Mosque, located opposite to the Ark Fortress, is the 17th century mosque and is the only preserved monument in Registan Square. Bolo-Hauz Complex, literally means Mosque of Kids' Pond, which includes a mosque, minaret and a pool, was a place of prayer for the Emir.



- ✱ Trading Domes:
- ✱ Silk Weaving:
- ✱ Carpet Shops:



Samarkand – Day 4 and 5

On the way from Bukhara to Samarkand we stopped at **Imam Al-Bukhari Mausoleum**, a place of peace and serenity for the followers. The journey by bus was filled with group jokes, experiences and site seeing. Stay of one and half day in Samarkand seemed small to us as there was much more to see. The streets were green and wide, looked like some parts of Europe. We did most of the shopping from Samarkand including hand made ceramic pottery, handicrafts, fridge magnets, pumpkin decorations and more. We visited a number of historical places, some only from outside due to shortage of time, including;



- ✱ **The Mausoleum of Al Buxori Al Bukhari** located in a suburb of Samarkand, at Payerik. Al Buxori was collector of the sayings of prophet Muhammad and compiled them in to a book Known as Hadith Bukhari Sharif or Bukhari Sahih. He was buried in the place where his mausoleum is located now. His Mausoleum was reconstructed by Uzbek Government and supported by some Muslim Governments, the bricks were delivered from Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. The project was financed by the Iranian government. The constructors and artists from all Uzbekistan and Iran were working to reconstruct the complex. The Green Marble was supplied by the Pakistan Government. According to newspaper articles Imam Bukhari's grave is visited every day by about 1000 visitors from all over the world. The present building was constructed on top of the original grave of Imam Al-Bukhari in 1997, 1225 years after the imam's death. The complex consists



of Al Bukhari's mosque and grave and a museum exhibiting Qurans from some Muslim countries.

- ✱ **Samarqand Restaurant:** Beautifully decorated restaurant with excellent food.

- ✱ **Registan Square:** Also called Registan Ensemble. Registan became the city square when the life in Afrosiab stopped.

Since that time Registan was reconstructed several times. Today it is surrounded by the three medreses Ulugbek, Shirdor and Tilla Kari.

- ✱ **Bibi Khanam Mosque:** Tashkent kochasi (on the pedestrian by Siob Bazaar). The restored Mosque Bibi-Khonym (named after the wife of Timur 1399-1404) is one of best known architectural attractions of Central Asia. The Mosque was erected on Timur's order after his raid of Delhi. The Minaret of the Mosque was supposed to be the tallest.

- ✱ **Siab Dehqon Bazar – Central Bazar:** Best and cheapest for baskets of dry fruits.

- ✱ **Shah-i-Zindan:** Also called Shakh-i-Zinda Ensemble. Another point of interest is ancient necropolis Shakh-i-Zinda (9-14, 19 centuries) situated on southeastern mound of Afrosiab. This architectural complex consists of 44 tombs in more than 20 mausoleums. The greatest Significance of Shah E Zinda is that he was the First cousin of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH and resembles the Prophet the most.

- ✱ **Ulugbek Observatory Museum:** Another curiosity is the observatory of Ulugbek (Timur's grandson). It was located by the Russian archeologists. Only the foundations remain but it is truly extraordinary. Ulugbek was an astronomer, scientist and architect. His scientific and astronomical discoveries greatly advanced knowledge in these fields. The monument is situated in the north-east outskirts of city at the foot Chupan-ata mountain, which in medieval times was called Kukhak. That was three floor round building, decorated by glazed tiles, majolica, mosaic, but it was destroyed. The only thing that was preserved is a part of huge secstant – major astronomic instrument, the lowest part of which was in a deep trench (11 km). Both arcs of this instrument are made of marble with indication of degrees. During the excavation works there were found a lot of remains of other astronomic instruments. Even being preserved partially, the observatory of Ulugbek is unique not only for Central Asia, but also for the whole world. The remains of observatory were conserved at the beginning of 60s XX. Here was also organized museum, where collecting the unique astronomic information and instruments related to Timurids epoch.

- ✱ **Statue of Tamewrlane**

- ✱ **Mosque of Hizr:** Khazrat-Khizr, Tashkent kuchasi. This mosque is one of the ancient edifices of Samarkand was destroyed by Genghis Khan's hordes. It was rebuilt in 19 cent. A beautiful Mosque stands on the elevation at the



entrance of town from where their eye wanders over Bibi-Khonym Mosque, the big bazaar and the mountains in the South.

For many centuries the name Samarkand has carried with it an air of exotic mysticism and romantic allure. Who has not heard the expression "The Golden Road to Samarkand?" Five simple words served as a passport to countless tales.

Tashkent – Day 5 - 7

Once an ancient city, Tashkent today is the attractive and vibrant capital of Uzbekistan with lush greenery and water. A tour of the city reveals modern landmarks include the Chorsu Tourist Complex, the Peoples Friendship Palace, and the Tashkent metro station. Known as the "capital of friendship" and the location of many international conferences and symposiums, this Central Asian city is a unique blend of old and new.

From Samarkand back to Tashkent we travelled by the new fast train called Afrosiyob and arrived at night. We went around the city exploring and shopping during the next 2 days before departure.

- ✿ **Tashkent TV Tower:** the Highest Construction in Central Asia, it became a bench mark for us to find the directions. The TV Tower with its unique architecture has become one of the favorite tourist attractions in this country. Many people travel to this city to wonder at the beauty and design of this tower. To date, the TV tower is the highest in Central Asia towering 375 meters. According to trusted sources, the construction of this building commenced in 1979 and was fully completed in 1981.
- ✿ **Mega Planet for Shopping:** Mall that is owned by President's daughter named Gulnar, who is also a singer with her stage name as Googoosha.
- ✿ **Chorsu Bazar for shopping:** Local bazaar for all kinds of shopping.
- ✿ **Khast Imam Mosque:** Khast Imam Square is a place where the relics of the Muslim world have been collected and preserved in the Khast Imam Madrasah. It is a religious centre in Tashkent and a place for worship for Muslim pilgrims. It is situated in the old city area and surrounded by blocks of mud houses. The world famous Quran of Caliph Uthman - Ottoman Koran has been preserved here.

Tashkent was, and continues to be, a major transportation link between Europe and the Far East. Formerly known as Chach, Shash, and Binkent, most of its architecture was destroyed as the result of a 1917 revolution followed by a devastating earthquake in 1966. Rebuilt as a modern Uzbekistan city, remnants of Tashkent's past can be found by touring buildings in the old town, located on a hill to the west overlooking the new town.

In addition to the 16th century Kukeldash Madrassah and the Kaffali-



Shash Mausoleum, touring Tashkent provides a great many opportunities to explore fascinating exhibits about this major industrial and cultural center in Uzbekistan, Central Asia. Among the treasures to be enjoyed while visiting the museums of Tashkent are paintings, ceramics, and the Bukharian royal robes displayed in the State Art Museum, as well as beautifully embroidered wall hangings and reproduction antique jewelry in the Museum of Decorative and Applied Arts.

After the terrible earthquake of 1966, the town was almost ruined. Tashkent was revived from ash and became one of the most beautiful cities of Central Asia, a cultural, scientific and industrial center.



Official Lunch

On April 24 was the official lunch with **H.E. The Ambassador of Pakistan Mohammad Waheed-ul-Hasan** at Restaurant Karim Beg that was a little out of the city with nice grape wines. H.E. The Ambassador was highly impressed with the participation and discussion. He spoke very high of the HRDN for organizing such an event with learning objectives and considered of great value to the participants. He expressed great appreciation. He also invited HRDN to bring ATR to Morocco as he plans to move on his next assignment. Two speakers **Ms. Anna Chernousova** and **Dr. Dinara Alimdjanova** along with our facilitator in Uzbekistan **Ms. Djamila Babadjanova** also joined us for informal interaction with the participants of the ATR. Participants had a group photo with The Ambassador and Guest Speakers.

In the interactive session with the speakers regarding education system, the following facts were revealed;

- ✱ The official literacy rate is 99%
- ✱ Education up till primary is free in public schools
- ✱ Parental rights of parents are taken if they are not sending their children to schools as per law.
- ✱ Vocational training and degrees are preferred so they get jobs.
- ✱ Both public while private sector in education system is prevailing.
- ✱ English is not the medium of instructions either Uzbek or Russian are the medium of instruction.

Gala Dinner

Gala Dinner was organized at the famous **Bahor Restaurant** with the beautiful cultural depiction through performance of Uzbek culture. After the cultural show, some of the ATR participants showed their talent for cultural performance on the stage.



Food

The country is a great place to visit for meat lovers as different delicious varieties of chicken, meat, lamb is available and in the end one craves for Pakistani Daal Chawal. The local naan looks so beautiful with different designs and is often sold in markets cold. It was difficult to settle for the cold naan as we are more used to the fresh hot roti and naan.

Food serving usually would come in a sequence as salad, main course, qehwa (green tea) and then desert. We enjoyed the lemon tea and green tea a lot and that made us all so tempted to buy the special Qehwa cups and tea pot.

**Conclusion / Recommendations**

- ✱ Uzbekistan is a great country to visit and to revisit our history. Beautiful geometrical architecture is sending millions of messages of Muslim heritage and their glory.
- ✱ The country is rich with Islamic legacy.
- ✱ Moreover the country is very economical to travel and shop around.
- ✱ The trip was very well organized by the HRDN however a lesson learnt from this event is the tour operator should be selected carefully, as they are working for HRDN and representing HRDN not themselves individually.
- ✱ Participants before travel should do their homework of places to visit and act in the professional manner which almost all of them all the time did.
- ✱ It is very important for participants to read all the information sent by HRDN secretariat especially on places to visit, so no one will miss any important place.

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