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Rakhmon Bars 'Toadyism'

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DUSHANBE, Tajikistan — Tajik President Emomali Rakhmon said he was embarrassed by the lavish receptions local officials laid on for him around the country and has ordered the "toadyism" to stop.

Despite the country's grinding poverty, local officials often go to great lengths to greet the president when he visits.

They order expensive repairs to the roads that Rakhmon's motorcade will take, plant trees along the roadside that he is said to like, routinely have children skip school so they can greet him with handfuls of rose petals and build elaborate canopies for him to make his speeches from.

"I feel ashamed of your toadyism," an enraged Rakhmon told a government meeting in remarks broadcast by state television Friday. "Ordinary people, residents of the towns and districts where I come on working visits, keep complaining to me: 'They empty our pockets for your every trip ... gathering money for a tribute, a carpet, a rug, flowers and feasts.'

''What's that? Stop it! I don't need any of this,'' Rakhmon said.

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