

# Tajiks subject to border hassles

By Nargis Zakirova  
IWPR

Seasonal workers from poverty-stricken Tajikistan are facing harsh new travel curbs as they set out on the annual mass exodus across Uzbekistan to find desperately needed jobs in Russia.

In violation of a 2000 agreement on facilitating mutual travel, Uzbek border guards are stepping up physical harassment of Tajik migrants and demanding international-style passports, which most of them don't have and could not afford. Until now, Uzbeks have accepted the old Tajik domestic passports. But the Uzbek ambassador, Bakhtior Urdashev, recently said these are no good because there's no room in them for stamps.

An estimated million or more Tajiks leave home in February and March and return in November. At this time of year their only feasible routes go across Uzbekistan. Even domestic travelers between northern and central Tajikistan face demands for passports because mountain passes at this time of year are blocked by snow and they must take trains that cross a chunk of Uzbek territory.

The ruling would require more than 2 million residents of Tajikistan's northern Sogd Province to have international passports to travel to the capital, Dushanbe. Consular officials at the Tajik foreign ministry told IWPR they had not



AN UZBEK customs agent checks Tajik men's luggage for weapons and drugs at the Oybek border post, 80 km east of Tashkent, Uzbekistan, in this file photo.

been officially notified by Tashkent of this requirement. But Amonkhaji Khojibekov, deputy chief of Tajik railways, said his company had received an official notice from his Uzbek counterparts requesting that, from now on, all Tajik citizens traveling through Uzbek territory by train carry international passports.

Political analyst Abduholik Juraev told IWPR, "From the legal point of view the Uzbeks are right, as there is a visa regime between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. On the other hand, Tajik trains are legally the territory of Tajikistan and if passengers are just

passing through the country without leaving the train, there should be no need for these procedures."

The blocking of migrant workers would be economically disastrous for Tajikistan. More than 80 per cent of its families live below subsistence level and the statutory minimum wage is \$1.30. Few could afford an international passport that costs \$30.

The Sharq research centre estimated that 900,000 Tajiks went abroad in 2002 to find seasonal work. Russian and unofficial estimates put the figure at between 1-1.5 million. The Sharq figures showed that

nearly all came from impoverished rural areas, where many have to sell property and cattle or borrow money to buy train tickets.

Sabir Rakhimov of Dushanbe will be joining his brother who moved to Moscow two years ago.

"I'll have to borrow money. Traveling is more expensive now after Russia introduced its 'migrant ID cards', which you have to pay for," he said.

"Rumor has it we are going to need international passports as well. Our Uzbek neighbors come up with new schemes all the time. They probably think we have loads of money and are traveling to Russia for fun."

Many Tajiks complain of constant extortion and humiliation during the arduous five-day trip to Russia. They all agree that Uzbek officials and soldiers are the worst, insulting passengers and demanding money every time they search luggage.

Analysts note that the difficulties faced by Tajik travelers resemble the situation in Russia's Kaliningrad exclave, where Russian citizens find it increasingly harder to travel to the mainland via Lithuania. They think Tajik president Imomali Rakhmonov should intervene the way Russian President Vladimir Putin did.

(Nargis Zakirova is a correspondent with Vecherny Dushanbe newspaper. This article was first published by the Institute for War and Peace Reporting, www.iwpr.net.)

Ramstore  
www.ramstore.ru

## DAILY GUIDE: Thursday, February 27, 2003

### CULTURE picks

Thursday, February 27, 2002

**OPERA**  
- Jane (Kremer): 7 p.m. Theater of Operetta  
- Madame Butterfly (Puccini): 7 p.m. Stanislavsky and Nemirovich-Danchenko Musical Theater

**BALLET**  
- The Queen of Spades (Tchaikovsky): 7 p.m. Bolshoi Theater

**THEATERS**  
- Three Sisters (Chekhov): 7 p.m. Sovremennik  
- Cardinal's Robe (De Vigny): 7 p.m. Maly Theater  
- Zeroes (Kohaut): 7 p.m. Chekhov MKAAT, small stage  
- The Wise Man (Ostrovsky): 7 p.m. Lenkom  
- The Picture of Dorian Gray (Wildie): 7 p.m. Malaya Bronnaya Theater  
- Ivanov (Chekhov): 7 p.m. Gogol Theater  
- A Little Tatar (Poyarkov): 7 p.m. Pushkin Theater

**CLASSICAL**  
- Cherpantier, Fauc: Symphonic Orchestra of the Moscow Conservatory, Rossijskiy Konsort ensemble. Conductor: Leonid Nikolyaev: 7 p.m.  
- Moscow Conservatory, Big Hall  
- Weber, Bruch, Berlioz: Symphonic Orchestra of the Moscow Philharmonia. Conductor: Dmitriy Yablonsky. Soloist: Maxim Fedotov (violin): 7 p.m. Tchaikovsky Concert Hall

**LIVE MUSIC**  
- Inna Rodiles (vocals) and XL: 8 p.m. M-Bar  
- Vyacheslav Gursky (piano): 9 p.m. B2  
- Crisis Dance: 10 p.m. Vermet  
- Corsair: 10 p.m. Bunker  
- Netslov: 10 p.m. Sixteen Tons  
- Formula-1: 10 p.m. Rhythm-n-Blues  
- Tax Free: 10 p.m. Schwein  
- Revolver: 10 p.m. Art Garbage  
- New Tango Orchestra: 11 p.m. B2  
- Salvation Army Band: 11 p.m. Kitaisky Lyotchik Dzhaio Da (Chinese Pilot)  
- Sauce: 11 p.m. Tabula Rasa

**SPORTS**  
- Greco-Roman wrestling, International junior competitions: 10 a.m. Moskvich Sports Complex  
- Diving, Moscow championship: 11 a.m. Olimpiyski Sports Complex

**EXHIBITIONS**  
- "Resort City." Exhibition of modern urban photography: MOSCOW HOUSE OF PHOTOGRAPHY (runs until Feb. 23)  
- Unique icons and folk craftworks from the Vladimir-Suzdal museum of history and arts. Part 2: TRETAKOV ART GALLERY ON LAVRUSHINSKIY PEREULOK (runs until March 16)  
- Restored graphic works from the 17th-20th centuries: TRETAKOV ART GALLERY ON LAVRUSHINSKIY PEREULOK (runs until April)  
- Vasily Kandinsky and Mark Chagall: TRETAKOV ART GALLERY ON KRYMSKIY VAL (runs until March)

### EVENTS diary

**INTERNATIONAL THURSDAY**  
• **CAIRO, Egypt** - Verdict expected in trial of Nabil Soliman on charges stemming from 1981 assassination of President Anwar Sadat.  
• **SOHAG, Egypt** - Verdict expected in case of 96 people charged in Muslim-Christian clashes in southern Egypt that killed 21  
• **WASHINGTON** - President George W. Bush meets Afghanistans' president, Hamid Karzai.

**WHAT happened**  
1557 First Russian Embassy opens in London  
1594 Henri IV crowned King of France  
1700 Pacific island of New Britain discovered  
1844 Dominican Republic gains independence from Haiti (National Day)  
1854 Composer Robert Schumann saved from suicide attempt in Rhine  
1872 Charlotte Pay, first black woman lawyer, graduated Harvard U  
1879 Constantine Fahberg discovers saccharin (artificial sweetener)  
1883 Oscar Hammerstein patents first cigar-rolling machine  
1922 Supreme Court unanimously upheld the 19th amendment - women's right to vote  
1929 Turkey signs Litvinov pact  
1929 Russia and the U.S. sign a trade agreement  
1930 Bouvet Island declared a Norwegian dependency  
1938 Britain and France recognize Franco government in Spain  
1942 J. S. Hey discovers radio emissions from the Sun  
1949 Chaim Weizmann becomes first Israeli president  
1951 22nd amendment to the Constitution is ratified, limiting the U.S. president to two terms in office  
1960 U.S. Olympic Ice Hockey Team beats the Soviet Union, 3-2, en route to gold medal  
1967 Dominica gains independence from England  
1967 Pink Floyd release their first single, "Arnold Layne"  
1972 President Nixon and Chinese Premier Chou En-lai issued Shanghai Communiqué  
1976 Final meeting between Mao Tse-tung and Richard Nixon  
1991 Gulf War ends after Iraqi troops retreat and Kuwait is liberated

**LifeStyle**

Published every Friday  
www.LifeStyle.ru

### WEATHER watch

#### WORLD CITIES

CITY	FORECAST	LO/HI (°C)	LO/HI (°F)
Amsterdam	Fair	2°/10°	36°/50°
Athens	Mostly Cloudy	3°/10°	39°/50°
Beijing	Fair	-2°/7°	27°/46°
Berlin	Sunny	-3°/5°	25°/41°
Brussels	Mostly Cloudy	3°/10°	39°/51°
Budapest	Hazy	-6°/5°	21°/41°
Copenhagen	Sunny	-3°/3°	26°/38°
Dublin	Mostly Cloudy	6°/8°	43°/48°
Geneva	Mostly Cloudy	1°/8°	34°/48°
Helsinki	Fair	3°/0°	20°/33°
Istanbul	Partly Cloudy	0°/2°	31°/37°
Johannesburg	Partly Cloudy	15°/24°	59°/76°
Kiev	Fog	-6°/0°	20°/31°
Lisbon	Mostly Cloudy	9°/15°	49°/59°
London	Partly Cloudy	6°/10°	44°/51°
Madrid	Mostly Cloudy	4°/8°	40°/48°
Melbourne	Mostly Cloudy	18°/30°	65°/86°
Minsk	Hazy	-8°/-2°	16°/28°
Montreal	Clear	-25°/-10°	-13°/13°
New Delhi	Partly Cloudy	13°/29°	56°/84°
New York	Partly Cloudy	-9°/-3°	16°/25°
Oslo	Fair	-7°/0°	19°/31°
Paris	Fair	6°/12°	43°/54°
Rome	Partly Cloudy	5°/15°	41°/59°
Stockholm	Hazy	-4°/1°	24°/34°
Tehran	Partly Cloudy	4°/11°	40°/52°
Tokyo	Clear	5°/11°	42°/52°
Toronto	Fair	-14°/-4°	7°/24°
Vienna	Sunny	-2°/5°	28°/42°
Warsaw	Sunny	-6°/2°	21°/36°
Washington	Light Snow	-4°/-2°	25°/28°
Zurich	Sunny	-2°/8°	27°/46°

#### MOSCOW 2-DAY FORECAST

TONIGHT	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Partly Cloudy Min: -12°C/10°F Wind: From the Southwest at 3 mph Chance of Precip.: 0 % Avg. Humidity: 80 %	Mostly Cloudy Max: -4°C/25°F Wind: From the Southwest at 5 mph Chance of Precip.: 0 % Avg. Humidity: 76 %	Cloudy Max: -4°C/25°F Wind: From the West Southwest at 3 mph Chance of Precip.: 0 % Avg. Humidity: 74 %

#### RUSSIAN CITIES

CITY	FORECAST	LO/HI (°C)	LO/HI (°F)
Arkhangelsk	Hazy	-8°/-6°	17°/21°
Chelyabinsk	Cloudy	-14°/-3°	6°/27°
Chita	Partly Cloudy	-15°/-2°	4°/27°
Irkutsk	Fair	-15°/-3°	5°/25°
Kazan	Mostly Cloudy	-11°/-3°	11°/27°
Kemerovo	Snow	-14°/-12°	6°/10°
Kirov	Mostly Cloudy	-16°/-2°	3°/28°
Krasnodar	Fair	-6°/3°	21°/38°
Kursk	Snow Shower	-10°/-5°	14°/22°
Murmansk	Fair	-3°/-1°	25°/32°
N. Novgorod	Light Snow	-11°/-1°	12°/29°
Novosibirsk	Light Snow	-13°/-12°	8°/10°
Omsk	Heavy Snow	-11°/-6°	11°/21°
Perm	Drifting Snow	-16°/-5°	2°/23°
Samara	Light Snow	-9°/-3°	15°/27°
Saratov	Mostly Cloudy	-8°/-5°	16°/22°
Smolensk	Light Snow	-9°/-3°	15°/25°
St. Petersburg	Light Snow	-5°/-1°	22°/30°
Tomsk	Snow	-16°/-12°	3°/10°
Ufa	Cloudy	-16°/-2°	3°/30°
Volgograd	Partly Cloudy	-11°/-4°	12°/24°
Yekaterinburg	Mostly Cloudy	-16°/-4°	2°/25°

**THE RUSSIA JOURNAL - DAILY**

Founder and chairman: Ajay Goyal  
(ajg@russiajournal.com)  
President: Sandeep Goel  
(sdg@russiajournal.com)  
Chief Operating Officer: Alexander Yakutov  
(alex@russiajournal.com)  
Advertising Sales: Tatiana Popova  
(advt@russiajournal.com)

..... EDITORIAL .....

Editor: Jon Wright  
(editor@russiajournal.com)  
Deputy Editor: Carolynne Wheeler  
News Editor: Zoya Gubernskaya

..... ADVERTISING SALES .....

advt@russiajournal.com

..... PRODUCTION .....

Production Manager: Sergey Milenko  
Photo Designer: Elena Kozlova, Alla Veseleva  
Advertising Designer: Tatyana Bobkova  
Photos: AP, Reuters, Itar-Tass  
Additional News From: RBC, Prime-Tass

Published by: Norasco Publishing Ltd., PO Box 75, Moscow 125047; All Rights Reserved. Regd. copyright. Registered with Russian State Committee for Press (Goskompechat).  
Reg. No. 018376, Dec. 30, 1998.

Contacts: Moscow: Tel: (095) 959 23 30 / 37, Fax: 959 2408  
Washington D.C.: Tel: (1-202) 797 7911, Fax: (1-202) 318 0561