



Kazakhstan Switches to Inflation Targeting as Tenge Slips



Prime Minister Karim Massimov (C) and banking and finance officials address the media at a Central Communications Service briefing on Aug. 20, announcing new economic policies, including a shift to a free-floating tenge exchange rate.

By Michelle Witte

ASTANA – Kazakhstan transitioned ahead of schedule to a free-floating exchange rate on Aug. 20 after the currency fell 5 percent against the dollar in commercial exchanges the day before.

The move was announced in

a two-hour press conference attended by the nation's top finance and government officials, including Prime Minister Karim Massimov, First Deputy Prime Minister Bakhytzhon Sagintayev, Minister of National Economy Yerbolat Dossayev, Minister of Finance Bakhyt Sultanov and National

Bank Chairman Kairat Kelimbetov. As the announcement was made, the tenge dropped a further 20 percent and settled at 255.26 tenge per dollar, versus 188 to the dollar two days prior. The overall drop over two days amounted to 26 percent.

Kelimbetov insisted the change

wasn't a devaluation. "This is not a devaluation; this is a transition to a freely floating rate when the market itself determines a balanced exchange rate on the basis of supply and demand," he said. An equilibrium will be found in five to seven days, he said, and appropriate next steps will be taken then.

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Nazarbayev Discusses Economic Challenges with Exporters

By Malika Orazgaliyeva

ASTANA – President Nursultan Nazarbayev held a meeting with Kazakhstan's major exporters and representatives of the National Chamber of Entrepreneurs (NCE) and business circles of the country on Aug. 20.

Addressing the gathering, Nazarbayev drew attention to the difficult state of the global economy.

"The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund have once again lowered their forecasts for global economic growth to 2.8 percent and 3.5 percent, respectively. The decrease of oil prices in the world continues. From its peak of \$115 in June

2014, it dropped to \$48.50 [for a barrel of Brent crude oil]. Prices for metals have also dropped; since 2011, the price index has fallen by 45.5 percent. This year alone, the price of copper dropped from \$6,300 to \$5,100 per tonne," he stressed.

Nazarbayev noted that low prices for oil and metals could remain for at least five years. He also pointed out the sharp drop in demand for Kazakhstan's export products by the country's main trade partners, China and Russia. According to the National Bank, Kazakhstan's exports in the first half of the year decreased by 73 percent.

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Customs Controls Removed on Border as Kyrgyzstan Joins EAEU

By Malika Orazgaliyeva

ASTANA – The presidents of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev and Kyrgyzstan Almazbek Atambayev participated on Aug. 12 in a ceremony to remove customs controls on the nations' border, reported the Akorda presidential residence press service.

The heads of state observed the elimination of the checkpoints between the two countries via a live video link from their meeting place in Cholpon-Ata on Lake Issyk-Kul.

The action is one of the key components of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) treaty, which focuses on promoting the freedom of move-

ment of goods, services, capital and workforce within the union.

During the ceremony, Nazarbayev stressed the importance of integrating Kyrgyzstan into the EAEU, underlining that it meets the interests of Kazakhstan and will further expand economic cooperation between the two nations.

"The removal of the customs border between the two countries is very significant. It will create new business opportunities for the two states and revive mutual trade. Fulfilling the agreements that were reached in the framework of the EAEU, we will be moving forward in the creation of a single economic space. I am sure that we will see real, positive results," said Nazarbayev.

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Pakistan Has Always Sought 'Connectivity with Central Asia,' PM Sharif Says



Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif of Pakistan

By Ilyas Omarov

Ahead of his visit to Astana on Aug. 25-26, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif of Pakistan shared his views on the potential of bilateral cooperation, issues of regional security and cooperation, the situation in Afghanistan, the fight against the so-called Islamic State, Pakistan's cultural diplomacy as well as other issues in an interview with The Astana Times.

What is the main purpose of your visit to Kazakhstan?

The purpose of my visit is to further strengthen Pakistan-Kazakhstan ties, expand cooperation in different areas and increase bilateral trade, investment and economic cooperation. We will also exchange views on how to work together for a peaceful and stable region.

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World Judo Championship Kicks Off at Alau Sports Palace in Astana



Yeldos Smetov throws his opponent en route to winning Kazakhstan's first gold medal in the World Judo Championship on Aug. 24.

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NATION

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 26, 2015

UN Special Rapporteurs' Recommendations Form Basis of National Human Rights Dialogue

By Aiman Turebekova

ASTANA – The regular meeting of the Dialogue Platform on the Human Dimension, a consultative advisory body, was held on Aug. 21 at the Kazakh Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Chaired by Kazakh Ambassador-at-Large Usen Suleimen, the session was attended by Maina Kiai, the United Nations (UN) special rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association.

The Dialogue Platform on the Human Dimension has served since 2013 as the format for regular interaction between government agencies tasked with protecting human rights and civil society organisations involved in the same issue.

Kiai's recommendations and those of UN Special Rapporteur Baskut Tuncak regarding the adverse effects of the illicit movement and dumping of toxic and dangerous products and wastes were discussed.

Tuncak visited Kazakhstan from March 26 to April 8 to assess the country's human rights record regarding the management of hazardous substances and wastes. During his 14-day mission, the special rapporteur travelled to several cities and towns known for pollution attributed to the oil and gas industry, metal extraction and processing, uranium and coal production and industrial emission and wastes.

Tuncak commended the Kazakh government for ratifying key international human rights treaties and environmental conventions, as well as the authorities' efforts to try and find a solution to those individuals at risk.

"However, the government has to do more. These populations



UN Special Rapporteur Maina Kiai

cannot continue living in fear," he stressed. "The pronounced commitment of the government to protect and promote human rights should be made into reality. The government should further its efforts to provide protection to those populations in accordance with international human rights law and standards," he said at the end of his visit.

In accordance with his recommendations, experts in the field of ecology, as well as representatives of the Kazakh Ministry of Energy and nongovernmental organisations, shared their views and read their reports during the meeting on the current situation in relation to the disposal of hazardous substances and wastes.

"In the report it was noted that in Kazakhstan there is no integrated system of waste management, but I would like to say that the country is working on waste management and control of compliance with environmental legislation of natural resources in terms of education and distribution of industrial and municipal waste," said Bizara Dosmakova, deputy director of the Ministry of Energy's Waste Management Department.

Ventures were also announced in conjunction with the United

Nations Development Programme (UNDP) projects in Kazakhstan aimed at assisting the government in solving the problem of hazardous waste and chemicals. The project to develop and implement a comprehensive plan to manage PCBs was executed due to cooperation of the UNDP, the Global Environment Facility and Kazakh government. As a result, 232 tonnes of waste containing persistent organic compounds were safely destroyed.

In the framework of the project on energy efficiency, local authorities are working to collect and recycle resident's mercury-containing lamps. Another UNDP project, "Updating the national action plan; integration management of persistent organic pollutants in the process of national planning and management of health care waste management in Kazakhstan," is aimed at solving the issue of controlling obsolete and unusable pesticides.

Vadim Ni, chairman of the Kazakh eco-forum of public organisations, spoke regarding the difficulty concerning public access to environmental information. He highlighted the issue for individuals to secure information and advised solving the problem by discussing future industrial projects with the population in advance.

Dosmakova noted the information was in accordance with the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) convention on access to information, public participation in decision-making and access to justice in environmental matters, known as the Aarhus Convention. The document, signed June 25, 1998 in the Danish city of Aarhus, became effective on October 30, 2001.

"Article 163 of the environ-

mental code of Kazakhstan, which regulates the right of access to environmental information, is fully consistent with the principles of the Aarhus Convention," she said.

The deputy director added that the document did not include information on the existence of the national report about the current environmental situation and use of natural resources, which can be found on the Ministry of Energy website.

The public's main concern in terms of the environmental safety of living conditions surfaced in 2014-2015 through numerous cases of people affected by the negative impact of the environment in the villages of Berezhovka in the Western Kazakhstan region and Kalachi of the Akmola region, said Ni.

In this regard, he offered to discuss the question about the procedures for recognising the status of internally-displaced persons and obtain the right to appropriate assistance from the state.

The parties also talked about the importance of the G-Global platform, a virtual international place within the Astana Economic Forum created by the Eurasian Economic Club of Scientists, and the relevance of green technologies. EXPO 2017 in Astana will address the possibilities of future energy in an effort to promote the most appropriate and viable sustainability-driven action plans.

"EXPO 2017 means access to energy for all," said Saltanat Rakhimbekova, managing director of Astana EXPO 2017.

The second part of the meeting focused on discussions of Kiai's recommendations, the report on which was presented to the UN Human Rights Council

during its 29th session in June. The visit was carried out pursuant to his mandate to assess the situation of freedoms of peaceful assembly and association in Kazakhstan. The special rapporteur concluded his visit by challenging the government to build on its achievements in the economic arena during the past 23 years by facilitating and opening up democratic space, in particular the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.

In response, Deputy Director of the Department of International Law of the Kazakh Ministry of Justice Alua Nadirkulova said the recommendations have been accepted and the necessary process to further improve legislation in this area was launched.

The meeting also included the presentation of two European Union projects implemented in Kazakhstan within the framework of European instruments for the promotion of democracy and human rights.

The first phase of the three-year project, from October 2013-October 2016, addresses the issue of violence against children deprived of their liberty in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan by promoting an end to the use of child solitary confinement and their effective separation from adults at all times and in all detention facilities.

The second segment is the Kazakh national preventive mechanism.

"The purpose of the project is to enhance the role of civil society in the prevention of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment," said Azamat Shambilov, regional manager of Penal Reform International, which has been working in the Central Asia region since 2001.

NATIONAL NEWS IN BRIEF

Newly appointed chairman of the Astana EXPO 2017 Company, Akhmetzhan Yessimov, has begun his tenure by cutting top management by nearly half and restructuring the organisation, Tengrinews reports. Yessimov, a former mayor of Almaty who was appointed on Aug. 9, has cut the number of deputy chairmen from five to three and the number of managing directors from nine to four. Departments have been merged, bringing the number of separate departments from 20 to 18. Former Astana EXPO 2017 Chairman Talgat Yermegiyayev was relieved of his position on June 11 and charged with embezzlement, misappropriation of property and other crimes. A number of former top managers have also been caught up in a corruption investigation.

Kazakhstan's population exceeded 17.5 million people on July 1, the country's Committee on Statistics announced. The increase – to 17,541,200 people – represents a population growth of 0.7 percent compared to last year. Forty-three percent of the population live in rural areas, the report said.

A new copper deposit has been found in the Karaganda region, KazakhTV reports. According to early estimates, the volume of the deposit is about 1 billion tonnes. Rio Tinto, the world's largest mining and metallurgical company, will develop the mine and has allocated more than \$5 million for the first phase of prospecting. Twenty specialists from Kazakhstan are already engaged in the project, and 60 local workers are expected to be trained. Galym Nurzhanov, chairman of the Kazgeology National Company, said Rio Tinto is developing copper only, and any other metals found in the mine will be the property of Kazakhstan.

A model from Kazakhstan and living in New York is working on a project about her home country, Tengrinews reports. Alena Subbotina was born and raised in Almaty. She began her modelling career at Kazakhstan Fashion Week at 16, then went on to sign with a New York modelling agency and appear in high-profile shows and cosmetic campaigns in Europe. Now, she is working with photographer Daniel King on a book of portraits of the people of Kazakhstan. "I wanted to show that Kazakhstan has a very interesting history and everything here has its own history," she said. Subbotina also plans to organise a photo exhibition in New York. "We have a lot of beautiful girls and models that can achieve success [here]. I am planning to open a modelling agency in Almaty and I want to help them get to world runways," she said.

The youth festival Khan Qoryk, dedicated to the 550th anniversary of Kazakh Khanate, has launched in Ulytau. The festival is organised by the Kazakh National Geographic Society and the Ministry of Education and Science of Kazakhstan. Around 100 people will camp and visit important historical sites in the region, including the graves of early khans. They will also take part in competitions to demonstrate their knowledge of Kazakh customs and discuss ways of developing tourism in the region.

The first Astana Duathlon competition will be held in the capital on Aug. 29, in honour of the 20th anniversary of Kazakhstan's constitution, Bnews.kz reports. Participants will cycle 15 kilometres and then run five km. The event will start at 10:00 a.m. near the Baiterek monument. Registration will begin at 7 a.m. and is open to all.

President Nursultan Nazarbayev chaired a meeting of the Security Council in Astana on Aug. 21, Bnews.kz reports. Permanent members of the Security Council and the heads of several government agencies discussed improving analysis and forecasting work. The President noted the need for careful monitoring of foreign markets. He also stressed that Kazakhstan should base its ongoing reforms on comprehensive domestic and international analysis.

New Anti-Aircraft Missile Systems to Boost Kazakhstan's Air Defences

Staff report

The Air Defence Forces of the Armed Forces of Kazakhstan recently received a delivery of five new S-300PS anti-aircraft missile systems, according to the press

The anti-aircraft missile system S-300PS is designed to destroy small targets that fly low.

service of the Kazakh Ministry of Defence. The systems were transferred at no charge from the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation.

"The anti-aircraft missile systems S-300PS will be tested in combat practice and transferred

into service in subordinate units of the Air Defence Forces of the Armed Forces of Kazakhstan to carry the duty of [protecting] the airspace," said Major General Nurzhan Mukanov, the commander of the Air Defence Forces.

The anti-aircraft missile system S-300PS is designed to destroy small targets that fly low. Using the S-300PS systems, Kazakhstan's air defence forces will be better able to protect the nation's airspace, the Ministry of Defence said.



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EURASIA&WORLD

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EXTERNAL NEWS IN BRIEF

Robert DeNiro's Tribeca Film studio recently featured an English-language presentation of the documentary film "550 Years of the Kazakh Khanate." The presentation was organised by the Ministry of Culture and Sport of Kazakhstan. The documentary is based on a book by President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev. The presentation was attended by government and consular officials, the heads of American film and television production companies and other film and television industry professionals.

Asiana Airlines, South Korea's second largest carrier, has launched a nonstop flight between Incheon airport in Seoul and Astana, the Korea Times reports. This route is expected to strengthen the carrier's network in Central Asia. The flight is operated on an Airbus 330-300 aircraft with 290 seats and runs every Saturday. Air Astana, which codeshares with Asiana Airlines, operates the same route every Tuesday. The first new Saturday flight took off on Aug. 8 and was marked by a ceremony in the Incheon International Airport passenger terminal attended by Asiana Airlines President and CEO Kim Soo-cheon.

Bangkok Airways has announced a new codeshare agreement with Air Astana, the Global Travel Industry News reports. The partnership will link Air Astana's passengers with Thailand's major beach destinations in Samui, Phuket and Krabi. As of Aug. 17, Air Astana customers have been able to book these codeshare services from Air Astana ticket offices.

Kazakhstan and Saudi Arabia have come to an agreement on the transportation of Kazakh pilgrims to Saudi Arabia during the Hajj, the Muslim holy pilgrimage to the city of Mecca, the press service of the Kazakh Ministry of Foreign Affairs reports. Saudi Arabia's FlyNas airline will transport Kazakh pilgrims from Almaty to Jeddah and on the Almaty-Medina-Almaty route. Airline commitments were made for the transport of the entire quota of Kazakh pilgrims to Saudi Arabia: 4,005 people. Departures to Saudi Arabia from Kazakhstan are scheduled for Sept. 11-16, return flights from Sept. 27 to Oct. 7.

Secretary of State of Kazakhstan Gulshara Abdykalikova met with head of the European Union delegation, Ambassador Aurelia Bouchez, on Aug. 20. Bouchez has completed her mission in Kazakhstan. Abdykalikova thanked Bouchez for helping expand relations between Kazakhstan and the EU, especially during negotiations on the new Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the two entities, expected to be signed this autumn, and for her role in strengthening peace, friendship and cooperation between the partners. Bouchez was awarded the Certificate of Merit of the Republic of Kazakhstan, as well as the Jubilee Medal "20 Years of Kazakhstan's Constitution."

Special Envoy of the President of Kazakhstan Baghdad Amreyev met King Abdullah II of Jordan on Aug. 24, the Jordan News Agency reports, to deliver a message to the Jordanian head of state about ways of enhancing bilateral relations between the countries, as well as comments on regional and international developments. The king stressed Jordan's keenness to strengthen cooperation, while Amreyev commended the king's efforts to defend the peaceful nature of Islam and deal wisely with regional issues.

First Deputy Prime Minister of Kazakhstan Bakytzhan Sagintayev and Vice Premier of the State Council in Beijing Zhang Gaoli have taken part in the seventh meeting of the Kazakh-Chinese Cooperation Committee, the website of Kazakhstan's prime minister reports. The sides discussed a number of agreements to be signed during the visit of President Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan to China.

ISIS Violence not a Serious Threat to Central Asia, Region not in Midst of New Great Game, Says Expert

By Michelle Witte

ASTANA – Violence perpetrated by the so-called Islamic State, now referred to in the region as Daesh, is a concern, but not a serious threat to Central Asia, and current tensions between the three major powers are merely blips in long-term "family" relationships, Richard E. Hoagland, former U.S. ambassador to Kazakhstan (2008-2011) and Tajikistan (2003-2006), told Voice of America in an Aug. 13 interview following his latest trip to Central Asia and the South Caucasus.

"[Daesh] is not yet a major serious threat to the security and governments and peoples of Central Asia," Hoagland said in the interview, during which he also discussed cooperation and competition between China, Russia and the U.S. in Central Asia and looked back on his decades of diplomatic service. Hoagland has also held high-ranking positions at American embassies in Pakistan and Turkmenistan and until his retirement this week served as principal deputy assistant secretary in the U.S. State Department's Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs.

Central Asians travelling to



Richard Hoagland is interviewed by VOA journalist Navbahor Imamova.

Syria to fight for Daesh is a cause for concern, Hoagland said. "We need to watch closely. We need to consult with our government-to-government partners. We need to pay attention to international security, but I want to emphasise, it's not like the barbarians are at the doorstep ready to sweep into all of Central Asia."

Nor is the region in the midst of another Great Game, the career diplomat said, with the U.S. capitulating to Russian and Chinese demands that it leave the region to them. The U.S. is in Central Asia "for the long term," he said,

and America's new embassies, recently built or under construction across the region attest to that.

"We are not about to leave anytime soon," he said. "At the same time, we emphasise to our partners in each country we fully support your independence, your sovereignty, your territorial integrity, but we don't demand that you make a choice of your partners. That's your responsibility."

In China, which is beginning to engage deeply in the region, particularly with its New Silk Road Economic Initiative, the U.S. sees a partner, Hoagland said. "[W]

have had consultations with China to see if we can understand each other's New Silk Road initiatives a little bit better. It's not a competition. I know that other countries see it as a competition. We don't. We see it as a partnership."

Russia will remain a natural partner for Central Asia due to their shared history and geography, Hoagland said. As for the tensions between the U.S. and its former Cold War adversary, he advocated taking a long view.

"In the near term, I think we need to be strategically patient, which means it'll take a little bit more time, but let's look back over 20 years. ... Relationships rise, and then they fall, and they rise, and they fall. Diplomatic relationships are very much like personal family relationships. There can be big problems, but you have to want to surmount those problems. You have to want to get back to a positive, even, respectful keel with each other."

It cannot be denied that things are difficult at the moment, Hoagland said, "but we have had a long relationship, and I firmly believe that as time goes by, we will find ways to make that a mutually respectful and mutually positive relationship again." He later called the agreements established, with the support of Russia, between the

U.S. and Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan following the 9/11 attacks "a great moment in diplomatic history."

Hoagland, at the end of his government career, provided some advice for new diplomats in the region. "If they were to ask for my advice, and a few already have, I would say be patient, don't jump to conclusions, get to know the country, don't stay inside your bubble, get outside of the golden cage, travel around the country, meet people and be a little bit humble."

He also urged diplomats to establish strong people-to-people relations. "I would say that in American diplomacy, one of the most important things we can achieve is mutually respectful relations with our partners, mutual understanding with our partners." However, he said, governments – both his own and others – can be difficult. "The most important thing is to establish the people-to-people relationships because all over the world, people are much the same. They want a good life. They want a better life for their children. They want a successful life. As we establish people-to-people relationships, we understand each other better, and that then can cushion some of the more difficult periods in high-level diplomatic life."

President's Special Envoy Visits Cambodia, Laos



Deputy Foreign Minister Askar Mussinov (L) greets Laotian Minister to the President's Office Phongsavath Boupaha.

By Malika Orazgaliyeva

ASTANA – Kazakhstan's Special Envoy of the President and Deputy Foreign Minister Askar Mussinov visited Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries Cambodia and Laos Aug. 12-13 in the framework of promoting his country's bid to secure a seat as a nonpermanent member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) for 2017-2018.

Mussinov met with the Cambodian Foreign Ministry's Secretary of State and International Cooperation Ouch Borith and Laotian Minister to the President's Office Phongsavath Boupaha. He presented letters from President Nursultan Nazarbayev to his colleagues in the names of Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen and Laotian President Choummaly Sayasone regarding support for the nation's candidacy.

The special envoy updated Borith and Boupaha on Kazakhstan's contribution in strengthening regional and international stability and security, including in the sphere of nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation, as well as the country's active participation in multilateral diplomacy.

His counterparts noted that Mussinov's visit demonstrated that Kazakhstan is serious about its intentions, as well as assured him the

letters would be promptly referred to the leadership of their countries.

The sides reviewed their cooperation within the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) and discussed the initiative of Kazakhstan to establish a new international organisation based on the CICA.

The Cambodian government officials expressed interest in developing trade and economic cooperation with the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) and establishing a free trade zone with the association. An agreement establishing a free trade regime between the EAEU and Cambodia's neighbour Vietnam was signed on May 29.

The parties agreed to consider the possibility of organising high-level visits, establishing a consultation mechanism between the foreign ministries and signing basic bilateral documents to develop mutually-beneficial trade and economic cooperation.

Boupaha noted that he appreciated Nazarbayev's initiatives and accomplishments in the national and international arena, as well as expressed assurance that Laos would take into account all the facts in favour of Kazakhstan's bid.

The participation of both countries in the international specialised exhibition EXPO 2017 in Astana was also discussed during the meetings.

On Eve of Agreement with IAEA, Officials Say Low Enriched Uranium Bank Will Benefit World

By Malika Orazgaliyeva

ASTANA – On the eve of signing the agreement between Kazakhstan and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on establishing a low-enriched uranium (LEU) fuel bank in the country in 2017, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) held a roundtable on Aug. 24 to answer questions raised by the public. Media representatives were informed about LEU bank and asked the experts questions in the field of atomic energy.

According to Timur Zhantikin, deputy chairman of the Kazakh Ministry of Energy committee for atomic and energetic supervision and control, this is the first time an international organisation of such level will possess nuclear material.

"More than 15 expert missions from the IAEA came to Kazakhstan with independent expertise in order to learn different aspects of technical security and regulation for holding nuclear activities," he said.

The bank will be a physical reserve of up to 90 metric tons of LEU, sufficient to run a 1,000 MWe light-water reactor. The load will be enough for such a reactor to power a large city for three years. The IAEA LEU bank will be located at the Ulba Metallurgical Plant (UMP) in Ust-Kamenogorsk (Oskemen) in northeastern Kazakhstan. The plant has been safely and securely handling and storing nuclear material, including LEU, for more than 60 years, said Zhantikin.

In his words, while there is no direct commercial benefit from the project, it will raise the level of the UMP in the international arena. The LEU bank is to be fully funded by voluntary contributions and has no impact on the IAEA's regular budget or other activities. Donors have provided approximately \$150 million to establish and operate the IAEA LEU bank for at least 10 years.

"Kazakhstan will maintain the uranium reserve at its own expense. This is our contribution to the joint project," noted Zhantikin.

According to MFA ambassador at large Barlybai Sadykov, following the collapse of the Soviet Union Kazakhstan was left with the world's fourth largest nuclear arsenal, which it renounced and dismantled over

the first decades of its independence. Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev is an internationally-recognised leader of the anti-nuclear movement who proposed different international initiatives directed at prevention and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, he said. His actions include the launch of The Atom Project and the initiative to proclaim Aug. 29 the UN International Day against Nuclear Tests. Moreover, jointly with partner countries from Central Asia, Kazakhstan created a nuclear-free zone in the region and also presented the platform for the two rounds of talks on the Iranian nuclear programme. In this context, the creation of the IAEA LEU bank on Kazakh territory is a contribution to the international initiatives designed to limit the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

"The agreement on the storage of the low-enriched uranium bank in Kazakhstan will start to operate in 2017," said Sadykov.

He noted Kazakhstan must fulfill a number of activities in the two years before the agreement will come into force.

"In particular, a coordinating committee will be created which will be provided with an action plan for approval," he added.

That plan includes a series of activities, including development of legal acts, he said.

The establishment of the bank is getting especially significant in light of the continuing expansion of the nuclear power industry globally, with more than 350 nuclear power plants either under operation or being constructed already across the globe, the round table moderator Roman Vassilenko said. This means that there will be higher demand for uranium fuel for power plants and having an additional element of guaranteeing the safety of the international nuclear fuel cycle will be useful.

Kazatomprom director of the department of nuclear fuel cycle projects Sergey Krechetov said creation of LEU bank in Kazakhstan provided an opportunity for the company to be estimated in accordance with international standards. In addition, the IAEA will hold a tender for the supply of uranium for storage in the bank and Kazatomprom plans to take part in the tender using

its partnership with Rosatom which does produce uranium hexafluoride that's needed for the supply of the bank, an action which might produce long-term benefits.

Kazatomprom produces around 20,000 tonnes of natural uranium a year, said Sergey Lukashenko, deputy director of the National Nuclear Centre and director of the Institute of Radiation Safety, saying this means that it can safely handle 90 tonnes of uranium hexafluoride that are needed to stock up the bank.

"From the point of radiation risk from the LEU bank, there will not be greater harm than from any finished goods warehouse at any uranium mine, of which we have hundreds in Kazakhstan. So, it is simply not serious to speak about any danger," he added.

"As the heart of the Eurasian continent, Kazakhstan once again demonstrated the commitment to its course of a reliable global partner supporting the sustainable development of all mankind," said Mikhail Mironenko, head of the service for strategic studies and forecasting at the Astana-based Library of the First President of Kazakhstan.

The upcoming ceremony will be attended by delegates from countries that have supported the project, including the five permanent members of the United Nations (UN) Security Council (China, France, Russia, UK, US), and the donors of the project – the European Union (EU), Norway, Kuwait and the UAE.

IAEA Director General Yukiya Amano will sign the agreement on behalf of the organisation, while Kazakh Minister of Foreign Affairs Erlan Idrissov will sign on behalf of the host country.

Kazakhstan has consistently campaigned for an end to nuclear testing and supports a number of non-proliferation and disarmament initiatives.

Established as an autonomous agency on July 29, 1957, IAEA is an international organisation that seeks to promote the peaceful use of nuclear energy and inhibit its use for any military purpose, including nuclear weapons. Though created independently of the UN through its own international treaty, the IAEA Statute, the agency reports to both the United Nations General Assembly and Security Council.

ECONOMY

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 26, 2015

President Reviews Economic Policies



President Nursultan Nazarbayev (C) addresses government officials on economic policies.

By Malika Orazgaliyeva

ASTANA – President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev held a meeting with the government and other officials on Aug. 19 to discuss the economic policies and directions of the country's economic growth in the context of worsening conditions on global markets, the Akorda press service reported.

Nazarbayev instructed the government to prepare a plan of measures to promote economic growth in the medium term as soon as possible. The government and the National Bank were tasked to urgently work out economic and monetary policy measures appropriate to the current environment.

[Details of these plans were provided at a Central Communications Service briefing by Prime Minister Karim Massimov, National Bank Chair Kairat Kelimbetov and others on Aug. 20. A separate report will follow shortly.]

Nazarbayev highlighted a number of negative factors that could impact the economy of Kazakhstan in the long term.

"Firstly, according to experts, low prices for oil and metals might remain for five years. Secondly, access of developing countries to investments and capital will be significantly limited. Thirdly, the market for Kazakhstan's products is shrinking due to the weak demand from our major partners, such as Russia and China," he said.

Nazarbayev emphasised that under these circumstances the state must introduce a moratorium on various projects until 2018. He noted that it is necessary to adapt to a price of oil at the level of \$30-40 per barrel.

"In previous years, we were building a lot, increased the number of personnel and salary levels.

Now, however, there is a lack of funds and in this context the costs for new projects will be strictly limited by the opportunities of the revenue base. It is therefore necessary to establish a moratorium on various initiatives until 2018. This is a necessary measure due to today's reality," he announced.

The President instructed that the national budget deficit be reduced to 1 percent by 2018, noting that the funding of the deficit should be made only from internal reserves.

Also, Nazarbayev emphasised that the priority is to support key sectors of the economy that have a competitive advantage.

First Deputy Prime Minister Bakhytzhan Sagintayev reported that gross domestic product growth had slowed to 1.5 percent during the first seven months of 2015, due to the challenging situation in the world economy. The devaluation of the Russian rouble has created additional difficulties for the domestic food industry and agricultural producers.

"In this regard, funds in the amount of 6 billion tenge [US\$30.63 million], which were previously aimed at the crop development, were reallocated to subsidies for the production of milk, meat, poultry, eggs, pork," Sagintayev said.

"A total of 8.8 billion tenge [US\$44.93 million] will be reallocated for the construction of the road Astana – Pavlodar – Oskemen. Another 6.6 billion tenge [US\$33.7 million] will be reallocated for modernising housing and communal services," he added.

Minister of Investment and Development Asset Issekeshiev noted that in order to adapt industrial policy to new conditions, the focus will be shifted to the four most promising sectors out of 14. These

are non-ferrous metals, fertilisers and agrochemical products, the petrochemical industry and the food industry.

Issekeshiev drew attention to the decline in domestic demand for products from the machinery engineering, building materials, pharmaceuticals and light industry sectors.

"In this regard, we intend to support only the strongest companies, which have as partners either global companies or Kazakh companies so called champions. We see that the stronger enterprises continue to work, while the companies that did not modernise their productions will go bankrupt. It will be taken into account in our employment programme," the minister said.

Minister of National Economy Yerbolat Dossayev informed that in the framework of ensuring macroeconomic stability, inflation is to be reduced to 3-4 percent by 2020, which will create a stable environment for investment.

In addition, he suggested the possibility of introducing a retail tax in order to improve retail and catering management.

Dossayev noted that the state plans to withdraw from small and medium-sized businesses through 2017.

Chairman of the National Bank Kairat Kelimbetov reported that the National Bank and the International Monetary Fund were studying the transition to inflation targeting. In his words, if the current situation persists, the implementation of the process will be hastened.

[Kelimbetov then announced the switch to inflation targeting in a live CCS briefing on Aug. 20, which led to the free floating of the tenge and trading at 255.26 per dollar in the morning session, up from 196 tenge per dollar one day prior.]

Customs Controls Removed on Kazakh-Kyrgyz Border, as Kyrgyzstan Joins EAEU

Continued from Page A1

Despite a difficult situation in the global markets, the Kazakh President noted the two countries have successfully developed trade and economic cooperation. Today, Kazakhstan has invested more than \$1.5 billion to advance different sectors of Kyrgyzstan, he said.

In turn, Atambayev expressed confidence that the joint operations within the EAEU framework will further strengthen bilateral relations. He added there should not be any boundaries between the two brotherly nations in the future.

"Today is a significant event for the residents of the Issyk-Kul region. President Nazarbayev sup-

ported the idea of building a short road from Almaty that will halve the distance [to Issyk-Kul]," he said.

Tourists from Kazakhstan make up a major chunk of visitors to the famous lake in the neighbouring country and up to now they had to take a rather longish road via Bishkek. The new road between Kazakhstan's largest city and Lake Issyk-Kul will shorten the distance of travel from 500 kilometres to 70 kilometres.

Nazarbayev signed the Kazakh law ratifying Kyrgyzstan's accession to the EAEU on Aug. 5. According to AKIpress, Russian President Vladimir Putin approved the agreement on July 13 and Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko signed it July 24.

Kyrgyzstan's admission into the EAEU is the result of great work

trade, services, capital and labour and providing new investment opportunities and prospects to implement large infrastructure projects. Citizens are now entitled to work in any country of the union as citizens of the state, stated the press release.

Following the ceremony, Nazarbayev and Atambayev discussed the state and prospects of bilateral relations, including investment, industry, road construction, tourism and other sectors, according to the Akorda.

The presidents exchanged views on topical issues of regional security and the international agenda, with Nazarbayev noting Kyrgyzstan's steady pace of development under Atambayev's leadership. The Kyrgyz leader thanked his counterpart for the visit and the fruitful cooperation.



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Kazakh Government Switches to Inflation Targeting as Tenge Slips

Continued from Page A1

Kelimbetov said the National Bank and the International Monetary Fund had been working together on the switch, which the bank chief said in June would happen over three to five years.

In the medium term, Kelimbetov said inflation is planned to be 8 percent, but will be brought down to 3-4 percent. Interest rates will be adjusted to achieve that, he said.

The shift to inflation targeting marks the end of the National Bank's significant intervention into the exchange rate, though Kelimbetov noted that the bank "reserves the right to intervene when there is a threat to financial and price stability." The rule that the difference between buying and selling dollars should not exceed two tenge still stands, and changes to the exchange rate will not be allowed on weekends or after 6 p.m., he said.

Major changes in the global economic situation led to the change, the officials said, particularly the economic woes of Kazakhstan's major trading partners, Russia and China, and low prices for Kazakhstan's oil and metal exports. Kelimbetov said he expects the dollar to continue to rise against other currencies.

The government will work to protect the prices of basic goods for a short time, the prime min-

ister said. "Today, at the government meeting I [tasked the cabinet] to establish a special group to control the prices of basic goods in the nearest future to avoid the sudden rise in prices for such goods. We will prevent it. In a long term, I think goods need to have prices determined by the market. ... The state must provide equal competitiveness so everyone would have an equal access to this market, and also the state needs to aid socially vulnerable people," he said.

No new withdrawals from National Fund; no cuts to Nurly Zhol, social obligations

The country's National Fund has more than \$68 billion and the National Bank's reserves stand at \$29 billion, Kelimbetov said during the briefing.

There will not be any additional withdrawals from the National Fund, Massimov said in response to questions. "We will restrict ourselves to the withdrawals from the National Fund already agreed upon as of today. This is the equivalent of \$8 billion for the current budget, plus \$3 billion for the Nurly Zhol programme," he said. He also said that the country would not be seeking loans from external markets.

It was stressed by all the officials that government social obligations will be met in full. This year's budget is also to remain intact, said Sultanov. "The budget is ready for any possible changes in the market rate of the tenge," he said.

However, the draft budget for the next three years will be cut, and, following the President's instructions from the day before, almost no new projects are to be launched before 2018.

At an Aug. 19 government meeting, President Nursultan Nazarbayev said that Kazakhstan's economic policies must "be ready for oil prices of \$30-\$40 per barrel," as reported in this newspaper. Calculations for this year's budget were based on oil prices at \$50 per barrel, Dossayev said which is more or less within the actual price range so far this year. Next year's budget will be based on \$40 per barrel, Dossayev added.

He also emphasised that no cuts would be made to the Nurly Zhol programme. However, funds within the programme are to be redistributed to the most promising industries. He emphasised that a coming deal with China to cooperate on their new New Silk Road Economic Belt initiative and other transit projects across Kazakhstan would create opportunities for new growth.

Support for automakers, agriculture, oil

Oil production will not be cut, Sagintayev said. KazEnergy and the government have come up with a list of 39 low-profit oil companies that are to have their tax burdens reduced by 8 percent. The government is also considering a request by oil companies to increase associated gas flaring, which he said would increase production by 480,000 tonnes and bring an additional 19 billion tenge to the budget.

An additional 10 billion tenge (US\$51 million) will be allocated to a car loans programme that supports Kazakh auto producers, he added, and subsidies for dairy, milk and egg producers will be increased by 50 percent by swapping out subsidies from less productive agricultural sectors.

Businesses to be responsible for being competitive

The need to become more competitive across the board was stressed repeatedly at the briefing. Massimov pointed out that the current global economic crisis isn't universal. "In the new sectors of the economy that require new knowledge, a skilled workforce, which require more capacity and capabilities – in these sectors, there is no

crisis," he said. And since Russia began inflation targeting in November 2014, businesses in Kazakhstan had been asking for a more competitive currency rate, he said.

Now, businesses also have a responsibility to ensure that they are up to date technologically and methodologically.

"We can't help every [small] business; we will only be able to help enterprises that are competitive," Massimov said in response to a question about how the shift will affect small businesses. "Unfortunately, everyone is used having all problems solved by the government. We need to work under market terms in order to win in the market and [the state] needs to provide that competitiveness."

Asked about reports predicting a Kazakh default, Massimov said, "If the government and the National Bank had done nothing ... had not intervened, and instead had solved problems by burning through the National Fund, then yes, we could have defaulted." Instead, he said the reserve was protected and ongoing structural reforms and cost-cutting will help Kazakhstan emerge stronger.

Russia switched to inflation targeting in November, and the rouble has since lost more than half its value against the dollar. China devalued its yuan over Aug. 11-13, followed by Vietnam, which devalued its dong on Aug. 19.

ECONOMY NEWS IN BRIEF

As of Aug. 1, Kazakhstan had 4.54 million tonnes of carry-over stock of grains and pulses, the Financial Channel reports, citing the country's Committee on Statistics. Wheat formed the greatest part of the stocks, at 4.08 million tonnes. Next largest were stocks of barley at 317,600 tonnes, oats at 44,900 tonnes and rye at 34,200 tonnes.

Kazakhstan's oil and natural gas production increased from January to July 2015, Azer News reports, citing the Committee on Statistics. Oil and gas condensate production rose 0.7 percent to 47 million tonnes. Gasoline production fell by 2.8 percent to 1.6 million tonnes and diesel fuel by 2.7 percent to 2.7 million tonnes in the same period. Electricity production also decreased by 2.3 percent to 52.8 billion kilowatt-hours.

Kazakhstan's foreign trade turnover decreased by 36.1 percent from January to July 2015 and amounted to \$39.52 billion, the Trend News Agency reports. During this period, the country's exports declined by 43.4 percent to \$24.06 billion and imports fell by 19.8 percent to \$15.46 billion. The physical volume index in the trade sector increased by two percent. Retail trade volume increased by 2.9 percent and wholesale trade by 1.4 percent. Food and beverage delivery services also grew by 6.6 percent. The consumer price index increased by 1.5 percent in July 2015 compared to December 2014. Food prices increased by 1.1 percent, non-food item prices by 0.9 percent and paid services to the population by 2.6 percent. Prices for industrial items fell by 12.9 percent.

Kazakhstan's refined copper and gold output grew sharply in January-July 2015, while steel output in the same period declined, Reuters reports, citing data from the country's Committee on Statistics. Production of refined copper rose by 38.1 percent to 217,879 tonnes and gold by 23.3 percent to 17.5 tonnes, while crude steel output shrank by 2.1 percent to 2.2 million tonnes.

KazTransGas signed a loan agreement with the Corporation Bank for Development of China and the Bank of China (London) for a syndicated loan totalling \$2.5 billion for the period to 2028, Kapital.kz reports, citing KazTransGas's press service. The purpose of the loan is to finance the construction of the major Beineu-Bozoi-Shymkent gas pipeline, the company said, which will bring gas from the west of the country to southern regions that need it. KazTransGas reports that construction is ahead of schedule, with most of the line between Beineu and Bozoi completed. The company pointed out that the gas project is one of the large-scale infrastructure investment projects deemed strategically important by President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev. KazTransGas is the national gas and gas supply operator and includes subsidiaries for mining, transporting and sales.

President Nursultan Nazarbayev declared a moratorium on salary increases for officials on Aug. 20, Tengrinews reported. He also appealed to Kazakhstan's citizens to live within their means and take the general economic situation into account. "Spending on new projects, new initiatives will be severely restricted due to the volume of revenues of our budget. ... Therefore, on any new initiative – expansion, wages, states and officials – a moratorium is announced, for 2016, 2017, 2018 at least." If the economic situation changes, things will be reconsidered, the President said.

The net profits of the exploration and production branch of national oil and gas company KazMunayGas fell 98.6 percent in the first half of 2015 compared to the same time in 2014, Tengrinews reports, citing the press service of the company. Profits for the first half of 2015 were \$16 million, as opposed to \$1.19 billion last year. The decline was due to a decrease in revenue as well as the devaluation of 2014, the company said. Net income in U.S. dollars fell by 73 percent, mainly due to a decrease in revenue resulting from low prices for Brent crude, as well as lower export sales.

BUSINESS

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 26, 2015

BUSINESS NEWS IN BRIEF

Chinese company Xinjiang Guanghui Petroleum plans to begin construction of a plant for liquefied natural gas in Kostanai in 2016, Interfax Kazakhstan reports. The volume of the new plant is to be 100 million cubic metres a year, to be increased over time to 300 million cubic metres.

Almaty Fan Works (AFW) and the British company NSV have signed a memorandum of cooperation, Kapital.kz reports. NSV is a world leader in the production of ventilation equipment for the oil and gas industry, offshore platforms and nuclear industries. With their cooperation, AFW's product line has expanded from 50 to 70 items and is now planning to replace products currently being imported for use in Kazakhstan's oil industry. The parties also believe that products made in Kazakhstan could be marketed for use in Iran, Azerbaijan and Russia.

Ambassador of Kazakhstan to Germany Bolat Nussupov held a working group meeting with Chief Executive Officer of the German Union of Machine Builders (VDMA) Thilo Brodtmann, the Central Communications Service of Kazakhstan reports. The main topic of discussion was cooperation in industrial development, a priority in Kazakhstan's Plan of the Nation, which is guiding the country's development and complex reform process. During the talks, Nussupov briefed the union on the Plan of the Nation and the Nury Zhol economic stimulus programme. The leadership of VDMA expressed readiness to support the process of industrialisation in Kazakhstan with the use of the German experience, advanced technology and innovation. A memorandum of cooperation is expected to be signed during the October 2015 visit of a Kazakh delegation to the VDMA. The VDMA brings together more than 3,000 enterprises in the engineering industry in Europe.

Russia's Lukoil has closed a deal to sell its 50 percent share in Caspian Investments Resources Ltd. to China's Sinopec for \$1.08 billion, Tengrinews reports, citing Lukoil's press service. Caspian Investments Resources is developing five oil fields in Kazakhstan. With the deal, Sinopec has become the sole owner of Caspian Investment Resources, having purchased the other 50 percent of the operation in 2010. Lukoil will retain participation in the Tengiz, Karachaganak and Kumkol projects based in Kazakhstan.

A tin mining and processing plant that will employ more than 500 people will be commissioned in the Ayrtau area of the North Kazakhstan region in 2018, Kazinform reports, citing an announcement made during a meeting of the regional coordination council with the participation of Governor of North Kazakhstan Yerik Sultanov. The project is recommended for inclusion in the National Industrialisation Map. The plant will produce tin concentrates and tin fumes of up to 6,000 tonnes.

The Butts Vodokanal company in South Kazakhstan will be bringing in Dutch technology to increase production speed and quality with the support of the Damu Fund, which helps entrepreneurs in the country, Bnews reports. "I have worked in large factories in the Netherlands, West Africa, as well as participated in international projects in Peru, Tunisia and other countries. Clay everywhere is the same, changes are only needed in the production technology. There are so many subtleties to make a brick stronger. This knowledge I am pleased to share with South Kazakhstan specialists," said Rudolf Shotman, the process engineer from the Netherlands who will visit in about two weeks. The Damu Fund helps small and medium-sized businesses gain access to senior foreign expertise through its "Senior Seniors" programme.

Chairman of the Eurasian Resources Group (ERG) Alexander Machkevich said at a meeting with President Nursultan Nazarbayev on Aug. 20 that the company would not lay off employees as a result of the new tenge exchange rate, Kazinform reports. He also promised to triple the purchase of local goods and services and to open new production centres. Machkevich reported that ERG is in negotiations with China on implementing three new large projects worth \$2 billion.

Nazarbayev Discusses Economic Challenges with Exporters Following Tenge's Free-Float



President Nursultan Nazarbayev meets with members of Kazakhstan's business community on Aug. 20.

Continued from Page A1

In Nazarbayev's words, last year alone the euro was down against the U.S. dollar by 26 percent, the Japanese yen by 22 percent, the Australian dollar by 27 percent, the Canadian dollar by 23 percent, the Norwegian kroner by 35 percent and the Brazilian real by 55 percent.

"The EAEU partners also devalued their currencies. The Russian rouble [has lost half its value], the Belarusian [rouble] has fallen by 56 percent, the Armenian dram by 17 percent. Thus, the majority of countries, including those in the European Union, countries exporting raw materials as well as trade partners of Kazakhstan, have devalued their currencies," he said.

In this situation, according to the President, the country had only three options.

"The first was doing nothing, keeping the course and waiting for improvement. However, the price of such a policy is a reduction of production, job losses and the depletion of gold and foreign exchange reserves. Another option was a gradual weakening of the tenge within the corridor. Again, in a poor and uncertain situation on foreign markets, this option required large expenditures of gold and foreign exchange reserves. Therefore, having considered all available options, the most appropriate was the introduction of a free-floating exchange rate for the tenge and the transition to infla-

tion targeting," Nazarbayev explained.

He stressed that the government and the National Bank had made this decision at the request of exporters, representatives of the NCE and small and medium-sized enterprises.

However, Nazarbayev noted that the exchange rate alone cannot make the economy competitive.

"This is a temporary support. We also need additional systematic measures to boost economic reforms and comprehensive solutions to support small and medium-sized businesses. Therefore, I instructed the government and the National Bank to develop such packages," he said.

"We are the only factory producing ammonium nitrate and ammo-

nia," Takhmina Nagumanova, deputy director of KazAzot, said at the meeting. "During the first five-year period, we successfully modernised our plant and increased capacity by 50 percent. Unfortunately, the current economic situation did not allow us to fully produce and implement our potential. For today, the adjustment of the national currency is correct and the right decision in order to preserve jobs."

In turn, Yerlan Orynbekov, chairman of the Caustic National Company said, "We are engaged in the production of caustic soda, hydrochloric acid and sodium hypochlorite. Before our factory started to work, these products were exported to Kazakhstan from Russia, China and Uzbekistan. With the launch of our project, we

completely replaced the domestic market with locally made products. I fully support my Kazakh colleagues. I believe that the currency correction is a timely decision. It will give industrial enterprises a chance to participate in a fair competition."

Nazarbayev also proposed that the government implement social initiatives planned for 2017 in 2016, including introducing a new model of remuneration of civil servants, as well as increasing payments to people with disabilities and scholarships.

He instructed the National Bank to introduce a mechanism for compensating individuals' urgent deposits in order to reduce losses among the population from the change to the exchange rate.

Kazakhstan Increases Uranium Production

By Julia Rutz

The physical volume of uranium mining in Kazakhstan, a world leader in uranium production, totalled 5,883 tonnes for April-June compared to 5,650 tonnes mined during the same period in 2014, reported the Kazatomprom press service.

The company's production volume, including shares of its subsidiaries and affiliates, was 3,177 tonnes of uranium during the second quarter of the current year, while a year ago the figure was 3,278 tonnes.

During the same period, the Ulba Metallurgical Plant (UMP) produced 415 tonnes of beryllium, 40 tonnes of tantalum and 14 tonnes of niobium products. The UMP, in operation for sixty odd years, has also been chosen as a site for the low enriched uranium fuel bank under the auspices of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) that will be established under an agreement to be signed Aug. 27 in Astana. The main energy supplier for the Aktau and Mangistau regions, Kazatomprom has produced 1.2 million kilowatts per hour of electricity, 765,000 gigacalories of heat en-

ergy and 286 million cubic metres of water, including two million cubic metres of drinking water. These indicators meet the region's needs for energy and water.

The Uranium Enrichment Centre, a subsidiary of Kazatomprom, completed work on the production and shipment of enriched ura-

nium since 2009. Over the past 10 years, the country has increased its volume by nearly six times, whereas Canada and Australia, its nearest competitors, have recently shown stagnation or even a slight decrease in their production. In 2014, uranium production in Kazakhstan increased 1.5 per-

Kazakhstan has remained a world leader in uranium production since 2009. Over the past 10 years, the country has increased its volume by nearly six times, whereas Canada and Australia, its nearest competitors, have recently shown stagnation or even a slight decrease in their production.

cent, which corresponds to 22,829 tonnes. Kazatomprom is a national operator responsible for the export of uranium and its compounds, rare metals, nuclear fuel for nuclear power plants, special purpose equipment, technologies and double-use materials. The company currently employs more than 25,000 people and is among the leading uranium producers in the world.

Samruk Kazyna Launches Eleven Industrial Projects



Staff report

The Samruk Kazyna Sovereign Wealth Fund plans to implement

11 projects worth \$24 billion in the second five-year plan of the State Programme of Accelerated Industrial and Innovative Development, said Berik Beisengaliyev, chief business development director and member of the Management Board of Samruk Kazyna during a recent Central Communication Service press conference.

In the second five-year plan of the State Programme of Accelerated Industrial and Innovative Development Samruk Kazyna will implement 11 projects worth \$24 billion, which is 73 percent of all projects in the National Industrialisation Map. These projects

will contribute to the creation of about 23,000 temporary and more than 4,500 permanent jobs," said Beisengaliyev.

It was announced that the entire investment portfolio of the fund has 161 projects worth \$121 billion.

Beisengaliyev also noted that in the overall structure of the financing of these projects, 27 percent belongs to the fund and about 73 percent are borrowed funds.

"It means every dollar invested in portfolio of Samruk Kazyna attracted about three dollars of investment, which is according to world practice considered to be a very good, high rate," said

230,000 Square-Metre Transport, Logistics Hub to Be Built in Shymkent

By Michelle Witte

ASTANA — The Kazakh government plans to build a 230,000-square-metre transport and logistics centre on 92 hectares in Shymkent to help coordinate transit between Shymkent International Airport, the Western Europe-Western China highway and the Trans-Asian Railway, Kazinform reported.

The centre will include Class A and Class B warehouses, dry warehouses, freezers and other equipment to store fruits and vegetables, a growing economic sector in the region, which produces 30 percent of Kazakhstan's vegetables, according to South Kazakhstan Invest. The centre will also have a container yard, customs terminals, service and distribution centres and other facilities. It will be located two kilometres from Shymkent International Airport, four kilometres from the Western Europe-Western China highway and 500 metres from the Trans-Asian Railway, Kazinform reported.

Twenty hectares of the project are to be used for infrastructure for the centre, while 72 hectares have been set aside for eight investment

projects on the site, according to Kazinform.

A press release issued by the South Kazakhstan Akimat (municipal administration) noted that the Nury Zhol economic programme intended to help Kazakhstan's economy cope with the steep decline in oil prices emphasises the development of transport and logistics infrastructure, particularly by creating logistics hubs in different key regions. "The creation of the centre is a contribution to the implementation of this project," it said.

Construction on the project will be carried out in two stages, one to be finished at the end of 2015 and the second to be finished in 2016. The centre will create 726 permanent jobs, according to Kazinform, and will receive \$7.97 million in funding from Kazakhstan's Business Roadmap 2020 programme, which is to build 510,000 metres of logistics infrastructure in the South Kazakhstan region. Private investment in the project is \$127.6 million, the report said.

It was announced in May that a new terminal would be built at Shymkent airport. Plans released in July say the new terminal will be integrated with the city's train and bus stations as well as the new transport and logistics terminal.



EDITORIALS & OPINIONS

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 26, 2015

Kazakhstan's Constitution Turns 20, Remains Central to Country's Development

Twenty years in terms of constitutional history is a very short period of time. The American and French constitutions, which are the models for so many which followed, are now well over two centuries old. Britain's famously unwritten constitution can trace its roots back much further to the Magna Carta whose 800th anniversary was celebrated this year.

By comparison, Kazakhstan's constitution, like our country itself, is still very much in its infancy. Drawn up with the help of international experts to replace the constitution in place during our first four years of independence, it was adopted overwhelmingly in a national referendum in 1995.

It was a period of great uncertainty for our young country as we struggled to escape the legacy of the last chaotic years of the Soviet Union. The new constitution underlined our determination to overcome the problems we faced. For the last 20 years, it has guided us through many challenges on our journey to the successful and stable country we have become.

First and foremost, of course, a constitution sets out the structure of government, the responsibilities of its institutions and the relationship between them and, importantly, its citizens. Our constitution created the two chambers of our parliament, elected by our people, as well the clear separation of powers between the executive, legislative and judicial branches of government.

But an effective constitution must go much further than simply institutional mechanics. By establishing the rule of law and the clear rights of the individual, our constitution put limits on the power of government and made clear that its role is to serve the interests of its citizens. In turn, it also laid down the responsibility of each individual to their nation and society.

Importantly, it also embodied the values we hold dear and our ambitions. In a sense, it has helped and continues to provide a road map for

the future and a focal point for a sense of national purpose towards a common goal.

These are all roles that Kazakhstan's constitution has played for our country over the last 20 years. It has provided the springboard for our economic, social and political development. The strong emphasis on individual rights and equality before the law, for example, has created a stable and tolerant society in which all our citizens, whatever their background, feel valued and can make their contributions.

We have also seen how the constitution, while staying true to its guiding values, has evolved as our society has developed. The mistake of imposing too rigid a straightjacket – which can be a barrier to wider progress – has been avoided. It has instead provided the flexibility that is needed in an uncertain world.

Recent reforms have seen the continued decentralisation and devolution of power, which better suits the country's more mature, confident and democratic society. Parliament, for example, has taken on increased responsibilities from the executive branch.

These changes will continue under the reforms set out in the 100 Concrete Steps programme designed to accelerate the modernisation of the economy and improve the quality of services to the public at a time of global challenge. Such is the scale of ambition in the plans for an international financial centre in Astana – a powerful symbol of Kazakhstan's determination to continue its progress – that it is likely to require amendments to the constitution. With the pace of reforms accelerating, it would be no surprise if these reforms are enacted during the upcoming autumn session of Parliament, which is set to open on Sept. 1.

Our constitution may, in global terms, be young. But its role in our country's journey has been essential. It is why the 20th anniversary of our constitution will be rightly celebrated across the country on and before Aug. 30.

Kazakh Cosmonaut's Flight Is Profitable for Country, Head of Kazcosmos Says

By Aiman Turebekova

ASTANA – In a recent interview with KazTAG news agency, chairman of the aerospace committee (Kazcosmos) of the Kazakh Ministry of Investment and Development Talgat Mussabayev spoke about the effective use of the Baikonur Cosmodrome, issues relating to the development of the space industry and the challenges which Kazakh cosmonaut Aidyn Aimbetov faces as he prepares for his first flight to the International Space Station in September.

Russian will be paid \$20 million for the Kazakh cosmonaut flight. Is this price justified, and is it partly covered by rent payments for the use of Baikonur Cosmodrome?

Indeed, the space flight of the Kazakh astronaut will cost Kazakhstan \$20 million, which is a very good deal because the original price for the flights was \$50 million.

It should be noted that the amount is not based on the commercial value, but on the price of services provided under the Federal Space Programme of the Russian Federation. Currently, the Russian Space Agency and Kazcosmos are working on a draft contract for the implementation of the short flight of the Kazakh cosmonaut with compensation money from the Kazakh side to the Russian side.

The amount will be paid in 2016. The question of the financial mechanism of Aimbetov's upcoming flight is currently being negotiated at the government level.

What kind of goals does Aimbetov have today and what will be the results of this flight?

There are several direct functions among his tasks, which will include among others controlling individual systems of the spacecraft, as well as implementation of the fifth scientific programme of space research and experiments on board the ISS, which have been developed by Kazcosmos and the National Centre for Space Research and Technology.

This programme will be implemented in accordance with the previous four research programmes of space research and experiments that were carried out on board the Mir orbital station and the ISS by cosmonaut Tokhtar Aubakirov (in 1991) and by myself (in 1994, 1998 and 2001).

The aim of the space research programme is to conduct scientific and technological experiments on board the ISS to obtain new fundamental data and apply the results to be used to solve social and economic problems, as well as to introduce high-tech space technology in the sectors of the economy of Kazakhstan.

Could you please elaborate on what the programme specifically includes?

It includes several areas of work, particularly monitoring natural and geophysical resources during the process and shooting ecologically-critical areas of Kazakhstan (the Aral Sea, monitoring dust storms in the Aral Sea areas, oil spills in the Caspian Sea), as well as conducting research on the condition and processes in the upper atmosphere over the region with thunderstorm activity.

As a result, the economic and environmental damage because of environmental pollution and climate change of ecologically-critical areas of Kazakhstan, as well as probability of emergencies, will be assessed.

Regarding the physical and technical research, researchers from Al-Farabi Kazakh National University will conduct basic research in the study of the physical properties of charged micro-particles in microgravity.

Thus, it will be possible to get a new structure of the so-called Coulomb crystals which are impossible to acquire under terrestrial conditions. The data obtained can be used in fusion energy and plasma medicine, as well as the production of new structural nanocomposite materials and nanoscale instrumentation.

Speaking about space biomedicine and space biotechnologies, under the



Talgat Mussabayev

direction of our scientists from the Institute of Human and Animal Physiology, an astronaut's performance in real space flight, his psychophysiological state in stressful conditions and their effect on functional activity will be studied.

We hear that the national cuisine will be used during the flight.

Scientists of the Kazakh Academy of Nutrition will produce specialty products of the national Kazakh cuisine based on mare's milk and horse fat with high nutritional and biological value and directed medical and biological properties, which will be offered to be tested by members of the international space crew.

The results of this experiment will allow us to estimate the body's resistance to the extreme conditions of space flight and to develop recommendations for improving the level of astronaut training. The results of studies of physiological data will be used in the areas of health, sports medicine and anti-doping analysis.

In addition, an amateur radio channel will broadcast an open programme "About Gagarin from Space," dedicated to the life and activities of the first cosmonaut of the Earth. A series of records to popularise the achievements of Soviet manned space flights will also be broadcast.

Where will these results be implemented?

They will be used in the space industry, in fields such as ecology and environmental protection, medicine, biotechnology and telecommunications. In addition, they will also be in demand and useful for space industry organisations in the country and for the government, as well as for higher education institutions in the preparation of the space technology specialists.

What is the total amount for the French contractors who implement the country's aerospace projects?

The amount paid to French contractors for the creation of the centre for adjusting and testing systems of spacecraft project over the last five years has been \$90.4 million. This amount was spent on activities such as the schematic design of equipment test sites and buildings of the centre, the detailed design and manufacture of equipment, services to support construction, controlling the interface requirements between the building and equipment, elaboration of documentation, preliminary and detailed design of laboratories and production areas of special engineering and design bureau of space technology and pilot production.

Do you anticipate that the aerospace committee will cooperate with the United Arab Emirates (UAE) space programme in the near future?

On March 9 in Abu Dhabi, I had a meeting with Chairman of the United Arab Emirates Space Agency Khalifa Al Rumaithi.

The Kazakh side proposed considering the possibility of cooperation in the fields of space, including the use of the ground infrastructure of the Kazcosmos National Centre of Space Communication to monitor the orbital-frequency resource in the interests of bilateral cooperation; considering the opportunity to create communication spacecraft in the interests of Kazakhstan and the United Arab Emirates; and developing technical specifications and feasibility studies for space communication systems.

Estimating the amount of budgetary funds necessary for the implementation of the above-mentioned areas of cooperation will only be possible after the

determination of areas and the concept of mutually-beneficial cooperation between Kazakhstan and the United Arab Emirates.

When is Russia planning to leave the Baikonur complex and completely switch to launching its rockets from the Vostochnyi Cosmodrome?

An agreement between Kazakhstan and Russia on cooperation for the effective use of the Baikonur complex was signed by the presidents of both countries in 2004, where the term of the rent of the Baikonur complex was extended to 2050.

The agreement also covers the modernisation of the infrastructure of the Baikonur Cosmodrome and the creation of a new environmentally-safer space rocket system for the subsequent phase-down of exploitation of vehicles that use highly-toxic components of rocket fuel.

They are also conducting joint research on environmental safety and addressing environmental issues related to the implementation of space-rocket activity as well as the participation of Kazakh and Russian specialists on equal terms in the implementation of joint projects at the Baikonur Cosmodrome.

In accordance with the agreements in the framework of the second session of the Kazakh-Russian intergovernmental commission on Baikonur, the sides agreed to complete operations of Proton-M rockets from the Baikonur Cosmodrome. The final launches are planned for 2025.

Currently, Kazakhstan and Russia continue to cooperate closely at the Baikonur Cosmodrome on the creation of Baiterek, a greener joint space rocket system which should replace the Proton.

However, Russia is indeed building a new cosmodrome in its far east and, sooner or later, will gradually transfer part of its launches to its own spaceports – Plesetsk and Vostochnyi. At the same time, the Russian government clearly states that it is not leaving the Baikonur Cosmodrome. Only time can give an exact answer to this question.

Will Kazcosmos contact Gazprom Salavat Petrochem, the manufacturer of heptyl, with the request to improve the environmental performance of this fuel?

The requirements for the Gazprom Salavat Petrochem OJSC apply to waste products of heptyl and do not belong to most rocket fuel.

The synthetic chemical compound asymmetrical dimethyl hydrazine (better known as heptyl) is a first-class danger substance and will fit this description, despite the improvement. Currently, Kazcosmos has no plans to contact the manufacturer of heptyl because improvement of environmental performance of the fuel is not possible.

Could you tell us what is the exact number of Soyuz launches from Baikonur in the framework of the joint project with Oneworld and Arianspace? If the Internet was available in space, would it be possible in the framework of this project to also distribute it on Kazakh territory?

Kazakhstan receives \$115 million in annual rent for the use of the Baikonur complex by the Russian Federation. It should be noted that, in accordance with the agreement, Russia does not pay any other charges, taxes and fees except the annual rental payment.

Kazcosmos has no information on the number of planned launches of Soyuz carrier rockets from the Baikonur Cosmodrome in the framework of the Oneworld and Arianspace project, because Kazakhstan is simply not a party to it. The question about the future of the Internet resource distribution in our country in the framework of this project does not fall within the competence of Kazcosmos.

Could you say that the Kazcosmos budget and that of its branches will be but one of the revisions of the articles of government spending?

At the next meeting of the National Budget Commission, sequestering of Kazcosmos budget, amounting to about 724 million tenge (US\$3.9 million), will be considered.

Modern Challenges Highlight Importance of IAEA LEU Bank in Kazakhstan

At a time of increased global uncertainty and tensions – including sadly among the major nuclear powers – it is even more welcome to be able to mark a development to make our world safer and more secure. It is why the ceremony in Astana on Aug. 27 to sign the formal agreement to locate the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Low Enriched Uranium Bank in Kazakhstan is an event which deserves global celebration.

The agreement is a genuinely historic moment in global nuclear security and a milestone in the campaign, in which Kazakhstan has played such a major role, to halt the proliferation of nuclear weapons. It will guarantee countries access to the uranium they need for a civilian nuclear programme without having to develop enrichment processes themselves (although countries in good standing with the IAEA do retain such rights in full). Such programmes, as we have seen in the case of Iran, lead to suspicions, whether justified or not, that they could be altered to make weapons-grade material.

So the fuel bank achieves two hugely worthwhile goals at the same time. It will encourage nuclear power, which will help drive the switch to low-carbon economic growth. It will also help prevent the spread of nuclear weapons-capable technologies with all the risks that brings to global security.

This week's ceremony in Astana is the end result of more than four years of patient negotiations to agree on the details for this major step. It paves the way for the LEU bank, which will provide a physical reserve of up to 90 metric tons of low enriched uranium in case of disruption to the market, to open in two years at the Ulba Metallurgical Plant (UMP) in Ust-Kamenogorsk (Oskemen) in the north east of the country.

Almost as soon as the idea for the IAEA nuclear fuel bank became concrete, Kazakhstan expressed its readiness to host it. The country's experience and history also ensured that, from

the start, its offer received widespread international support. In fact, no country has better credentials.

Kazakhstan is, of course, the world's largest producer of natural uranium and has plenty of experience of the security needs such a role places on the country. Thanks to a good deal of preparation with the IAEA and international partners, UMP already has all the necessary infrastructure in place to store and transport safely enriched uranium.

Our country has good relations with all the major nuclear powers and with its neighbours. Importantly, Kazakhstan also has a track record of working tirelessly for a world in which nuclear weapons don't pose a threat.

Within a few months of independence, Kazakhstan voluntarily renounced the world's fourth biggest nuclear arsenal and closed the Semipalatinsk nuclear testing site which caused such devastation to our people and land. Working with Russia and the United States, warheads and material were safely removed. Kazakhstan showed how the international community could co-operate to reduce the nuclear threat.

In the years that have followed, Kazakhstan has continued to do everything we can to reduce the threat to humanity from nuclear weapons. The country has championed the campaign against nuclear testing and, through our initiative, has seen Central Asia declared a nuclear-weapons-free region.

There has been progress but there remain almost 16,000 warheads in the world in the possession of nuclear states. Violent extremists now actively hunting weapons of mass destruction in order to cause as much loss of life as possible bring a new, terrifying dimension to their storage.

This threat alone must drive us to step up our efforts to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons. This week's ceremony in Astana shows that despite increased tensions, international cooperation can produce a safer world.

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IAEA Low-Enriched Uranium Bank in Kazakhstan Marks a Milestone in Nuclear Cooperation

By Yukiya Amano

The agreement between the government of Kazakhstan and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to establish an IAEA low enriched uranium (LEU) Bank in Kazakhstan is a significant milestone in this important endeavour.

In December 2010, the IAEA Board of Governors authorised the establishment of a reserve of low enriched uranium as a supply mechanism of last resort to provide confidence to countries that they can obtain LEU that would be used for the manufacturing of fuel for nuclear power reactors in the event of an unforeseen, non-commercial disruption to their supplies. The following year, Kazakhstan, which has six decades of experience in the safe and secure storage, handling and supply of civilian nuclear material, volunteered to host the IAEA LEU Bank.

Now, after three years of constructive negotiations, including legal and technical work, Foreign Minister Erlan Idrissov, Energy Minister Vladimir Shkolnik and I will meet in Astana on Aug. 27 to sign a Host State Agreement and related technical accords. These agreements complete the legal framework and will launch full-scale implementation of the project at the Ulba Metallurgical Plant in Oskemen.

In many ways, it is fitting that the IAEA LEU Bank should find its home here.



Kazakhstan has an exemplary record of contribution to non-proliferation. Under President Nursultan Nazarbayev, Kazakhstan voluntarily renounced the nuclear weapons which it inherited from the Soviet Union, closed the Semipalatinsk Nuclear Test Site, and joined the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty as a non-nuclear-weapon state and signed a comprehensive safeguards agreement and additional protocol with the IAEA. It also played a leading role in the creation of a nuclear-weapons-free zone in Central Asia in 2009.

Hosting the IAEA LEU Bank is the latest and very important contribution by Kazakhstan to international nuclear cooperation. I offer my gratitude to President Nazarbayev as well as the government and people of Kazakhstan.

Kazakhstan and the IAEA enjoy a fruitful relationship of broad cooperation. Kazakhstan and the agency are working together as the coun-

try moves forward with its plan to launch a nuclear power programme. The IAEA is also assisting the modernisation of systems at a Kazakh research reactor, as well as helping to transform the former Semipalatinsk Nuclear Test Site into an area of economic benefit.

Helping countries to benefit from the peaceful use of nuclear technologies and applications is a central area of the IAEA's work. Our assistance covers areas including human and animal health, food security, water management, electricity generation, and environmental protection – to name just a few. These efforts are all part of our contribution to the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In fact, people are often surprised at some of the things we do.

For example, during the latest Ebola outbreak in West Africa, we supplied affected countries with simple kits so they could diagnose the disease more quickly – in four hours rather than in four days.

The IAEA is also assisting member states in Central Asia – including Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan – in their efforts to confront the challenges of global warming. Such initiatives include helping to develop more drought-resistant strains of cotton, assess water resources, and increase the nutritional content of staple foods. In one such project, IAEA and Kazakh scientists are using nuclear techniques to boost the qual-

ity and output of wheat and maize grown on Kazakh farms.

The IAEA also does a lot of work in nuclear medicine, including helping cancer patients in many countries gain access to modern nuclear medicine. Together with Kazakhstan, we are helping to establish a dosimetry centre for cancer therapy and working to improve the quality and safety of radiotherapy services.

Kazakhstan has also been a generous member state of the IAEA, contributing funds to our ReNuAL Project. Its aim is to revamp the IAEA's nuclear applications laboratories near Vienna, which offer training to scientists, support research in human health, food and other areas, and provide analytical services to national laboratories. Our goal is to turn the 50-year-old complex into fit-for-purpose labs by 2017 to meet member state needs for the next 20 years.

Kazakhstan's contribution to ReNuAL is a good demonstration of its active interest and participation in the work of the Agency.

It's in this context of fruitful cooperation that the IAEA LEU Bank will take root. The bank will be a reserve of up to 90 metric tons of LEU, the basic ingredient for fabricating nuclear fuel. Stored in secure steel cylinders, the LEU will be suitable for making fuel for a typical light water reactor – the world's most widely used power reactor – sufficient to generate enough electricity for a large city for three years. The IAEA, it should be noted,

has also played a part in the establishment of other, complementary mechanisms that provide confidence in the assurance of nuclear fuel, including a guaranteed physical reserve of LEU was established by Russia at the International Uranium Enrichment Centre in Angarsk. The IAEA LEU Bank will be owned and controlled by the Agency, but operated by Kazakhstan. While its safety and security will be governed by Kazakhstan's legal and regulatory requirements, the IAEA LEU Bank will meet all applicable IAEA nuclear safety standards and security guidance. The IAEA LEU will also be subject to IAEA safeguards.

How will the IAEA LEU Bank work? If an IAEA member state is unable to obtain low enriched uranium, it can ask the IAEA for a supply as a last resort. Such a request would have to meet certain criteria, such as a disruption of LEU supply to a nuclear power plant, or an inability to secure LEU on the commercial market or through state-to-state arrangements.

The country would also need to have a comprehensive safeguards agreement with the IAEA in force and no issues relating to safeguards implementation in that country under consideration by the IAEA Board of Governors. It would pay the cost to restock the IAEA LEU Bank and could use the LEU only for the peaceful purpose of making reactor fuel. Further enrichment, reprocessing or retransfer would not

be allowed without the prior agreement of the IAEA.

One guiding principle of the IAEA LEU Bank is that it must not distort the commercial market. Nor does it affect the right of an eligible recipient country to develop its own nuclear fuel cycle facilities.

Funding has been provided entirely by voluntary contributions. I am grateful to the donors who have furnished a total of \$150 million, including \$400,000 as well as in-kind contributions from Kazakhstan, to establish the IAEA LEU Bank and operate it for at least a decade.

With expertise developed over decades, Kazakhstan, the world's leading producer of uranium, is well suited to host the IAEA LEU Bank.

The Ulba Metallurgical Plant is a licensed nuclear site with commercial-scale operations and the infrastructure to safely and securely store, transport, and process LEU. Oskemen, for its part, is an important administrative centre with a large metals and mining industry.

The agreements to be signed in Astana mark an important milestone and are a further example of IAEA-Kazakhstan cooperation. On behalf of the IAEA, I express my sincere appreciation to the Government and people of Kazakhstan and I look forward to a future of ever closer cooperation.

The author is director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Kazakhstan Readies Itself to Host EXPO 2017

By Rapil Zhoshybayev

In 2017, Astana, the capital city of my home country of Kazakhstan, will host the next international exhibition, joining a long heritage that includes Shanghai's extraordinary effort in 2010.

EXPO 2017 is a national project that provides a great opportunity for Kazakhstan to investigate new sources of energy and current developments in green technologies. We have set ambitious goals to ensure that this exhibition is held at the highest level, meeting the expectations and hopes of other countries. The President of Kazakhstan has set up some challenging objectives; we need to turn EXPO 2017 into the central point for the third industrial revolution, which includes the development

of an alternative economy and the creation of new high-tech materials, sources of renewable power and a skilled workforce. The promotion of EXPO 2017 is gaining significant feedback from across the world.

The construction of the exhibition grounds will follow green principles, using both smart power-supply networks and buildings with renewable power sources. This unique and highly advanced building project will spur on the technological development of the country.

Astana will not only get a new district with modern buildings and infrastructure, but also new premises for implementing innovative ideas after the exhibition. The most important factor is that new technologies and innovations will become a part of the life of this country.

We guarantee appropriate accommodation and working conditions for the participants of the exhibition. We will take all necessary measures to provide visa support, issuing visas for the representatives of the participating countries and fulfilling guarantees relating to customs and local taxation. The Convention Relating to International Exhibitions was signed in Paris 87 years ago, which in turn established the Bureau International des Expositions and set simple rules that specify the number of exhibitions, their orders and characteristics.

I will visit a great number of the countries whose representatives are expected to participate in the exhibition. In this sense, 2015 is a crucial year for negotiating and signing participation agreements. We are holding

meetings to discuss technical and other issues.

In regards to the entry regime, we have piloted a visa-free regime for 19 countries: Australia, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Malaysia, Monaco, the Netherlands, Norway, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the U.K., the United Arab Emirates and the U.S. The residents of these countries will be able to enter Kazakhstan without a visa for up to 15 days until December 2017.

During the implementation of this project, we will identify existing disadvantages and administrative barriers; evaluate how prepared our tourism industry is for the influx of visitors, and our ability to provide the necessary services to people.

We will expand the list of coun-

tries whose citizens will be granted a free-entry visa to Kazakhstan, and identify countries with whom we can sign an agreement on the mutual abolition of visas. Moreover, electronic and group visas will be introduced in the near future. At the same time, we are working on improving our border and immigration controls.

Two bus stations and a railway station are under construction, and we will commence building our international airport's new terminal soon. We are planning to build more than 70 hotels. The construction of exhibition pavilions and new housing is planned and will be built over the next two years. The appearance of the city will be completely different by 2017.

Taking into account the experience of previous countries, we are carefully considering the handling

of the EXPO 2017 pavilions, cultural spaces, housing and related buildings as carefully as possible. Most of these buildings will use green energy, including wind and solar power. Part of the complex has already been earmarked as an additional campus for Nazarbayev University, where students and scientists will be able to develop new technologies.

After EXPO 2017, the exhibition area, which will dazzle with its unique and innovative buildings, will become a financial centre for Astana, with a special status that will operate on the principles of English law, following the example of the Dubai International Financial Centre.

The author is first deputy minister of foreign affairs of Kazakhstan and the national commissioner for the international specialised exhibition EXPO 2017. This opinion was first published in The Global Times on Aug. 17, 2015 and has been edited for space.

100 Concrete Steps Lay Foundation for Modern Nation

By Indranil Banerjee

President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev has formulated a grand programme to create the pillars of a modern democratic state. The five broad areas of reform are the development of a professional executive, independent judiciary, government accountability, economic strategies and national identity.

These five reforms have been further sub-divided into various sub-components and 100 specific objectives have been detailed in order to implement the programme. A wealth of expertise both within Kazakhstan and from all over the world has been garnered to devise the strategy of 100 Concrete Steps.

If successfully implemented, these reforms promise to lay the foundation of a stable and enduring modern nation state.

Professional Civil Service

The first basic requirement of any state is a body of individuals authorised to honestly and diligently implement orders, plans and programmes emanating from the national leadership. One of the most important reasons for the success of the ancient Chinese empires was the existence of a large, competent and professional bureaucracy selected on the basis



of merit through examinations. These Chinese mandarins, as they were called, ensured the survival of powerful empires over the centuries. Some historians maintain that the decline in the fortunes of some Chinese dynasties was directly related to the decline of their bureaucracies. Today, all successful nations have large, effective and professional bureaucracies to manage most aspects of governance, civic services and economic well-being.

The concrete steps outlined in the 100 Steps programme seek to address the problems arising in the unregulated development and growth of the bureaucracy in Kazakhstan. The idea of merit and professionalism as the basis for recruitment and promotion is the most significant area of executive reform; the creation of a code of conduct, rules and procedures are necessary conditions.

Rule of Law

The dispensation of justice is one of the most fundamental duties of the state. No society can progress if it does not have a corruption-free, independent and erudite system of dispute resolution. The steps to create a professional judiciary, a modern justice system, police transparency and mechanisms for the arbitration of disputes involving foreigners are some of the highlights of the steps related to the judiciary. If successfully implemented, these reforms would greatly help ordinary Kazakh citizens. The international community, too, would be assured regarding Kazakhstan's judicial independence and fairness.

Industrialisation and Economic Growth

The steps go into great detail in which the Kazakh economy could be boosted through industrialisation and general economic development. The stress is clearly on economic development, as this is correctly seen as being the basis for national well-being. The steps outlined promise to take Kazakhstan plans further to develop specific industrial clusters, create a fair and transparent tax system, develop entrepreneurship and make the country an important node in the Eurasian economic system.

Identity and Unity

The reform programme considers the development of a national identity and unity as crucial for Kazakhstan's future. This is a critical concept and the key to a stable, viable state. One key concept is that of "Mangilik El," or Eternal Nation. This theme is to be elaborated and projected through various means. The media, too, is to be enlisted in the task of strengthening national unity and identity.

Accountable State

Perhaps one of the most significant features of the 100 Steps is its stress on the accountability of the state or government. The spirit of national pride and a sense of well-being cannot thrive in a situation where the state is conceived of being anti-people, opaque, corrupt and oppressive. The new steps seek to address these problems by encouraging transparency in government, minimal governance, citizens' empowerment and the introduction of an open government.

Commendable Features

The best part of Nazarbayev's 100 Steps programme is the systematic manner in which it has

been conceived and is likely to be implemented. The programme has clearly been well and meticulously thought out. The inclusion of foreign experts and global experience in drawing up this plan is suggestive of great wisdom. Likewise is the decision to involve the parliament and the nation's elected representatives in implementing this grand design. Presidential oversight coupled with grassroots participation is the best way to successfully implement a project of such dimensions and national significance.

Some Omissions

The development of national pride sentiments is a must for long-term viability of the nation state. While a number of steps have been outlined in the policy document, there is no mention of the development of a body of national literature and the arts, both of which are intrinsic to nation building. Great poets, novelists, thinkers and artists are the ones who create true national pride feelings and values that transcend those decreed by governments and political leaders. A nation learns, remembers and sustains its sense of oneness through poems, songs, stories, philosophical writings, paintings and so on. It would be a great

mistake to omit the development of intellectuals and artists in the nation-building process. It would be relevant to recall the works and impact of poets in the development of national sentiments in the great European, American and Asian powers of today.

Conclusion

The hallmark of a great leader is his foresight and ability to create conditions for the nation's future prosperity, stability and growth. Short-sightedness in leadership assumes that the future will look after itself and that the leaders of tomorrow will learn by the example of the past. But this rarely happens; the lessons of today are seldom remembered. The glory and example of great leaders invariably fade, but strong institutions left behind by wise leaders endure and ensure the success of future generations. In Kazakhstan, we are witnessing the beginnings of a historic endeavour to create lasting state institutions. If they succeed, the nation will have been placed on solid foundations for a long time to come.

The author is a national security analyst and a freelance journalist working in Greater Noida/ New Delhi, India.

EURASIA&WORLD

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 26, 2015

Pakistan Has Always Sought 'Connectivity with Central Asia,' Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif Says

Continued from Page A1

Trade turnover between our two countries last year was \$33 million. This figure obviously does not correspond to the potential of bilateral cooperation. With the accession of our country to the World Trade Organisation (WTO), what are the prospects for bilateral trade and economic cooperation?

The bilateral trade between Pakistan and Kazakhstan is far below its potential. However, there exists tremendous potential for enhancing trade between the two countries. Both sides need to make efforts to utilise all available options, while simultaneously exploring new areas of cooperation. In this regard, Kazakhstan's WTO membership will be instrumental in enhancing the country's trade with Pakistan, a founding member of the organisation.

Since Kazakhstan's independence, Pakistan has actively supported Kazakhstan's foreign policy initiatives. A case in point is the Conference for Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA) process focused on interaction on Asian security, where Pakistan takes the most active part. What, in your opinion, are the main components of the Asian security?

Pakistan supports the CICA process and actively participates in its

activities. We have recently joined the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), which is also an important organisation for security. Pakistan believes that adherence to the UN Charter is essential for peace, stability and security in Asia. Principles of non-interference in internal affairs, development of friendly relations and settlement of disputes through dialogue should be promoted. There is an intrinsic link between development and security. Therefore, we should focus on regional connectivity and building economic synergies.

Kazakhstan is a candidate for a nonpermanent seat on the UN Security Council for 2017-2018. What is your country's position in this regard?

Pakistan supports Kazakhstan's candidature for election to a nonpermanent seat on the UN Security Council for the term 2017-2018.

What do you think about the opinion of political analysts that Kazakhstan can become one of the new peace-building centres?

Pakistan attaches great importance to the maintenance of international peace and security. We are the largest troop contributor to UN peacekeeping operations around the world.

Pakistan admires Kazakhstan's

role for the international peace and security and has full confidence in our brotherly country and its visionary leadership. The Kazakh leadership created CICA, which contributes to peace and security. Kazakhstan is also an important member of SCO. We welcome Kazakhstan's increasing role as a peace building centre.

Afghanistan is one of the key issues not only in the region but also in the world. What is the view of Islamabad on how to achieve the stabilisation of the situation in this country? How is it possible to prevent drug trafficking from Afghanistan?

We fully support an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace and reconciliation process. Stability and peace in Afghanistan is very important for Pakistan and the region. We have common interest in having a peaceful and stable Afghanistan. I have been in contact with President Ashraf Ghani since he has assumed the office. During my recent visit to Afghanistan on May 12, I met with Afghan leadership. We discussed all aspects of our bilateral relations, especially reconciliation, peace and security in Afghanistan.

With the establishment of peace and security followed by a favourable environment for economic development, we believe all such evils

like narcotic drugs will be eliminated from the country.

What should be done for eradication of so-called "Islamic State"?

Pakistan unequivocally condemns acts of terrorism committed by the so-called ISIS or ISIL. This is against the tenets of Islam.

We are engaged in Operation Zarb-e-Azb to eradicate the menace of extremism and terrorism. This is successfully going on and we will soon get rid of terrorists and extremists.

The international community should fully implement the UN Security Council resolutions 2170 and 2178 against ISIL. Multilateral cooperation under the Security Council resolutions, under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, is essential to eradicate the menace of ISIS.

Unfortunately, sometimes Islam is associated with violence and terror. What should be done to change these stereotypes?

It is absolutely wrong to associate Islam with violence and extremism. Islam is a religion of peace and moderation. The actions of small minority unfortunately create an unfounded impression that Islam is associated with violence and terror. The trend, however, is changing. Thanks to international exchange programmes and people-to-people contacts the

world is now gaining more awareness and understanding about Islam. Media can be used as a very strong tool to highlight correct and soft image of our religion. Similarly, we need to remind the world of the achievements of the Muslims that have changed the world for the better.

Do representatives of Pakistan's business community plan to use the potential of cooperation with Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU)?

Pakistan wishes to enter into a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the Eurasian Economic Union to deepen commercial relations with the member countries. This will facilitate fruitful cooperation between the EAEU and Pakistan business community. Kazakhstan being a member of the EAEU may be very helpful to support Pakistan's proposal for the FTA.

Is Islamabad interested in attracting Kazakhstan to participate in the Pakistan-China Economic Corridor mega project?

Pakistan views China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) as a means to achieve its objective of regional connectivity and growth opportunity for the entire region. We welcome any initiatives that lead to fulfillment of this objective. We have always sought to enhance connectivity with Central Asia, which will pro-

vide greater economic opportunities and create win-win situation for all.

Pakistan has a long and rich history, and at the same time it is a relatively young state. What are the basic postulates of the cultural diplomacy of Pakistan?

Pakistan's cultural diplomacy is manifestation of its strong Islamic identity along with its geographic location in South Asia and historic ties to Central Asia. Even though Pakistan is a young state, it has a rich history embedded in the Indus Valley Civilisation. Hence, Pakistan has culturally benefited enormously through all these factors. Pakistan conducts its cultural diplomacy through its cuisine, dresses, language and art. The Pakistani community and Pakistan's missions abroad also promote the culture of Pakistan globally.

You have a very rich and long political experience at the highest level. What qualities should a modern politician have? Who is your political ideal?

I think the most important qualities for a modern political leader today are honesty, compassion and integrity. He should be available to the public and work tirelessly for amelioration of all segments of society. Similarly, he should have the vision for creating harmony, unity and prosperity in the nation. Moreover, he should enjoy the trust and popular support of his people.

The founder of Pakistan, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah is my ideal who gifted us with our sweet homeland and taught us how to live and grow with dignity and honour.

Saudi Ambassador Addresses Daesh, Oil Prices, Seeks Deeper Relations with Eurasia

By Dmitry Lee

ASTANA – Saudi Arabian Ambassador to Kazakhstan Ghorm Said Malhan emphasised the importance of deepening relations with the Central Asian country and the Eurasian continent as a whole on Aug. 12 during an informal meeting at his residence for local Kazakh media.

The ambassador, who assumed the office in March, highlighted the importance of the bilateral ties between the two oil-rich countries and explained that several mutual visits are expected this year, in-

first countries that recognised Daesh as a terrorist organisation; on top of that, Saudi Arabia is an avid supporter of all the groups that are being established to counter Daesh. Also, Saudi Arabia refused to recognise the group as an Islamic State," said the ambassador.

According to Said Malhan, his country is suffering from the image Daesh portrays of Islam. The ambassador stressed the importance of the Internet and its influence on people who are not educated properly about the religion. He emphasised the age of disinformation and the need to find means to refute it.

because the country itself is both a producer and a consumer of oil products. To maintain oil prices at reasonable rates, Saudi Arabia has established wealth funds," he said.

His country, the ambassador maintained, is one of the few oil producers which so far does not feel the pressure from low oil prices, which have seen a reduction of almost two thirds since their maximum in the summer of 2014.

Brent crude oil, the global benchmark, was fixed at \$48.74 a barrel on ICE Futures Europe on Aug. 17, while prices for light sweet crude oil on the New York Mercantile Exchange fell to their lowest levels in six levels, to \$41.87 a barrel. The reduction in prices has been observed on the back of the strong production figures from the United States and from Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries of which Saudi Arabia is a key member.

"In some countries cost of production of oil stands at \$50-\$60 per barrel. Saudi Arabia's actual costs per barrel are about \$10 or so. Each country estimates its future expenditures. Saudi Arabia has launched numerous big projects, like building an extensive railway hub or a new airport; some others have been completed and some are nearing completion, totalling hundreds of billions of dollars. These projects are hoped to return investments in the future to become financial sources for the national budget," Said Malhan noted.

The ambassador also shared his view on the situation with Iran in light of the recent agreement reached with the P5+1 countries on its nuclear programme.

"Saudi Arabia doesn't have nuclear weapons nor is it against peaceful use of nuclear energy. If a country wants to use nuclear energy, it has the right to do so. But we also believe it is their own internal issue."

On a personal note, the ambassador noted the architecture of the young Kazakh capital and admitted with a smile that Astana is truly one of the coldest capitals in the world.

Asked if he was looking forward to his first winter in Astana, the ambassador, the true diplomat that he is, smiled and said, "I like Astana's architecture; the city boasts some beautiful restaurants and recreational centres. And the people here are very warm and friendly."



Ambassador of Saudi Arabia to Kazakhstan Ghorm Said Malhan

cluding by the Saudi agriculture minister to attend the launch of the Islamic Organisation of Food Security of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation.

He said the recent visit of the Saudi Foreign Minister to Moscow was a sign of expansion of its external affairs farther east. During his first visit to Russia, the minister, Adel al-Jubeir, met with his counterpart, Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, to discuss global security, oil prices and military issues among numerous other items on the agenda.

"The visit of Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister to Moscow on Aug. 11 has propelled the relations between the countries," the ambassador in Astana said during the meeting.

The journalists were curious about his country's views on one of the most topical issues on the agenda, that of the activities of the so called Islamic State group, in Arabic known as Daesh.

"Saudi Arabia was among the

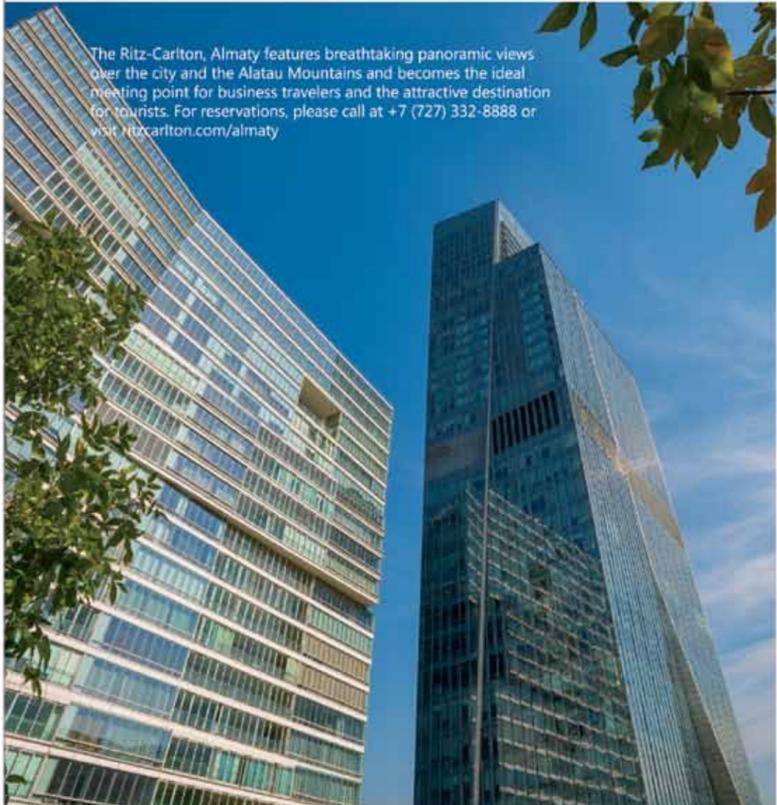
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CULTURE

Semey Folk Ensemble to Perform in Paris

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SOCIETY

Kazakhstan's Deaf Population Works Toward Greater Integration

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SPORTS

FC Astana Beats APOEL of Cyprus in First Leg of Champions League Playoffs

B7

ATOM Project Calls for Global Moment of Silence on Int'l Day against Nuclear Tests

By Michelle Witte

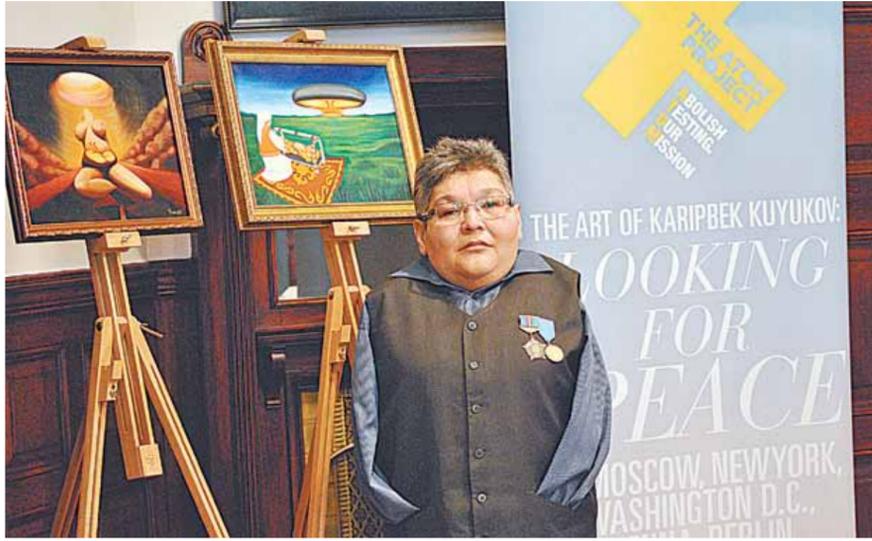
ASTANA – The ATOM Project (“Abolish Testing: Our Mission”) is again calling for a worldwide moment of silence to honour the victims of nuclear weapons testing on Aug. 29, the United Nations International Day Against Nuclear Tests.

“We are calling for people around the world to observe 11:05 a.m. their local time as a moment of silence,” said The ATOM Project Honorary Ambassador Karipbek Kuyukov in a press release by the project. “That time was chosen because the clock hands show a V, which stands for victory. This moment is meant to signify a victory of common sense over fear and a victory for global efforts towards a nuclear-weapons-free world.”

The ATOM Project, an online petition campaign launched in 2012 to help galvanise public opinion against nuclear testing and to achieve the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), now has more than 200,000 electronic signatures. Kuyukov was born in Semey, near the area where more than 40 years of nuclear testing by the Soviet Union took place. Despite being born without arms, Kuyukov became an artist and a campaigner against weapons testing anywhere in the world.

This year, The ATOM Project team also plans to join the Federation of Judo Veterans in a peaceful march in front of Astana’s Alau Sports Palace on Aug. 29. The march will observe the moment of silence, and then release white doves and balloons in honour of victims.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-



The ATOM Project Honorary Ambassador Karipbek Kuyukov presents his paintings depicting the costs of nuclear weapons testing.

moon has issued a message on this year’s International Day against Nuclear Tests. “This year marks the 70th anniversary of the dawn of the nuclear age,” the message reads. “Seven decades ago, the Trinity Test unleashed the power of more than 20,000 tonnes of TNT and precipitated over 2,000 additional nuclear tests. Pristine environments and populated communities in Central Asia, North Africa, North America and the South Pacific were hit. Many have never recovered from the resulting environmental, health and economic damage.”

The best way to honour victims of tests is to prevent future testing by signing and ratifying the CTBT, the message continues. “The CTBT is essential for the elimination of nuclear weapons. It is a legally binding, verifiable means by which to constrain the quantitative and qualitative development of nuclear weapons. Nearly two decades after the CTBT was negotiated, the time has long passed for its entry into force.”

The CTBT, which would ultimately ban all nuclear explosions in all environments for either military or civilian purposes, was adopted by

the UN General Assembly in 1996 but cannot be enacted until China, Egypt, India, Iran, Israel, North Korea, Pakistan and the U.S. both sign and ratify it. So far, 183 states have signed the treaty and 164 ratified it.

Kazakhstan, which initiated the Aug. 29 International Day against Nuclear Tests, was the site of more than 450 nuclear weapons tests by the Soviet Union from 1949 to 1991. In September, Kazakhstan and Japan will begin a two year co-chairmanship of the conference to enforce the CTBT for two years.

Astana Leads Eurasian Cities in International Activity

By Michelle Witte

ASTANA – A joint Eurasia Local Governments Congress and Eurasian branch of United Cities and Local Government (UCLG) project has shown that Astana has the most international activity of any Eurasian city, according to the city’s website.

Astana was the overall leader in the ratings, which assessed 50 small, medium and large cities, and one of only two non-Russian cities to be recognised.

The Cities International Activity Rating (CIAR) was the first such international ranking to be conducted by the organisation. “The CIAR is aimed at stimulating cities to intensification of

international activities and participation in the global processes and brings to light the cities most actively working on strengthening the international relations and promoting their image on the international arena. Nobody has made such ratings yet and CIAR is an unprecedented initiative,” according to the website of the Eurasia branch of UCLG.

The ratings were compiled by international experts who collected more than six months of data on business activity, the international activity of the population, international organisations and institutions, international events, infrastructure and socio-demographics of each city, according to the website.

Continued on Page B8

British-Kazakh Society, Air Astana Charity Marathon to Kick Off in September

By Zhazira Dyusseembekova

ASTANA – Runners’ endurance will be tested on Sept. 13 during a marathon organised in the capital by the British-Kazakh Society (BKS) and Air Astana. BKS has been developing races in the parks of Almaty and London with the support of Kazakhstan’s largest aviation company since 2009.

“This is the very first full-

length marathon in the capital of Kazakhstan. It took us six years to build it. Charity races and marathons have always been very popular in North America and Europe since the early 20th century. Kazakhstan is just finally catching up with the world marathon mania,” said BKS CEO Gauhar Bramley-Fentonin in an Aug. 21 interview with The Astana Times.

Continued on Page B5

Theatrical Performances Mark International Youth Day in Astana

By Meruert Nurgasinova

ASTANA – On Aug. 12, International Youth Day was celebrated in the Khan Shatyr shopping mall. To mark the event, young talents of the capital city demonstrated their skills on a specially equipped mini-stage in the centre of the mall.

As part of the celebration programme, volunteers of the Astana Zhastary Youth Resource Centre organised a talent show where everyone could demonstrate their vocal and dancing abilities.

“It was a two-hour concert with the participation of young people who wanted to show their talents. We have seen various performances, dances, songs of all possible genres. Such shows help youth



Young people pose in Khan Shatyr during the International Youth Day event.

express themselves in a creative way. The event was initiated by

them [youth], we have only supported the idea,” said the head of

the Astana Zhastary Department for Volunteer Movement Elvira Esmukhanova.

She also added that the youth resource centre is recruiting volunteers for EXPO 2017.

The organisers of the concert received many applications to participate in the celebration and chose 30 youth for the performance. The performances included modern and traditional dances, songs in Kazakh, Russian and English as well as instrumental performances.

“Khan Shatyr is a place where our young people like to meet and spend their free time. That is why we chose this place. Moreover, it is one of the main attractions of the city,” explained Esmukhanova.

Nazarbayev University Launches Country’s First US-Style Medical School

By Michelle Witte

ASTANA – Nazarbayev University, Kazakhstan’s flagship English-language university, launched its school of medicine on Aug. 17 with an inaugural class of 20 taking the Hippocratic oath and beginning the four-year programme.

“The School of Medicine is a very important step on a way toward a strategic objective – the creation of an integrated academic health system, bringing together education, research and clinical experience,” President of Nazarbayev University (NU) Shigeo Katsuo said at the opening day of the school, as quoted by the Kazakhstan 2050 Strategy website.

NU is implementing the programme with the support of the University of Pittsburgh and will offer modern curriculum, incorpo-

rating active learning methodologies that encourage students to develop their abilities to learn rather than relying on lectures and memorisation. They will also practice real-world-based problem solving and hands-on work in the six hospitals of the National Medical Holding in Astana, Dean of the School of Medicine Massimo Pignatelli said in an interview on Aug. 21.

The curriculum incorporates a number of methodologies that are unique in Kazakhstan, he said, including the use of “standardised patients” real people coached to present with particular problems to help students learn, hands-on, how to interact with patients, conduct examinations and take histories, for example.

While this is unique in Kazakhstan, it is not unique in the world, stressed Pignatelli, who previously served as head of the School of Medicine at

the University of Glasgow. Rather, modern techniques used at well-established medical schools in the developed world are being brought to Astana. “This is what a modern medical education is, how medical education is done at the moment,” he said.

The degree programme offered is a graduate programme, but the qualification the students will receive is a basic medical qualification – in order to practice medicine, they will need to complete several more years of specialist training.

“This is very different from the current medical education programme in Kazakhstan. In Kazakhstan, as in many countries, medicine is an undergraduate degree. ... So the student can go into medicine when they finish [undergraduate] school,” Pignatelli explained. This is something that will require the reform of Kazakhstan’s

medical education system, he said.

By the time the current class is ready to graduate, programmes should be in place for them to go on to do the training they need to practice medicine at Western standards in Kazakhstan. The School of Medicine will be developing residency programmes for a number of specialities, so by the time the first cohorts graduate, there will be opportunities for them to do the additional training they need within Kazakhstan, Pignatelli explained.

Pignatelli hopes the new school will have a massive impact on the practice of medicine in Kazakhstan, “to change completely not only the practice of medicine: the actual diagnostics and therapy, but also even more the approach, the doctor-patient communication, which is currently very different here.”

Continued on Page B2

New Information Websites to Become Part of the Public Face of Kazakh Tourism

Staff report

ASTANA – The “3D Tour Across the Country” project will launch by the end of 2015, Director of the Institute of Eurasian Integration and Chairman of the Congress of Political Scientists Zhanargul Kusmangaliyeva said during an Aug. 11 briefing held at the Central Communications Service.

“Virtual 3D tours across Kazakhstan placed on the Encyclopedia of Kazakhstan portal will provide information on the history and culture of Kazakhstan, everything connected with interesting facts from the life of Kazakh citizens, as well as reference data,” Kusmangaliyeva said.

Two websites – the National Digital History and the Encyclopedia of Kazakhstan – will be created within the Menin Elim project, according to Kusmangaliyeva.

Encyclopedia of Kazakhstan is a detailed information website covering topics such as education, science, youth politics, sports and culture, Kusmangaliyeva added.

The National Digital History website will become a primary source of information on Kazakhstan’s history.

International experience was taken into account when the 3-D tours project was created, including the experience of the national tourism company in promoting tourism in countries such as, the United States, Germany and Israel.



Director of the Institute of Eurasian Integration and Chairman of the Congress of Political Scientists Zhanargul Kusmangaliyeva discusses the virtual tour portal at an Aug. 11 briefing at the Central Communications Service.

Kusmangaliyeva also noted that the websites can be accessed from anywhere around the world and will become part of the public face of Kazakhstan.

Leading scientific employees of research institutions and local universities will become co-authors of the encyclopedia.

“The goal of the project is to bring a sense of patriotism and pride for our country, so that our citizens and our generation know the rich history of our country,” stressed Kusmangaliyeva. Developing internal and external tourism and attracting foreigners to the country is among other goals, she noted.

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Norwegian Kazakhs Launch Association to Promote Kazakh Culture



Members of the NKKS holding traditional Kazakh instruments.



Saule Kudaybergenova, Aru Redondo, Almagul Kalelova and Alia Shakabaeva of the NKKS organisation pose in Norway.

By Galiaskar Seitghan

ASTANA – The first Kazakhs apparently arrived in Norway as German prisoners of war during World War II, with some escapees able to join Norwegian guerrillas fighting the Nazi occupation. The Red Army subsequently liberated the country's northeastern tip from the Nazis in the autumn of 1944. Since the 1960s, some ethnic Kazakhs have settled in the Northern European nation as part of the labour migration from Turkey and a few hundred remain in the country.

Today, most Norwegian Kazakhs are either members of mixed families, mainly women and their children, or those who

found relatively permanent jobs in Norway's affluent economy. Occasional attempts to bring the compatriots together saw little success until the Norwegian Kazakh Cultural Centre (Norsk-Kazakh Kultur Senter, or NKKS) was founded in 2011 by Almagul Kalelova, a choreography teacher at a high school in Oslo. She originally came to Norway in 2000 to study, then began working and finally settled in the city.

"At that time, it was a rare thing to meet a person from Kazakhstan in Norway. This changed over the years when students started to arrive to study in Norwegian universities and Kazakhs started to come under work contracts or as part of a united family. It was then

when Almagul realised that a local organisation pursuing social and cultural interests between

NKKS members have big plans for the future, including setting up a summer camp where children will stage Kazakh fairy tales and learn the language, handicrafts, cooking, singing and dancing.

Norway and Kazakhstan should be founded," said NKKS active member Saule Kudaybergenova in a recent interview with The Astana Times.

A nonprofit organisation, NKKS, is open to anyone who

is interested in Kazakhstan, its culture, language and society. It also assists Kazakhstan citizens

with their understanding of Norwegian social and cultural life.

Over the past years, together with the Embassy of Kazakhstan, which has been present in Oslo since 2004, NKKS has organised many musical events,

such as performances by Turan, a Kazakh ethnic band and Naz Dance Academy from Astana. The organisation has its own stand representing Kazakh culture and music at the annual festival presented by the Norwegian Cultural Association.

In 2014, NKKS formed Silk Road, its own dombra music band, and since January created a dance group performing traditional folk dances.

"The highlight for this year should be the joint wish of the families with children where one of the parents is from Kazakhstan to meet on a monthly basis and teach children Kazakh music, history and language over delicious Kazakh dastarkhan (a traditional spread of food served on a low ta-

ble). We have held several meetings already where children were taught about Kazakh ornaments, costumes and traditional games," said Kudaybergenova,

NKKS members have big plans for the future, including setting up a summer camp where children will stage Kazakh fairy tales and learn the language, handicrafts, cooking, singing and dancing.

"The pilot project will be conducted soon in the Norwegian mountains with the confirmed participation from the families from Norway, Finland and the Netherlands. Other plans include meeting Kazakhs living outside of Kazakhstan and establishing a network with them," Kudaybergenova said enthusiastically.

Kazakh Student Takes Part in WorldSkills Competition in Sao Paulo

By Malika Orazgaliyeva

ASTANA – Kazakh student Adlet Takezhanov knows his way around a lathe, demonstrating his excellence in turnery at the WorldSkills Competition, an international tournament held Aug. 12-15 in Sao Paulo, Brazil, reported vteme.kz.

During the four days of competition, more than 200,000 visitors came to Anhembi Park, the largest event centre in Latin America, to watch 1,190 talented contestants representing 59 countries and regions compete in 50 areas. The skills on display included construction, manufacturing, creative arts, information technology, transportation, service and agricultural sectors, according to worldskills.org.

Georgian team member Ana Vashadze said she was motivated to do her best in the floristry competition. She noted she is someone who is always ready to embrace opportunity, so when WorldSkills

Holding Kasipkor, a company which specialises in vocational and technical education, was determined in July 2014 to be the national operator of the WorldSkills Kazakhstan project.

put a call out to competitors and the public to submit videos celebrating their skills, she jumped at the opportunity, reported worldskills.org.

In his welcoming speech at the Aug. 11 opening ceremony, WorldSkills President Simon

Bartley thanked the host, organisers, sponsors, and partners. He made a special point of acknowledging the 800 volunteers supporting the event, which was greeted with a loud and last-

ing round of applause. Bartley praised the work and dedication of the participants and encouraged them to compete in a fair and friendly fashion, sharing what they knew and learned over the next four days, as well as realising the contest was the start

of the many great things they will do in their lives.

WorldSkills is the global hub for talent excellence and development. Competitions are held around the world to showcase and inspire world-class excellence and introduce youth to a variety of skilled careers.

WorldSkills International is a not-for-profit membership association open to agencies or bodies which have a responsibility for promoting vocational education and training in their respective countries/regions. The organisation operates worldwide and is politically and denominationally neutral.

Founded in 1946, the association currently draws participants from 72 countries. The secretariat's headquarters is in Amsterdam.

The organisation demonstrates

the importance of skills education and training for youth, industries and society by challenging young professionals around the world to become the best in the area of his or her choice.

"WorldSkills is the collective voice for skills excellence and development in vocational, technological and service-oriented careers around the globe. Since 1950 we have raised the awareness among youth, as well as their parents, teachers and employers, that our future depends on an effective skills-training system. Today, WorldSkills represents more than 45 skills in 72 member countries and regions, all working together with youth, educators and industries to help prepare the workforce and talent of today for the jobs of the future," according to the organisation website.

Kazakhstan joined WorldSkills International after applying for membership in March 2014. Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries Armenia, Belarus, Georgia and Russia are also members of the worldwide movement.

Holding Kasipkor, a company which specialises in vocational and technical education, was determined in July 2014 to be the national operator of the WorldSkills Kazakhstan project. The first regional championship was held in February in the Akmola region, where young people between the ages of 18-22 competed in specialties such as turnery, welding, cooking, hairdressing, IT management systems and brick masonry.

Based on the results, Holding Kasipkor chose the national team which represented Kazakhstan.

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Cuban Singer and Kazakh Ethnic Rock Band Release 'Kara Zhorga' Video



Cuban singer Isaac Real (second from left) and Kazakh ethnic rock band Aldaspan.

By Kamila Zhumabayeva

ASTANA – Combining a rhythmic Spanish motif with traditional Kazakh sounds, Cuban singer Isaac Real and Kazakh ethnic rock band Aldaspan released a video on “Kara Zhorga,” a Kazakh folk song and dance. Performed in the native language, it included performances by students of an Almaty choreography school and Cuban dancers. The video premiered July 3 on Kazakhstan’s CTV channel and the song was played on Zhuldyz radio, reported Tengrinews.

“Latin music is very vivid,

catchy and hard to lose with. When a Latin singer added other ethnic motifs while singing in his own style, it resulted in a winning mix of Kazakh folk and sufficiently-dynamic modern Latin music,” said Aldaspan member Nurzhan Toishi. “The Spanish language is very beautiful and has more love, romance and passion in it than, for example, the English language.”

Despite the language barrier and complexity of its lyrics, Real noted he chose “Kara Zhorga” because it felt very close to the spirit of Cuban music, said the article.

“At first, when selecting a song I was guided by only one criteria

– to be able to easily pronounce words in the Kazakh language, but once I heard ‘Kara Zhorga,’ I realised that I should start exactly with this song,” the singer shared in an interview with Tengrinews.

“As the saying goes, ‘there are no easy paths,’ and I decided to simply learn the most difficult words so that an accent could not be heard,” said Real, emphasising his desire was to perform “Kara Zhorga.” “It is a dance song, very much like Latin music. I took the risk and I think I succeeded.”

Real lived in Almaty for five years and became popular in Kazakhstan for his participation in the country’s version of “The

Voice” television singing competition. Since then, he has been promoting Kazakh music abroad, particularly in Hispanic countries, said Tengrinews. “Ay Maria,” recorded by Aldaspan and Real, hit the Radio Metropolitana charts in Cuba in June, according to the news website.

Turkic ethnic music is in demand in European and American countries, Real noted.

“It is very vivid, rhythmic and has typical motives which, I think, are familiar for the world music market. For my part, I will do everything within my power to talk about this music beyond Kazakhstan,” he said.

British-Kazakh Society, Air Astana Charity Marathon to Kick Off in September

Continued from Page B1

She and former Agip KCO employee Saule Kudaibergenova devised the idea of the race after participating in the Royal Parks Half Marathon in London in 2008.

“Over the years, these events have grown in stature and we are delighted to accommodate the full distance this year. Runners will be able to choose to compete in the five km, 10 km, half-marathon or full-marathon events,” said Bramley-Fenton.

Organisers expect to attract participants not only from Kazakhstan, but also from many other countries, and Air Astana has launched special offers to accommodate them.

“The event gives us an enormous opportunity to market Astana as an international destination, very much as many cities around the world have done with other sporting events,” said Richard Ledger, vice president of worldwide sales at Air Astana, reported Traveldailynews.asia.

More than 400 participants have already signed up and coordinators expect 200 additional runners to register.

“I like running marathons in the places where I live, because it is a great way to get to see the whole city and also to meet other people who like to run, like fitness and enjoy it like you. Running is becoming a trend here. A lot of people here are really active and really concerned about their

health and fitness. It is great that there is a community of runners in Astana and I want to support this event and the whole idea, fitness activities of the city and the community,” said Megan Levanduski, one of the participants of the event and the founder of Astana Running Club, in an Aug. 20 interview with The Astana Times.

All the money raised will be donated to Ayala Charity Fund’s Room-Doctor project, which provides assistance to the state children’s medical and educational institutions. According to the marathon’s official website, Room-Doctor structures the environment in a special way, filling it with different kinds of stimulants that affect all the child’s senses – sight, hearing, smell, touch and taste.

Soft colours, soft light, fragrances and soothing music – these offerings in the sensory room help the child relax and calm down, which is especially important for youngsters with various disabilities.

“There are 325 children with impaired intellectual and developmental needs of varying degrees; some of them are orphans and children from socially-disadvantaged, low-income families. [Of that

number,] 260 children are disabled children in a special boarding school in Astana. Most of the children live in a boarding school during the school year. The cost of the sensory room is 3.51 million tenge (US\$14,024),” according to the website.

Semey Folk Ensemble to Perform in Paris



Members of the Kerbez folklore ensemble.

By Julia Rutz

The Kerbez Kazakh folklore ensemble from Semey was recently selected through an online qualifying competition to perform in Paris at the International Festival

This is not the first international concert a Semey folklore ensemble has given. Musicians have traveled internationally many times, but the Paris audience will see Kazakh musicians for the first time.

of Nations of the World, reported Tengrinews.kz. French audiences will experience songs of renowned Kazakh singer Amre Kashaubayev as well as folk songs and kuis, a traditional Kazakh composition.

Kashaubaev was among the first Kazakh singers to achieve acclaim abroad. In 1925, he went to Paris where he won second place at the Ethno Concert organ-

ised in the frames of the World Exhibition. The newspaper “The Paris Week” described the Kazakh singer as the “owner of an amazing voice, who performed breathtaking songs of his people accompanied by the national musical instrument dombra.”

Thanks to Kashaubayev, the world discovered the new world of Kazakh music and Kazakh people. Later in 1927, Kashaubayev impressed Europeans by his unique vocal talent in Frankfurt, Germany. Both performances earned him worldwide fame. Ninety years later, his countrymen musicians are going to perform on the same stage.

According to the event’s rules, Kazakh artists will present a one-hour concert programme.

“We have selected several Kazakh folk songs and national kuis to present to the international jury in Paris. In addition, we will stage performances to tell about national singing traditions, such as laying a baby in a cradle, which is called ‘besik’ in Kazakh or the betashar ritual, which is the ceremony of unveiling the bride’s face before the wedding. These small performances will help Europeans get to know our culture and customs better,” said the head of the Kerbez folklore ensemble Gulbahram Mussabekova.

This is not the first international concert a Semey folklore ensemble has given. Musicians have traveled internationally many times, but the Paris audience will see Kazakh musicians for the first time. It was announced that the artists will be performing along with representatives from China and Japan during the festival.

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Tour Operator Bankruptcies Force Tighter Industry Regulations

By Kamila Zhumabayeva

ASTANA – The bankruptcies of Kazakhstan's major tour operators, such as Travelsystem, Gulnar-Tur and other smaller companies, terminated the existence of many small travel agencies across all regions of the country and created vacation problems for thousands of tourists. As a result, government bodies will begin toughening requirements for businesses involved in tourism activities.

A new law on tourism that is expected to be adopted by the end of the year is currently being developed.

The law of Kazakhstan determines legal, economic, social and organisational bases of tourist activity as one of the nation's economic branches. The law was amended and annexed in 2014, but a revision is currently being developed and the tourism industry department of the Ministry of Investment and Development promises amendments will be adopted at the end of the year.

According to the National Chamber of Entrepreneurs, amendments to the law on the introduction of advising procedure for travel agents will increase transparency in their activities, as well as create an authorised body with a unified state register

of travel agents, tour guides and tourism instructors and availability of information about travel agents. Implementing tour packages by tour operators of outbound tourism solely via travel agents allows a reduction of risk for tourists and tour operators and eliminates unfair competition between tour operators and travel agents.

The Kazakhstan Tourist Association (KTA), a non-profit, non-governmental organisation, engages in agreement issues with tour operators and travel agents on changes and amendments to the law on tourist activity.

Astana Tourism Association President Rysty Karabayeva answered some of the most topical questions regarding these new regulations in an interview with The Astana Times.

How will introducing new regulations in tourism industry affect Kazakhstan's entrepreneurs in tourism businesses?

We are talking about the changes to the law "On tourist activities" for outbound tourism beginning December 29, 2014 that separated the functions of the tour operator and the travel agent where a tour operator cannot work directly with tourists, but only through an agent.

The changes introduced partially put the market in order. For example, when GulnarTur "burst" last year, tourists who bought tour vouchers directly from the tour operator were left with nothing and nobody was there to ask. Kazakhstan's committee for emergency situations of the Ministry of Internal Affairs sent planes for the tourists who stayed in Turkey



and had to bring them out at public expense.

Such measures were not necessary, because in a similar situation this year with Travelsystem, the company was selling its tours through travel agencies. Tours were re-bought for tourists or travel agencies and they reimbursed them. All losses fell on the shoulders of the travel agencies to whom insurance companies partially offset losses (the amount of money is very small) and the agencies went bankrupt as a result.

Will new regulations be able to resolve the recent problems of dereliction of duty by tour operators? Will the new rules be efficient?

In order for situations with "bursting" tour operators not to be repeated, new amendments to the law are being planned for administration where concepts like financial guarantee and compensation fund are introduced. These measures must be administered because a tour operator working on outbound tourism in mass direction has a great financial risk (early booking, large turnover) not guaranteed to a sufficient amount with money or an insurance policy. The existing law provides only up to 9 million tenge (US\$47,877) in insurance coverage, which is not enough to pay for even one charter flight.

The financial guarantee expo-

sure, where some offer \$260,000-300,000 and others ask for a decrease to \$100,000, is currently being actively discussed among participants in the tourism business. Newly-adopted changes are planned to be introduced starting in the New Year to bring order and efficient operation to the outbound tourism market.

A Reserve Fund to Guarantee Tourist Satisfaction

The director of the tourism industry department of the Ministry of Investment and Development Timur Duysengaliyev told news.invest.kz about establishing

a reserve fund and how it will be financed.

"Recent events have shown that no financial instruments that could secure Kazakhstan's tourists abroad were involved. We have studied the experience of Russia, the United Kingdom, Denmark and other Nordic countries to establish such a fund," he said.

A new law on tourism that is expected to be adopted by the end of the year is currently being developed and he spoke about the expected introduction of a three-level system of financial guarantees of tourists' recreation.

"First of all, the company announcing a charter programme must provide financial guarantee and its amount must be determined depending to what 'depth' a company sells its services. Secondly, tour operators will pay a small fee for each package sold which will be included in the price and simultaneously allocated to a reserve fund," said Duysengaliyev. "Thirdly, the estimated amount of civil law liability for tour operators and travel agents is planned to increase and this system will allow all participants of the market to bear a responsibility on their own level."

Following the bankruptcy of the travel agencies, insurance companies are now attempting to refuse a license for tourism business insurance, which does not help the development of the business, Duysengaliyev continued. Thus, insurance companies are refusing to make an agreement, without which it is impossible to obtain a license to engage in tourism activities for newly-opening tour operators and travel agents.

Surgeons in Astana Master New Breakthrough Throat Surgery



By Dmitry Lee

ASTANA – Kazakhstan's success in healthcare has been recently marked by a series of rare and complicated surgeries. One

The essence of the operation is to remove a blockage in the trachea that prevents air from getting through.

such surgery was held at the capital's hospital No. 2 recently on a resection of a trachea for the first time in the country, Astana TV reported.

A few years ago, crane operator Duman Bekmaganbetov fell off a tower crane and received multiple injuries that kept him in a coma for a month. He was also diagnosed with tracheal stenosis – he couldn't breathe. So doctors in-

stalled a silicone tube in his throat. He had lived with the device for four years.

"It was hard for me. Sometimes suicidal thoughts came to my mind. I was simply exhausted to fight the disease. And when recently I had

surgery, I was extremely happy. I wanted to cry [in happiness], but I'm a man, but still could not hold my tears," Bekmaganbetov said in an interview with Astana TV.

The essence of the operation is to remove a blockage in the trachea that prevents air from getting through. The doctors said the surgery was very sophisticated and they needed a lot of time to prepare.

"Many of patients [with the same diagnosis] were sent abroad. Now we can safely say that we, in Kazakhstan, in Astana, can perform such surgeries," Chief Thoracic Surgeon Kairat Dzharkayev said. "Probably any surgeon would admit that before each surgery they are nervous and they get ready for each operation. Any surgery is a risk. This pathology is not so common to operate in every region and everywhere. It is rare and has many complications. The failure of joints, recurrence of stenosis, inadequate ventilation, bleeding," he added.

According to doctors, there are 18 patients with pathologies of the thoracic cavity. In general, there are only two departments of thoracic surgery that can help people with severe abnormalities: the Syzganov National Scientific Centre in Almaty and from now on the city hospital No. 2 in Astana.

National Bank Issues New Commemorative, Anniversary Coins

By Michelle Witte

ASTANA – The National Bank of Kazakhstan issued seven new coins on Aug. 7, the bank announced in a press release.

Four commemorative coins mark places: "Taikazan" is a new addition to the Treasures of the Steppe series, "Buran" joins the Space series and "Kyzylorda" and "Oral" join the Cities of Kazakhstan series. Two anniversary coins celebrate Kazakhstan's constitution ("20 Years of Kazakhstan's Constitution") and the country's Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan ("2015: Year of the Assembly

of the People of Kazakhstan"). The bank also issued a second coin dedicated to the Year of the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan (APK) as part of the Outstanding People and Events Series.

The four commemorative coins and the two anniversary coins each have a face value of 50 tenge (US\$0.26). The APK coin of the Outstanding People and Events series has a face value of 500 tenge (US\$2.66). Stores around the country are required to accept the coins for payment.

Six thousand of the Taikazan, Buran, 20 Years of Kazakhstan's Constitution and 2015: Year of the APK coins have been specially

packaged for sale to collectors in thermal vacuum packs, as have 1,000 of the Kyzylorda and Oral coins. Kyzylorda and Oral coins can also be purchased with other city coins in the Cities of Kazakhstan series packages.

In total, 100,000 Taikazan and Buran coins, 50,000 Kyzylorda and Oral coins, 500,000 50-tenge constitution and APK coins and 5,000 500-tenge APK coins will be put into circulation.

All coins are made at the mint of the National Bank of Kazakhstan.

Kazakhstan's coins have earned international recognition, including Coin of the Year awards in 2010 and 2011 and several international awards in 2014.

European Renewables Consultancy Wind Prospect to Work on Yereimentau Wind Farm

By Michelle Witte

ASTANA – The European renewable energy consultancy group Wind Prospect will provide consulting services to the 3E energy company that is building the 50-megawatt Yereimentau Wind Farm in central Kazakhstan's Ak-mola oblast, the firm announced on Aug. 17. 3E is an energy, ecology and engineering company working for Samruk-Energo, a subsidiary of the Samruk Kazyna Sovereign Wealth Fund.

"We are delighted to be able to play a part in supporting the development of Kazakhstan's nascent renewable energy industry," said Wind Prospect's Construction and Operations Director Bruce Allan in a Wind Prospect press release. "We look forward to sharing our expertise and experience gained over two decades in global renewable energy development, construction,

operation and advisory services to deliver a highly successful project in partnership with 3E."

Wind Prospect is to provide construction project management and turbine procurement services for 3E for two and a half years. Construction on the project, Kazakhstan's first wind project, according to Wind Power Monthly, is set to begin in June 2016 and end one or two years later.

In 2014, the Yereimentau Wind Farm was awarded funding under the Clean Technology Fund (CTF), a fund of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD). It is the first energy-generation project to receive funding from the CTF, according to Wind Prospect. The wind farm is likely to be expanded to 300 MW in the future, GreenTech Lead reports.

3E Project Manager Philip Ward said, "We selected Wind Prospect as our partner of choice on the strength of their track record in the industry and their ability to bolster

the skills and expertise provided throughout by 3E. We look forward to working together throughout this crucial phase in the project lifecycle to ultimately ensure the future prosperity of Kazakhstan as a world leader in renewables," according to Wind Prospect.

In 2014, the head of the department for housing and communal service and energy of the Kazakh government said it would be investing \$100-150 million in six new wind projects in northern Kazakhstan through a government programme to develop renewable energy in the oil-dependent nation, Wind Power Monthly reported at the time of the announcement. Then, the projects were expected to be online in 2018. Kazakh Energy Minister Vladimir Shkolnik announced in July that the country expects to increase the share of renewable energy in overall energy output to a minimum of 3 percent by 2020.

SOCIETY

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 26, 2015

Kazakhstan's Deaf Population Works Toward Greater Integration

By Kamila Zhumabayeva

ASTANA – More than 150,000 people in Kazakhstan have impaired hearing and related disabilities. Approximately 5,000 reside in Almaty and many in Shymkent, although only about 500 adults and children with hearing problems live in Astana.

Although the capital has a variety of programmes for youth, like the Komek programme which teaches young people with disabilities and helps them with employment opportunities, many of the deaf choose to live in Southern Kazakhstan rather than Astana due to its harsh winters and high-priced accommodations, said Society for Disabled Children Chairperson Kamka Zhasanova in an interview with The Astana Times.

Since 2008, Astana's ZhasNur Public Association of the Deaf has worked with people who have hearing disabilities. The organisation has projects and programmes aimed at providing an informational environment and teaching creative skills, professional development and legal literacy to children and youth.

The city also boasts the Kazakh Society of the Deaf, Theatre of the Deaf project and Educational and Manufacturing Enterprise of Kazakhstan Society of the Deaf. The latter manufactures garments and furniture and is involved in woodworking and polygraph production.

Astana's deaf population interacts well with one another and asks questions when they come to the as-



Young hearing-impaired people are trained through a project supported by the Bota Public Fund and the Foundation of the First President of Kazakhstan as hairdressers and manicurists.

sociation, but the lack of adequate hours with professional and literate sign language interpreters makes it much more difficult to receive an education and employment.

"The government provides a 30-hour sign language interpretation per year, meaning only two and half hours per month, which is not enough," said Zhasanova.

Various sign languages are used in different regions of Kazakhstan and the widely-used books of gestures are mostly in Russian.

"Deaf people in Kazakhstan can't use lip-reading or speak and understand each other without gestures," she said.

The integration process is quite difficult for Kazakh youth with disabilities, as many deaf children do not receive enough attention from their parents. Their mothers and fathers do not know sign language and as a result, young people may be led to religious sects or a problematic environment, she stressed.

Zhasanova shared she never considered learning sign language herself because she always believed that one day her deaf child would start speaking.

"I realised I had to change my way of thinking a few years ago when my younger son thought I didn't love him because I didn't want to learn gestures. All my life I thought my child would be able to speak, but it's been 30 years and it is clear that he will not," she said.

Having completed a basic

course, she can understand simple gestures but it's not enough. Zhasanova stressed the need for parents to have more training with sign language specialists. Deafness is often not inherited genetically, meaning deaf parents can have children with normal hearing abilities. If the youngsters are unable to hear, parents can be interpreters.

Cochlear implant surgery may create a way for those with hearing impairments to live in a hearing world. The devices are easily accessible in Kazakhstan, but many do not want the appliance implanted and refuse the operation. While the technology is modern, it has its limitations and dangers.

"If a chip is damaged, it will cost a lot – over 2,000,000 tenge (US\$10,657) to replace it," said Zhasanova.

Individuals with cochlear implants must also deal with not being able to swim or stay in the sun or rain.

"The device affects the brain, resulting in more problems such as not being able to sleep because of disturbing sounds and nobody is responsible for consequences that result from the surgeries. Deafness is not curable," she emphasised.

Some deaf people can speak fully and while cochlear implants might help, there are no specialists who can set the device correctly, said ZhasNur Public Association of the Deaf social worker Galina Ilyasova.

She noted parents think they are doing what is best for their children when they rely on public

healthcare facilities, such as city clinics. In these settings, however, neurologists and family doctors are not competitive enough to make the right diagnoses and provide the proper treatment not only for the deaf, but also for patients without impairments, stressed the social worker.

The society in Astana is another challenge of daily life for people with hearing disabilities and those who are blind, paralysed or use wheelchairs.

"The society often bypasses, omits and even despises us as social workers taking care of children and adults with such disabilities. They don't feel comfort, support and plain understanding," said Ilyasova.

ZhasNur is also developing a project that protects the rights of deaf people in situations where scammers take advantage of their condition.

"There are a lot of cases when intermediaries helping people with hearing disabilities to take loans from banks end up stealing half of the money," said Zhasanova. The situations have led to a number of lawsuits filed and trials among deaf victims across regions in Kazakhstan. It is extremely necessary to provide deaf people with training in these areas to reduce these types of problems, she added.

Employment, integration and sign language learning remain among the major issues for people with hearing disabilities, no matter how many projects and activities of NGOs, government support and big opportunities exist.

Women Entrepreneurs Work to Develop Leadership Skills



Participants listen at the Aug. 1 public speaking skills seminar of the Women's Leadership School, coached by Svetlana Kaplina.

By Kamila Zhumabayeva

ASTANA – A public speaking skills seminar was held Aug. 1 within the Women's Leadership School and supported by the city's internal policy state management institution.

The workshop was aimed at teaching talents to potential women leaders such as preventing fear of public speaking, using body language, setting correct physical posture, keeping the person's attention, improvising on any subject, storytelling, giving toasts and working with difficult audiences, according to a report on Kazakhstan's Union of Women Entrepreneurs website.

The participants stressed the need for activities on improving and exploring women's leadership

potential. In addition to acquiring new information, those involved established business relationships and intend to continue working together towards improving their leadership abilities.

Svetlana Kaplina, a leading coach and licensee of rhetoric and public speaking skills at a university in Moscow, director of the Profi Training Educational Technologies Centre and member of Kazakhstan's Union of Women Entrepreneurs, spoke about her work experience, audience activity and feedback on seminars in an interview with The Astana Times.

What are the results of your seminars on public speaking?

"People stop being afraid, easily get in touch, are capable of convincing and ready to improve

their public speaking skills – these are the most important results. For example, a programming graduate, basically a closed type of person who does not have a natural confidence, by utilising all the options taught during the training, successfully passed an interview and received a job at Nazarbayev University. That is, people improve communication skills, learn to negotiate and find common language to achieve their goals through persuasion."

What activity is observed in seminar participants? What are your expectations for them?

"The activity went very well. A friendly, inspiring and motivating-for-change atmosphere created during the training is one of our achievements. After training, a lot of listeners become friends and find business partners. A willingness to change is my most important expectation from participants. If people are really willing to do something to change their lives for the better, then that's great!"

Do you conduct seminars on other subjects? What are your experiences in these areas?

"We have trainings on leadership, management skills and intelligence maps (mind maps) that focus on training the ability to negotiate in order to reach an agreement that would suit both sides while maintaining a relationship

and achieving a result. A separate project – Leadership School for Teenagers – is like a mini MBA programme for children, where teenagers learn important and useful life skills which unfortunately are not provided in schools.

I have been working as a business coach since my years as a student and have extensive experience in public and political activities. I was the head of a public organisation, held a lot of trainings and education for young people, did leadership teaching and had an active citizenship position within community service. Now I'm in business with my husband; we have several directions that we are actively engaged in and developing."

Founded July 4, 2002 Kazakhstan's Union of Women Entrepreneurs is a non-profit organisation created mainly to enhance the participatory processes of women in economic and social life, develop democracy and form an active civil society in Kazakhstan.

In 12 years, the organisation has trained more than 10,000 women, including those in rural areas who received education and skills in the field of entrepreneurship. Through the organisation's help, 23 women entrepreneurs obtained credits in the amount of \$115,000 and over 4,000 women received microcredits totaling \$88,815 to open their businesses, according to the organisation's website.

Kazakh Red Crescent Supports Thousands Affected by Recent Floods

By Malika Orazgaliyeva

ASTANA – More than 200 volunteers from the Kazakh Red Crescent were deployed in response to recent floods in Almaty, according to a press release from the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

The disaster, caused by rising temperatures which resulted in some melting of the Kargalinka glacier, sent a torrent of water, earth and debris into the city. The flood damaged bridges, downed power lines and trapped people in their homes. More than 1,000 people were forced to evacuate to safety.

The Kazakh Red Crescent was the first nongovernmental agency to respond, with volunteers offering humanitarian assistance ranging from providing hot meals and first aid to taking clean water on foot to communities cut off from main roads.

Society president Erkebek Argymbayev established disaster response headquarters in Almaty with members of the organisation's national committee. A second response centre was created in a local school to support volunteers and the disaster response team. With support from local businesses and individuals, volunteers were able to begin the distribution of food, fresh water, tools and other essential items.

During the week-long emergency operation, Red Crescent staff and volunteers collaborated with local authorities on a range of activities, including psychosocial support for evacuees, field kitchens to provide hot food and taking sanitation kits and food aid to remote areas. At the height of the response, the group was delivering more than 10,000 litres of fresh water and 700 food packages each day. An estimated 2,800 vulnerable families received support from

the Kazakh Red Crescent, stated the press release.

The branches of the Red Crescent carry out responses annually to various small and medium-scale disasters such as house fires, gas explosions, flooded homes and severe frosts, according to its website. Employees and volunteers distribute essentials among the victims, such as clothes, shoes, hygiene products, bedding, kitchen utensils and water containers, which are purchased at the agency's expense and through donations from organisations and individuals. In the case of large-scale disasters, the Red Crescent mobilises its own resources for humanitarian assistance, as well as internal and international reserves.

The volunteers of Kazakh Red Crescent are a very active part of a society composed of 17 million volunteers worldwide. The permanent work of training staff and volunteers who may be involved in responding to emergencies is held on a regular basis. Seminars and training sessions for disaster response team preparation are also conducted at regional and national levels.

The Red Cross Society of the Kazakh SSR was established on March 5, 1937, shortly after the formation of the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic in 1936. With Kazakhstan's independence in 1991, the Red Cross Society of the Kazakh SSR was transformed into the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

In March 2002, the organisation was renamed the Red Crescent Society of Kazakhstan and adopted the organisation's emblem. The Red Crescent Society of Kazakhstan was recognised by the International Committee of the Red Cross and became a member of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in Nov. 2003.

Nazarbayev University Launches Country's First US-Style Medical School

Continued from Page B1

In Kazakhstan, doctor-patient interaction is still doctor-centred, with doctors telling patients what to do, Pignatelli said. "Whereas modern medicine is really very much engaging, and actually the patient takes responsibility for their own health. It's much more participatory," he said. "The patients need to understand the different options for their treatment and they need to be able to inform the physician about their health. Health and disease – not just

treating disease but obviously preventing disease. This curriculum is really based on what we call modern medicine, which is really about trying to preempt disease."

The school is also in the process of developing three programmes for Kazakhstan's nurses: a four-year bachelor's degree programme for new students and a two-year bachelor's equivalent programme and a professional development programme for practicing nurses who want to upgrade their education and skills. The programmes

for practicing nurses will be offered with Russian translations, Pignatelli said.

And as life expectancy rises in Kazakhstan, the country is beginning to see the rise of chronic diseases found in the developed world, including increased rates of heart disease, diabetes and cancer. Preventing those diseases and others caused by poor diet, excessive drinking and smoking will be some of the medical challenges in the country's future, Pignatelli said.

But changing medicine in Ka-

zakhstan will require more than the few dozen graduates NU will generate over the coming years. Rather, the idea is that the NU programme will become the model for medical education across the country, Pignatelli said. In a statement on the University of Pittsburgh website, he explained. "The goal of the project is to create the hub of medical education and biomedical research in Central Asia. We have all the necessary components, including infrastructure, resources and political stability."

EXPO 2017

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 26, 2015

India Requests Maximum Area for EXPO 2017 Pavilion

By Murager Sauranbayev

NEW DELHI – Expo 2017 is a national project which is expected to provide long-term social and economic effect, giving a powerful impulse for further diversification and modernisation of the national economy for Kazakhstan's transition to a green economy.

EXPO 2017 Commissioner and First Deputy Foreign Minister Rapol Zhoshybayev meets with officials in India.

Hosting a successful project is a responsible mission that affects a very wide range of organisational issues. Working on these matters, a Kazakh delegation led by Rapol Zhoshybayev, commissioner of EXPO 2017 and the country's First Deputy Foreign Minister, visited India Aug. 17-19.

India is interested in participating in the Astana expo and establishing cooperation with Kazakhstan in the field of new and renewable energy sources, including solar energy, said Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his visit to Kazakhstan in July.

Zhoshybayev met with the leadership of the Indian Ministries of External Affairs, Commerce and Industry, Tourism, the India Trade Promotion Organisation (ITPO) and Association of Tour Operators, as well as senior representatives of the Confederation of Indian Industry and leading companies in the field of renewable energy based in Bangalore, a city known as the heart of the Indian Silicon Valley.

Meeting with Sujata Mehta, secretary of the Indian Ministry of Ex-



EXPO 2017 Commissioner and First Deputy Foreign Minister Rapol Zhoshybayev meets with officials in India.

ternal Affairs, the sides discussed the current state and prospects of cooperation between the two countries, the outcome of the Prime Minister's visit and New Delhi's participation in EXPO 2017, as well as prospects for enhancing mutually-beneficial relations in other areas.

Mehta noted India had confirmed participation in EXPO 2017, despite the fact her country is still not a member of the Bureau of International Exhibitions (BIE). She declared India needs an impres-

sive area at the exhibition – about 2,000-3,000 square metres – to show everything it has managed to achieve in the field of alternative energy sources. She provided assurance the country would be well represented at the exhibition.

In turn, Zhoshybayev noted India's participation would give a new impetus to strengthening the strategic partnership between Kazakhstan and India and open new horizons for cooperation, particularly in green energy.

The Kazakh diplomat and sec-

retary of the Indian Ministry of Tourism Narendra Kumar Sinha discussed developing further cooperation in tourism, facilitating the visa regime, organising the Indian Culture Days in Kazakhstan in 2017 and the possibility of opening a direct flight between the two capitals. The sides also discussed implementing joint projects and promoting Kazakh tourism in India.

"We want to [host] the Days of India festival in Astana. We have met with the Indian side [and reviewed ways] to boost tourist in-

flows to Kazakhstan. We want to have a better understanding of Indian culture, especially Bollywood," said Zhoshybayev.

In addition, the Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO) and Astana EXPO 2017 signed a memorandum for tourism cooperation. IATO President Subkhash Goyal noted the organisation is planning to study Kazakh sights and develop tourist packages. He noted the need to open as many new flights as possible and connecting them to Indian airlines: JetAirways, AirIndia and JetLite. He also stressed the importance of simplifying the visa regime and one of the best ways to do so is introducing electronic visas. Approximately 14,000 Indians visit Kazakhstan annually.

During the meeting at the Indian Ministry of Commerce and Industry, the sides discussed bilateral trade-economic relations, prospects of cooperation in green energy and interaction between the two countries' respective state agencies and companies regarding participation in EXPO 2017.

As part of his Indian visit, Zhoshybayev made a special presentation on EXPO 2017 for the leadership of the trade and industry promotion organisation, which is responsible for Indian participation in the upcoming exhibition, as well as members of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry and the Confederation of Indian Industry. During the demonstration, they discussed the terms of participation, location of the pavilion and other technical issues.

Based on the results of the negotiations, the Indian side expressed a willingness to sign an agreement on the country's participation during the September visit of the commissioner of the Indian National Section to Kazakhstan.

Indian scientists create most of their advanced technologies based on alternative power engineering in Bangalore, in the southern area of the country. The Kazakh delegation visited the city Aug. 19, which is the largest industrial centre in India and location of the main IT companies and prestigious universities.

Presentations for EXPO 2017 were made during the visits to the technology parks and research institutes. The staff of India's leading scientific institute became interested in the exhibition's opportunities and the scientists showed their willingness to display their best technology in renewable and alternative energy sources in Astana.

Siwa Umapati, a professor at the Indian Institute of Science, noted it was an excellent idea to highlight such an important subject as energy of the future at an expo. The institute is directly involved in implementing and developing solar power, which is already included in the Indian programme.

In the framework of the Kazakh delegation's visit, numerous important agreements were achieved that contribute to the further development of relations with India and its participation in the exhibition. India became the 36th country to officially confirm its participation in EXPO 2017.

Air Astana Becomes Official Carrier of EXPO 2017



Chairman of Astana EXPO 2017 Akhmetzhan Yessimov (L) and President of Air Astana Peter Foster sign the cooperation agreement making Air Astana the official airline of EXPO 2017 on Aug. 17.

By Aiman Turebekova

ASTANA – Kazakhstan's largest aviation company, Air Astana, is to be the "Official Air Carrier of EXPO 2017," following a memorandum of cooperation signed with the Astana EXPO 2017 National Company, which is organising the event, on Aug. 17. Chairman of Astana EXPO 2017 Akhmetzhan Yessimov and President of Air Astana Peter Foster signed the memorandum on behalf of two companies.

On July 12 this year, Prime Minister of Kazakhstan Karim Massimov introduced Yessimov, a former akim (mayor) of Almaty City, as the new head of Astana EXPO 2017. Yessimov was appointed to the position by President Nursultan Nazarbayev a few days prior.

"Air Astana is the largest airline in Kazakhstan, and the memorandum signed today will be the first step in our cooperation. With its international reach across Asia, Central Asia, Europe and the Middle East, the airline will be able to promote this major project around the world. We have agreed to place the EXPO 2017 logo on all of Air Astana's aircraft and to develop a joint promotional plan for the exhibition, which will be enormously beneficial to building international awareness," said Yessimov.

Some 2.1 million people are expected to visit the exposition, and the partnership is expected to give additional impetus to Air Astana's

continued expansion of its network.

"The theme of EXPO 2017 will be Future Energy and the event will focus on innovative and practical energy solutions and their global impact. The airline industry is a contributor to greenhouse gas emissions, and at Air Astana we continue to take corrective action through the introduction of greener technology. At the recent Paris air show, we announced our intention to acquire a fleet of Airbus A320 family NEO aircraft, whose new engine technology should save up to 15 percent of emissions. The NEOs will be introduced from 2016. The EXPO 2017 site is well underway, and we look forward to supporting what will be a fascinating and enjoyable extended event, as Astana opens its arms to the world," added Foster. Within the framework of the memorandum, there are plans to integrate the airline's online reservation system onto the event website, www.expo2017astana.com, and also to conduct a joint promotional campaign. In addition, all passengers arriving in or transiting through Astana will be given tickets to the exhibition in 2017.

Air Astana launched regular flights on May 15, 2002 and has a route network that includes more than 60 international and domestic flights operated from the country's major hubs in Almaty, Astana and Atyrau.

Kyrgyzstan Signs Agreement on EXPO 2017 Participation

By Murager Sauranbayev

BISHKEK – On Aug. 21, during a visit by a Kazakh delegation headed by EXPO 2017 Commissioner and First Deputy Foreign Minister Rapol Zhoshybayev, Kyrgyzstan became the first country to sign an official agreement to participate in EXPO 2017 in Astana.

Kyrgyzstan had previously confirmed its participation in the beginning of 2015 and appointed an expo commissioner. Details of the country's participation, including the size and location of its national pavilion, will be decided during a meeting of international EXPO 2017 participants in November.

While in Kyrgyzstan, Zhoshybayev met with representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kyrgyzstan, President of the Chamber of Commerce and



EXPO 2017 Commissioner Rapol Zhoshybayev (R) and Expo Commissioner of Kyrgyzstan Marat Sharshakeyev at the signing of Kyrgyzstan's official expo participation documents.

Industry of Kyrgyzstan and Expo Commissioner of Kyrgyzstan Marat Sharshakeyev as well as officials at GazPromoil Asia.

With Sharshakeyev, Zhoshybayev exchanged views and opinions on prospects for collaboration within the event. Sharshakeyev

noted that holding the large-scale event, with its theme of "Future Energy," will help promote Kazakhstan's green economy. He also commented on Kyrgyzstan's green energy potential, with its mountains and water resources. It will be important to display Kyrgyzstan's potential at EXPO 2017, he said.

Zhoshybayev said the expo would be a good foundation for developing the potential of the region and the world in renewable energy. Sharshakeyev also assured Zhoshybayev that Kyrgyzstan will be an active participant in presenting the most exciting green energy achievements.

The two officials also discussed strengthening bilateral economic and trade cooperation and the collaboration of government agencies and companies of the two countries.

Despite global economic challenges, bilateral trade between Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan has consistently exceeded \$1 billion. Kazakhstan is consistently Kyrgyzstan's third largest trading partner and among the top five foreign investors in Kyrgyzstan's economy.

China Officially Confirms Participation in EXPO 2017

By Murager Sauranbayev

BEIJING – China has officially confirmed its participation in EXPO 2017 in Astana, making it the 39th country to confirm that it will take part in the event. The participation documents were signed and handed to EXPO 2017 Commissioner and First Deputy Foreign Minister of Kazakhstan Rapol Zhoshybayev in a meeting with Chairman of the International Trade Promotion Committee of China Jiang Zengwei in Beijing on Aug. 24.

"The business circles of China are very interested in EXPO 2017," Jiang said during the meeting. "During his visit to Kazakhstan last May, President of China Xi Jinping assured President Nursultan Nazarbayev that China will actively participate in EXPO 2017." Jiang also underlined that during the event, China intends to publicise its energy concept and demonstrate its own contribution to future energy. China also intends to use this opportunity

to strengthen Chinese-Kazakh relations in the economic, humanitarian and security sectors and to stimulate the development of bilateral relations and strategic partnership.

According to Jiang, hosting an event on the scale of EXPO 2017 will bring the economy of Kazakhstan to a new level, encourage more investment from international companies and support new domestic achievements in alternative and renewable energy. He promised that China will be represented well at the event and that a Chinese delegation will be sent in the near future to Astana to discuss organising China's participation.

Zhoshybayev expressed his gratitude to China for their support for Kazakhstan's bid to host the expo and stressed that China's participation will strengthen Kazakh-Chinese partnership. Both parties noted the development of Kazakhstan and China's relationship in an atmosphere of trust and mutual understanding and in the spirit of strategic partnership.

Zhoshybayev pointed out that 2017 has been declared by President Nazarbayev the Year of the Chinese Tourism in Kazakhstan.

"I am sure that this will motivate a successful and fruitful hosting of EXPO 2017, and the Chinese population will learn more about our country," he said. The Kazakh diplomat also reported that Kazakhstan is working on facilitating Chinese tourism to Kazakhstan, including through the signing of two agreements between the Astana EXPO 2017 National Company and tour operators of China.

Zhoshybayev also met with Director of the State Administration of Tourism Zhang Lijun and discussed the implementation of joint projects in tourism, organising and conducting the Year of Chinese Tourism in Kazakhstan in 2017, attracting Chinese tourists to EXPO 2017 and promoting the touristic potential of Kazakhstan in China. Zhang shared the Chinese experience in tourism development, especially in hosting large international

events like EXPO 2010 in Shanghai and the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing. Zhang stressed that the Year of Chinese Tourism in Kazakhstan in 2017 will be colourful and interesting and will enlarge the geography of tourism within the country and strengthen special strategic relations.

A road show for the leaders of Chinese tourist agencies was also organised during the visit, with Zhoshybayev reporting on Kazakhstan's investment climate; possibilities for the Chinese business in trade, investments and tourism; and the preparations underway for EXPO 2017. He also familiarised the Chinese business circles with the conditions for participating in EXPO 2017. A video on the expo and the preparation for it was also shown.

Tourism from China has grown steadily through recent decades, and according to data from the World Tourism Organisation for 2012, the country holds the leading position for the number of citizens travelling abroad (97.3 million people) and for expenses in travelling abroad (\$102 billion). In 2014, more than 15 million Chinese citizens travelled abroad, making up 19.6 percent of all international tourists. They spent \$140 billion during their travels.

SPORTS

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 26, 2015

FC Astana Beats APOEL of Cyprus in First Leg of Champions League Playoffs



By Dmitry Lee

ASTANA – FC Astana slipped by APOEL of Cyprus in a narrow 1-0 victory in front of a nearly sold-out home crowd at Astana Arena on Aug. 18.

The young Astana club, at only seven years old, is making its

UEFA Champions League debut this year and so far the club is unbeaten in three encounters (two wins and one draw), having eliminated Maribor, Slovenia and HJK Helsinki, Finland, to reach the final stage of the playoffs.

The team threw an all-out attack at the Cypriot team for the first 20

minutes of the first half, and it paid off.

FC Astana striker Baurzhan Dzholchibiyev used teammate Foxi Kethevoama's almost-perfect cross into the box to bring his team to victory in the 14th minute. FC Astana has not lost on home turf in a year.

Perhaps because this was their first meeting, the Cypriots simply did not know what to expect from the Kazakhs, who are hungry to make an impact in their first UEFA showing.

And although FC Astana's assistant manager Gregory Babayan told local media that APOEL was Astana's toughest opponent en route to the Champions League group stage, he admitted that he did not fear the Cypriot club. His confidence was evident in the team's strategy on the field. After the goal, Astana preferred not to protect their lead, but kept pressuring their guests, seeking another goal, especially in the last three minutes of the match.

"We started pretty bad," APOEL Manager Domingos Paciencia said after the match, as reported by Vesti.kz. "Though I wouldn't say that we were not prepared for the match. Astana played aggressively, scored fast and it impacted our team; we were nervous. We didn't score in the second half either, but we still have a home game to play. I hope we will score at home."

Despite getting back into the game toward the end of the first half and staging some serious attacks in the second half, the Cypriot club couldn't come back and produce a goal.

Eight-Year-Old Kazakh Tennis Player Wins Championship in Florida



Photo credit: sports.kz

Staff report

ASTANA – Zhakas Kozbak from Aralsk city in the Kyzylorda region recently won an international youth tennis championship in Florida, United States, beating an Argentinian player 6:4, 6:3 in the final match, according to Sports.kz.

The young athlete from Kazakhstan earned a spot in the under-10 tennis World Cup to be held Aug. 23-29 in New York.

"The athlete has been playing tennis since he was five years old and has been repeatedly winning championships of Kazakhstan," a statement said.

Kozbak is currently training at the Evert Tennis Academy in the United States.

Tennis' popularity in Kazakhstan has been increasing over the last decade. In 2010, Kazakhstan fought into the top rank of the global elite – the Davis Cup World Group, beating Switzer-

land five matches to none. Also in 2010, Russian-born Kazakh citizen Yaroslava "Slava" Shvedova emerged on the international tennis scene at age 22 by winning back-to-back Grand Slam doubles tournaments at Wimbledon in Britain and the U.S. Open at Forest Hills, New York. In the summer of 2012, Shvedova made Wimbledon history by playing the first perfect singles set in at least 44 years.

The Kazakh Tennis Federation has also been working in recent years to encourage the region's best players to come and live in the country and adopt Kazakh citizenship. It has also brought in legendary coaches like Eric van Harpen, the former coach of star Anna Kournikova, to work with the Kazakh national team. Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev has also been reported to be a good tennis player and earlier this year met with tennis superstar Ralph Nadal during Nadal's visit to Kazakhstan.

Astana Pro Team Cyclist Taaramäe Takes Overall Win at Arctic Race of Norway

By Dmitry Lee

ASTANA – Astana Pro Team rider Rein Taaramäe snatched the

overall win in the Arctic Race of Norway in Narvik on Aug. 17 from race leader Ben Hermans, who had a mechanical issue in stage four and couldn't defend his position.

Taaramäe started the final race seven seconds behind overall leader Hermans but with the help of his teammates managed to attack in the final laps to finish the

race third and take the overall win.

"Two stage race victories in August is something very special, and my form is very good right now – I hope to race well next in Canada and for a spot at the TTT World Championships in Richmond," Taaramäe said after the race.

"With the overall victory at the Arctic Race of Norway, Taaramäe celebrated his second consecutive stage race title in August, having won earlier this month in Spain at the Vuelta a Burgos," the team's official website quoted.

The Arctic Race of Norway is a multiple-stage annual road cycling event that has been held since 2013. Taaramäe is the third winner. Previously, Norwegian Thor Hushovd of BMC Racing Team celebrated victory in 2013 and Dutch Steven Kruijswijk of Belkin Pro Cycling in 2014.

Taaramäe's overall time was 16:42:02, with second place Silvan Dillier of the BMC Racing Team trailing by eight seconds and third place Ilnur Zakarin of Team Katusha by 31 seconds. Tane Kangert of the Astana Pro Team finished in 17th place, 00:02:22 behind Taaramäe. Davide Malacarne, Daniil Fominykh, Arman Kamyshiev and Maxat Ayazbayev of the Astana Pro Team also finished the race.



Photo: Getty Images Sport

Rein Taaramäe celebrates his Arctic Race of Norway win on Aug. 17.

Football Academy to be Launched in Shymkent

Staff report

The Football Federation of Kazakhstan plans to open a football academy in the South Kazakhstan region, according to otyrar.kz. It has not yet been determined if the academy will be national or regional.

Specialists from Spain choose young players in Shymkent for the academy during a selection process ending Aug. 15 and coaches from leading football clubs chose youth from three age groups.

More than 100 children tried out for the academy during each day of

the selection process. Specialists looked at how children behaved during the try-outs. Sixty-six children were chosen. Foreign coaches will be assisted by local coaches. The academy will be based on the BIIR football centre.

"Spanish coaches brought something new to our children. It is an exchange of experience. It encourages children and their parents. First of all, the academy means growth in sports for children. We had a quite different childhood. These days a lot is being made for the development of football," said Oleg Sabirov, the head coach of the South Kazakhstan football school.

Barys Astana Wins President's Cup

By Zhazira Dyussebekova

ASTANA – With a 3-2 victory over Admiral Vladivostok in the final match, the city's Barys won the President's Cup, the annual open ice hockey tournament organised for the sixth time. The competition began Aug. 9 and the last game was held four days later in the capital's new Ice Palace, launched right before the championship.

The match opened with performances of the Kazakh and Russian anthems. Barys played an active game from the first minutes and Admiral goaltender Igor Bobkov displayed excellent work withstanding the attacks. During the first period of the final game, both teams' attempts to score failed and the players

went to the locker rooms with a score of 0-0.

After the break, the home team's Brandon Bochenski scored the first goal on a pass from Kevin Dullman. In less than five minutes, however, the opponents equalised the score on a goal by Maxim Mamin. Five minutes before the end of the period, Barys' Evgeni Rymarev took a pass from Talgat Zhailauov to bring his team forward, 2-1. But the Astana club could not hold the advantage, as Admiral's Konstantin Makarov tied the game at 2-2.

Neither rival put the puck in the net during the third period, sending the game into overtime. In the 62nd minute, Roman Starchenko scored the final goal to lead his team to victory.

"It was good game. After looking at the moments, it turned out

that both teams tried to play active hockey; they did not try to devote every effort to defence and attacked boldly. That is why there were many good, beautiful combinations played on the counter attacks. The game was equal," said Barys head coach Yerlan Sagymbayev, reported sports.kz.

Barys and Admiral met previously during the group stage of the tournament. The game ended with a score of 2-1 in favour of the Astana team.

"It was an excellent tournament. It was quite hard due to the ice, but the team did a great job and won the cup. It is a nice start to the season," said Barys right winger Evgeni Rymarev, according to vesti.kz.

Ugra from Khanty-Mansiysk took third place in the tournament after beating Metallurg Novokuznetsk by a score of 1-0.



Barys Astana pose after their Presidential Cup victory.

Photo: Turar Kazangapov

CAPITAL

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 26, 2015

Astana Leads Eurasian Cities in International Activity



Astana was the overall leader in the ratings, which assessed 50 small, medium and large cities, and one of only two non-Russian cities to be recognised.

Continued from Page B1

“Business activity” included data on a city’s exports to international markets, foreign investment and the number of enterprises with foreign capital, among other data. “International activity of a city population” assessed the representation of the local population in the international arena and data on population migration, student exchanges and tourism. “International organisations and institutions” information included data on a city’s cooperation with international organisations and institutions and its representation in the international educational arena, including how many of a city’s universities were included in the Top 600 World Universities List, how

many offered double degree programmes with foreign universities and other data. “Infrastructure” took into account visa centres, embassies and consulates, foreign airports and foreign airlines, among other topics. “Socio-demographic data” included English-language information offered by city administrations and the level of the foreign language knowledge of the city leader, among other issues.

The results of the ranking were revealed at the General Assembly of the Eurasian branch of UCLG. UCLG is a Barcelona-based international organisation that “represents and defends the interests of local governments on the world stage, regardless of the size of the communities they serve,” according to the UCLG website. The re-

gional branch of the organisation met in Kazan, Tatarstan, in the Russian Federation, for a congress entitled “Local Solutions for Global Development: Toward Eurasian Integration,” in which the heads of more than 100 cities in Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States participated, according to the Astana Akimat.

According to the Astana Akimat and Kapital.kz, winners among major cities after Astana were Khabarovsk and Yekaterinburg, both in Russia. Among medium-sized cities, Yakutsk and Stavropol in Russia and Tiraspol in Moldova had the highest rates of international activity. First among small cities were Yelabug, Magadan and Bugulma, all within the Russian Federation.

Yessil Riverbed to be Upgraded to Provide Flood Protection



Astana’s Yessil River.

By Zhazira Dyussebekova

ASTANA – Beginning this year, the city construction department is planning to implement 18 projects on the reconstruction of the Yessil riverbed to protect the capital from flooding. Completion of the work is dependent on funding allocation, reported astana.gov.kz, the city administration’s official website.

The reconstruction plan includes several stages. The design of four facilities, including the water control dam, is scheduled for 2015. Construction of 14 facets is planned for next year and four more phases are set to be built in 2017-2018.

The plan also provides a new

beach area for city residents and visitors, as well as construction of the harbour with an appropriate 17-unit infrastructure to ensure allowable conditions of storage, maintenance and operation of the fleet.

The Yessil River is the left and longest tributary of the Irtysh River.

The main aims of the projects are to protect Astana from flooding and construct new embankments. A number of measures will create more favourable environmental conditions, eliminate discharge of any drains into the river and

contribute to the development of shipping and comprehensive arrangement of territory with maximum greening.

The Yessil River is the left and longest tributary of the Irtysh River. Its length is 2,450 km and the basin area is 177,000 sq.km. The river originates in the Niyaz Mountain massif, with the upper course passing through Astana. Since 1998, the Yessil River has been actively managed for flood management and maintaining water level to provide recreational use and ensure the showpiece appearance. It is dammed downstream from central Astana, which keeps its level higher than it otherwise typically would be, while the river bottom has been made deeper to let flood waters pass faster.

New Facilities to Increase Storage of Vegetables in Astana by 2016

By Zhazira Dyussebekova

ASTANA – New greenhouses and vegetable storehouses are being built in Kazakhstan’s capital to ensure food security, according to astana.gov.kz, the city administration’s official website.

Tselinselmash and Astana Food Storage, with capacities of 2,500 tonnes each, as well as the new Astyk Logistics Class A warehouse complex, were put into operation this year. Construction of Kazglavprodukt, a transport and

plan, once all the programmes are put into operation in 2016, the city need for the storage of 60,000 tonnes of fruits and vegetables will be fully covered.

The city administration (Akimat) and trade organisations follow the memorandum “On the definition and application of the size of the trade allowance by trading organisations in wholesale and retail sale of socially-important food products in Astana” to keep pace with inflation in the planned corridor and prevent an unjustified rise in food prices, according

Six new vegetable storehouses with a total capacity of 19,500 tonnes and two greenhouses with a volume of 4,850 tonnes per year are under construction.

logistics centre with a packing line, has also been completed in the Astana Industrial Park, stated the Astana department of economy and budget planning.

The network of enterprises is expanding gradually. Six new vegetable storehouses with a total capacity of 19,500 tonnes and two greenhouses with a volume of 4,850 tonnes per year are under construction. Moreover, five additional vegetable storehouses which can accommodate 23,500 tonnes and seven greenhouses with a total capacity of more than 10,540 tonnes per year are being designed.

The city has also implemented projects to build a multifunctional trade and logistics complex and logistics centre. According to the

to the department of economy and budget planning. The document provides control over the implementation of its provisions by monitoring the establishment of trade allowances for food products in shopping sites, the process of price formation and avoiding facts of price collusion and unjustified price increases.

In addition, memorandums were signed with Kazakhstan’s Association of Poultry Farmers and 23 largest producers in the Akmola region to provide Astana with food products. The city holds weekly fairs every Saturday and Sunday with the participation of its farmers and suppliers, as well as those from the Akmola and Karaganda regions.

