

A dispatch from soviet uzbekistan



Monuments in marble and constructions in white stones all around”. The richness of the culture and traditions of Samarkand was evidently noticeable from the very first moment of entry into the area. The centuries old mosques and other buildings, the cultural elements and the nature appeared to speak much about the people and life in Samarkand. The mythical story of Queen Scheherazade who spent her 1001 Arabian nights in Samarkand seemed to be justified by the landscape of the area.

However, the political developments seemed never to fit in with these cultural and historical aspects. The aristocratic nature of the rule has been overruled by the Russian bureaucracy. It is true that ideally a shift from a monopolistic rule to a people based leadership must create a socially free living environment. However, the political developments in Samarkand very evidently could not bring forth such changes. A shift of the political capital of Uzbekistan from Samarkand to Tashkent by the Russians created a functional shock in the social system. Though politically Samarkand lost its relevance, the cultural factors still pull the people to be close to Samarkand. It would be right to state that as the political capital moved to Tashkent, Samarkand evolved to be the cultural heart of Uzbekistan. This created a social gap among the people. The corruptive bureaucratic setup is an ideal evidence for this. Corruption is prevalent in almost all of the public based systems. The economic slowdown from which the country is yet to recover is another added contributor towards this cause. The new political setup has opened avenues for newer corruptive sources of income.

The cultural shock that Samarkand is facing is also quite easily observable at all its nook and corners. The area historically had been known for its well maintained monuments and gardens. These had been the cultural identity of

the area. Taking this to account, it is quite disappointing to find most of the formal gardens of Samarkand at the verge of complete destruction. They were heavily infested with weeds and least maintained. It appeared that the plants were crying for water and the grass had lost its vigor. When such cultural icons are left with no attention paid, it refers to the political inefficacy of the prevailed political system.

The country was still getting over the aftermaths of the depression and the earthquake. Poverty was clearly notable in and around Samarkand. People are found to be extremely worried of the ways to earn their daily bread and butter. The body language of the people stood as a proof for this.

The Russian governance system must take immediate measures to have serious intervention in the prevalent system. There must be corrective measures to rectify the gaps in the cultural, political and economic balance. The cultural and historic relevance of the area must not be taken lightly. The distortion in the cultural identity of Samarkand would not be a forgivable offence with regard to its historic relevance. Equity in the distribution of economy must be ensured by the governance system.