



At United Nations, Kazakh President Proposes Developing Global Strategic Initiative to Be Implemented by 2045

By Altair Nurbekov and Malika Orazgaliyeva

NEW YORK – President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev took part in the General Debate of the 70th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UN GA) in New York Sept. 28 where he outlined Kazakhstan's position on the most pressing international issues and voiced proposed solutions.

Nazarbayev said Kazakhstan supports initiatives aimed at restoring trust in international relations and strengthening peace and security based on international law. For seven decades, the world has sought an effective formula to resolve conflict, he said, yet disputes have only grown more sophisticated and complex, an evil that stems from destroyed statehood. He urged shifting from routine conflict prevention and post-conflict rehabilitation to a new development strategy that renders conflict senseless.

In that context, he proposed the creation of what he called a 2045 Global Strategic Initiative Plan that would launch a new trend in global development based on fair conditions in which all nations have equal access to infrastructure, resources and markets. For that purpose, he urged transforming the Economic and Social Council into the Global Development Council with states elected by the General Assembly and heads of all United Nations specialised agencies acting as a global economic regulator. A draft world anti-crisis plan was under discussion at the Astana Economic Forum over the past few years.

He said clear rules must be created for the trade of global reserve



President Nursultan Nazarbayev delivers his remarks in Kazakh at the opening of the General Debate of the 70th session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York Sept. 28.

currencies, which today do not meet the criteria of justice, democracy, competitiveness and international control.

"In the 21st century, our world needs qualitatively new instruments. The UN member states need to combine their efforts to create a new supranational currency, which should be relevant to the targets and tasks of global sustainable development and prosperity," Nazarbayev said.

Nazarbayev also reaffirmed his earlier proposal of a universal dec-

laration to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons.

"Kazakhstan was the first country to close a nuclear test site, renounced the world's fourth largest nuclear arsenal and has created a nuclear weapon free zone in Central Asia. There is an acute need to establish nuclear weapon free zones in other regions of the world, particularly the Middle East. The nuclear powers must provide guarantees of the non-use of force for all countries that renounce possession of nuclear weapons," Nazarbayev said.

"In 2013, we initiated in Almaty two rounds of talks on the Iranian nuclear programme. We welcome the signing of the Comprehensive Plan of Action on Iran's nuclear programme," he said.

Nazarbayev mentioned that signing the agreement on the establishment of an International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) bank of low-enriched uranium in the country is an important step that the world should acknowledge as a safe use of the atom.

Continued on Page A3

Kazakhstan Achieves its Highest Ranking on Global Competitiveness Index

By Aiman Turebekova

ASTANA – According to the results of the Global Competitiveness Report for 2015-2016, Kazakhstan holds 42nd place among 140 countries in competitiveness, the best result in the history of Kazakhstan's participation in the ranking, reported the National Analytical Centre under the government and the National Bank of Kazakhstan.

The overall average score of Kazakhstan is 4.49, placing the

country between Poland (4.49) and Italy (4.46). The country's institutions were also ranked higher this year, though its position worsened by three points on labour market efficiency compared to last year.

However, this year the results moved up eight positions in comparison with the results of the ranking of the previous year. Of 114 global competitiveness index indicators, Kazakhstan improved on 73, declined on 30 and saw no change on 11 indicators.

Continued on Page A4

Kazenergy Forum Explores Energy's Role in Sustainable Development, Forecasts Oil Prices' Rise

By Michelle Witte

ASTANA – The theme of this year's Sept. 29 – Oct. 1 Kazenergy Eurasia Forum was "New Horizons of Energy: Prospects of Cooperation and Investments," but it also acknowledged the new normal: low oil prices and companies trying to balance innovation with thrift in the context of a world increasingly worried about climate change.

Despite low prices and belt-tightening, the forum offered some good news for the fossil fuel industry. An updated National Energy Report developed by international analytical agency IHS Cambridge Energy Research Associates (IHS

CERA) presented on Oct. 1 predicted a return of crude oil prices to \$63 per barrel next year and to \$80 in 2020 and growth in demand for primary energy resources to 2035 at 1.3 percent per year, 90–115 million barrels per day. Crude oil production in Kazakhstan will increase from 80.8 million tonnes (1.7 million barrels per day) in 2014 to 95.4 million tonnes (2.0 million barrels per day) in 2020, and Europe will remain an important market, the report forecast.

The report was presented by Daniel Yergin, co-founder and chairman of the Cambridge Energy Research Associates, who also moderated discussion panels during the forum.

Continued on Page A2

Nursultan Nazarbayev Outlines MDG Successes, Calls for Portions of Defence Budgets to be Diverted to Development



By Altair Nurbekov

NEW YORK – President Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan took the floor at the UN Summit for the Adoption of the Post-2015 Development Agenda on Sept. 27, describing his country's success in implementing the Millennium Development Goals and expressing support for the post-2015 agenda of sustainable development.

On Sept. 25, world leaders adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which includes a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to end poverty, fight inequality and injustice, and tackle climate change by 2030.

Addressing the audience, the President of Kazakhstan empha-

sised that his country had achieved significant progress in implementing the previous eight MDG goals.

In particular, Nazarbayev said Kazakhstan had strengthened the foundations of statehood and created the conditions for the development of civil society. He also noted that the country's gross domestic product had grown by 19 times and the per capita income had reached \$13,000 dollars.

Nazarbayev also emphasised Kazakhstan's positive health indicators: life expectancy in the country has exceeded the age of 71; poverty has decreased by 11 times from 34 percent to 3 percent; infant and maternal mortality rates have fallen by 65 percent; and significant progress has been made in the fight against AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis.

The country is also addressing the health of the planet, he said, by gradually reducing greenhouse gas emissions and taking care of the conservation of its biological diversity.

"We have approved the National Concept of the transition to a green economy. The disappearance of the Aral Sea is a threat not only to our region, but also worldwide. Its drying wind picks up about 75 million tonnes of toxic dust and salts annually, which have already been detected in Europe and Antarctica. With the support of the World Bank, we managed to restore the northern part of the Aral Sea. We are actively cooperating with the UN and the international community in rehabilitating the zone of the former Semipalatinsk nuclear test

site. The Central Asian countries are expecting further assistance in order to combat the specific environmental problems of the region," said Nazarbayev.

The President explained that Kazakhstan supports the global document on the development of the planet and said the final document of this summit would be a truly global guide for development and prosperity in the world.

The goals and targets of the new UN document coincide with the priorities and objectives of Kazakhstan, he said.

"Our response to the current challenges is the Kazakhstan 2050 Strategy, the purpose of which is the country's entry into the top 30 most developed countries of the world. We are implementing the National Plan: 100 steps on implementing five institutional reforms. It aims to modernise public administration, improve the work of civil and legal institutions and support further industrialisation of the economy. Reviving the economy of the Silk Road at present is very important for the Eurasian continent. This will benefit many countries, reducing transit time from the Asia-Pacific region to Europe. We are paving its infrastructure, building railways and highways linking the Pacific Ocean to Europe and the Middle East," he said.

Continued on Page A3

BOLASHAK
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CONFERENCE
& EDUCATION FAIR

Read an opinion by Kazakh Minister of Education and Science Aslan Sarinzhipov and comments from foreign partners and participants on Page A7.

NATION & EURASIA&WORLD

Government, NGOs, Universities Unite to Help Trafficking Victims in Kazakh Capital A2

Nazarbayev, Obama Reaffirm Strategic Partnership During New York Meeting A3

ECONOMY & BUSINESS

Private Investment in National Housing Savings Bank Won't Hurt Existing Depositors, Says Bank A4

Finnish Trade Minister, Major Business Leaders Visit Kazakhstan to Build Relationships A5

INSIDE

EDITORIALS

Asia as Possible Home for UN: Far-Fetched, but Worth Considering A6

'One Belt, One Road' Initiative Will Extend Regional Prosperity A6

OPINIONS

KUSHKUMBAYEV: Nurdy Zhol and China's Economic Belt of the Silk Road: Confluence of Goals A6

SARINZHIPOV: Kazakhstan Seeks to Create Highly Qualified Professionals A7

NATION & SPORT

FC Astana Brings Football Frenzy to Capital, Draws with Galatasaray B1

Brazil, Argentina, Chile Plan to Participate in EXPO 2017 B6

NATION

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2015

Government, NGOs, Universities Unite to Help Trafficking Victims in Kazakh Capital

By Claire McCarthy

ASTANA – Makhabat Sadykova, a 20-year-old student in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at Nazarbayev University, was introduced to the disturbing criminal activity of human trafficking in 2013 during the university screening of an anti-trafficking film, “Dark Side of Chocolate.”

“I knew about people exploiting others for free labour,” she said, “but I then became aware it was a business ... a serious business that people control others to make money. I wanted to find out more about the situation in Kazakhstan.”

Even after discussing the subject with fellow classmates who were doing research on child trafficking and despite it being the world’s second biggest business after drug trafficking, there was a distinct lack of information in the country.

“The disproportionate distribution of money in this country may lead to exploitation. You find naivety and lack of education are generally the main reasons behind becoming victims of exploitation,” said Sadykova.

Since its emergence 17 years ago as the new capital of Kazakhstan, Astana has seen accelerated growth in its size and population. This rapid development attracts large numbers of workers from rural parts of the country and its neighbouring nations, all hoping to find employment and a better life in the big city. Yet there is a dark side to this expansion. Many of these hopefuls are falling victim to labour and sexual trafficking – lured by promises of jobs and higher wages. In 2014, the government identified 74 trafficking victims, 68 of whom were Kazakhstani citizens from outlying areas. Between 2004 and June 2015, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) office in Kazakhstan has assisted 1,235 victims of trafficking.

Organisations such as the IOM, together with the government, are



Students from Almaty on World Day against Trafficking.

intervening. Kazakhstan is a destination country for victims of trafficking (VoT) due to its economic situation and geographical location, but the government, supported by nongovernmental organisations, is taking steps to tackle the problem, said Anissa Kuanova, NGO coordinator for the counter-trafficking department of IOM Astana.

“In 2009, the Ministry of Justice launched a pilot project to establish a government-funded shelter in Astana. Since 2015, the Department of Labour and Social Protection under the Akimat of Astana has supported this shelter through social contracting and IOM funds for the assistance of victims of trafficking at this shelter,” she said.

Kazakhstan has three shelters for VoTs and two established by the IOM, in Almaty in 2006 and Koskhetau in 2008. Kuanova added that in 2015, nearly 80 percent of all VoTs were foreigners, who need to stay in safe, temporary places where their individual needs are met.

“It is necessary to take into account the great traumas each victim undergoes and long stays in an unknown country (waiting for identity documents to be issued or criminal cases to be finalised). In connection with this, the NGO’s social workers in shelters will be

able to provide full rehabilitation opportunities for victims,” she explained.

“In cooperation with our NGO partners in 14 regions of Kazakhstan, we provide not only accommodation in places of safety (shelters), but also other needs, like medical and psychosocial support, skills development and vocational training, reintegration assistance and the options of voluntary, safe and dignified return to countries of origin,” she said.

Additionally, in close cooperation with the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the IOM supports the toll-free hotline 11616 to provide information on human trafficking and migration issues. Around 4,000 calls were made in the last three years. Furthermore, in 2013 the IOM launched the open Facebook group “Let’s Stop Trafficking in Kazakhstan!” to support social interaction among NGOs, journalists, government agencies and the general public in combating human trafficking and promoting access to social services for trafficking victims in the country.

Since beginning its work in Kazakhstan, the IOM has built a positive relationship with many organisations throughout the nation, including universities such as Nazarbayev University, L.N. Gumi-

lyov University, Eurasian National University, KAZGUU and D.A. Kunayev University in Almaty.

David Cronin, a teaching fellow for the last five years with the Nazarbayev University Foundation Programme, coordinates charity collections at NU as well as raising awareness of the shelter and human trafficking in general. Upon entering his apartment, it is easy to see the high levels of contributions he receives. His spare room is filled to the ceiling with donations of clothes, toiletries and random knickknacks; his balcony is piled high with shoes and in the corner stands a brand new bicycle left by an ex-colleague to sell to raise money for the charity. As he was involved in donating clothes to orphanages in Hungary and the rural poor in China, he researched similar possibilities in Kazakhstan the moment he arrived and was soon contacted.

“Due to this, I work not only in the university but also with the wider international community,” said Cronin. “I support the charity work mainly by collecting clothes, but also through educational activities such as relevant films and speakers. I have also been in local schools to raise awareness of human trafficking.”

Despite these efforts, it is sometimes difficult to raise awareness, as students are busy with academic studies and adapting to a new life style, he said. Students do get involved with the initiative by coming to events and attending lectures on related topics, however, helping directly is more complicated.

“It is difficult to have direct contact, which you can do with local orphanages, for example, due to the vulnerability of victims. There is the need for security in case of legal cases or attack from traffickers wanting to ‘reclaim their property,’” he said.

Sadykova started supporting the charity by raising awareness of clothing collections and film showings. Sadly, over the last few

years she has noticed an increase in the city’s unofficial newspapers advertising the services of prostitutes and this summer was driven to discover more about the problem by taking a course in Thailand and Singapore. She discovered how widespread the problem was but also how much was being done to combat this business, particularly in the Far East. She has returned to Kazakhstan and hopes to continue supporting the work that is being done in the country.

“The mentality of society needs to change for this to come to an end,” said Sadykova as she went on to describe the nuances of the problem. “In Kazakhstan, there is the idea that the women should be at home and not work. They do not receive a good education, which makes them more vulnerable. This, along with their lack of knowledge of the world, leads them to be targets for traffickers.”

Kuanova is hopeful, however, pointing to recent success stories from the capital shelter.

“After leaving the shelter, many VoTs keep in touch with NGOs. Children are returned to education and others are found places in orphanages,” she said.

Sadykova recalled how one VoT was re-issued documents and returned to Ukraine, where the woman had been taken, and was finally reunited with her family after being exploited in Kazakhstan for more than 15 years. Although the country has already made progress in combating human trafficking, a more concerted effort is required, she believes.

“Education is needed to counter the presumption promoted that the problem does not exist or is minimised in Kazakhstan,” said Cronin, adding people can get involved by “donating what you can, attending events, giving money, becoming informed, asking questions of representatives such as the Mazhilis deputies or Nur Otan party members and finally trying to educate others.”

NATIONAL NEWS IN BRIEF

President of Kazakhstan’s Boxing Federation and International Boxing Association (AIBA) Vice President Timur Kulibayev was elected president of the National Olympic Committee of Kazakhstan in elections held in Astana Sept. 26, Inside the Games reports. Kulibayev, who also chairs the board of the Atameken National Economic Chamber, will replace Temirhan Dosmukhambetov, who had occupied the position since 2006.

A Kazakh engineer has created a futuristic version of the classic LEGO toy, Tengrinews reports. Robo Wunderkind consists of various cubes, similar to LEGOs, which contain motors and sensors and can be assembled into a small robot. Every cube has its own function, and the toy can be used to learn the basics of programming and robotics, inventor Rustem Akishbekov said. “We want to become the new LEGO. We believe that children should play not just with toys made of plastic but with toys that bring added benefit,” he said. Orders for the new toy can be placed through Robo’s Kickstarter web page.

Kazakhstan chose “Patriots of the Year” in seven categories at its Oct. 5 Forum for Patriots. The theme of this year’s forum was “Mangilik El: One Nation of the Future.” Elizaveta Golovkina, mother of Gennady “GGG” Golovkin won in the “Mother’s Heart” nomination. Aidyn Aimbetov, Kazakhstan’s cosmonaut who just completed his flight in September 2015, and Bibigul Tulegenova, the famous singer and actress won in the High Morality nomination. An 11-year-old school student from West Kazakhstan region Nikita Tyukin won in the Courage nomination for saving two girls from drowning.

The Ministry of Health and Social Development is taking measures to prevent mass layoffs and preserve jobs, according to a statement by the ministry. The statement notes that since the beginning of the year, 72,000 memoranda covering 2 million workers have been signed between city and regional administrations, employers and trade unions. The country is also considering introducing a temporary measure to save the jobs of skilled workers subsidising two-thirds of the revenue lost due to reduced work hours. Another proposal is to give state grants to employers who will retrain and then reemploy workers to cover 80 percent of employers’ costs. This year, 322,000 people are expected to be covered by a comprehensive regional plan to promote employment. The goal of all the proposed measures is to keep unemployment below 5 percent.

The Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) conducted a training seminar on applying gender-mainstreaming principles in politics and local self-governance and promoting good governance, transparency and accountability in rural communities and small towns in Aktau on Oct. 2, the organisation reported. The event was co-organised by the OSCE Programme Office in Astana, the National Commission on Women’s Affairs and Family and Demographic Policy under the President and the Mangystau Regional Administration. Some 40 akims (mayors) of small towns and rural districts, as well as members of regional representative bodies, attended the seminar, where they learned from national experts about gender-related issue, particularly gender-responsive budgeting and the use of disaggregated statistics in gender-equality promotion. In light of upcoming local and parliamentary elections, they discussed women’s empowerment issues related to developing election strategies and campaign techniques, including using social networks to reach out to electorates. Particular attention was given to identifying ways to enhance public trust and improve the image of women leaders.

Kazenergy Forum Explores Energy’s Role in Sustainable Development, Forecasts Oil Prices’ Rise

Continued from Page A1

First Deputy Minister of Energy of Kazakhstan Uzakbai Karabalin said on the first working day of the forum, “We believe in the long-term development of the oil and gas sector in Kazakhstan, as the reserves are far from exhausted.”

However, cost cutting measures were also evident. The day also saw an announcement by KazMunayGas Chairman Sauat Mynbayev during a press conference that the national company had cut its investment portfolio by 130 billion tenge (US\$479.5 million) and planned to sell 50 percent of its share, in a \$4.7 billion dollar deal, in the massively delayed and over-budget Kashagan project by November. The company also cut its operating costs by 117 billion tenge (US\$428.6 million) this year.

However, as Vice President of KazMunayGas Daniyar Berlibayev said at a later session on the strategies of national companies in current economic conditions, KazMunayGas is invested largely in long-term projects and is taking a long-term view of investment. They don’t anticipate big changes to major projects and still have as a near-term goal becoming one of the world’s 30 biggest oil companies.

Indeed, reacting to short-term price fluctuations can do more harm than good, some forum participants said. Speaking at another afternoon session, Victor Martynov, rector of the Gubkin Oil and Gas University in Moscow, said “As soon as the crisis comes, companies start cutting money from education and innovation, which



means chopping off the branch on which we are sitting.”

The forum’s working days launched on with a plenary session on “The New Normal for Energy Markets,” which focused on China-Kazakhstan energy cooperation, the development of common energy markets in the Eurasian Economic Unions (EAEU), the Eurasian gas market, and energy goals of the Sustainable Development Goals recently adopted at the UN General Assembly.

“The energy issue is the cornerstone of every single economy,” former French Prime Minister Francois Fillon said early in his remarks at the opening session. But the new normal, he explained, will be transition, and consequent choices.

“Governments are anxious to decide energy policy orientation,” he said. This entails choosing the resources to use and the modes of consumption, which will affect future generations, particularly as

regards climate change. Energy policy for the 21st century must be reconsidered, and the theme of EXPO 2017 is a “visionary sign” of the need to anticipate the coming energy transformation, he said.

“We must innovate to produce and consume differently,” he said. “The transformation we see everywhere in the world shows the desire of each territory to take control of its own energy. The subject no longer belongs completely to central authorities. Local initiatives are intensifying to achieve energy autonomy on a territorial scale.”

The idea of the state as strategist in energy matters is obsolete, he said. Rather, states should guide the selected policy by defining the main principles and deciding on the choice of technologies to be developed.

Valery Golubev, deputy chairman of the Management Committee of Russia’s Gazprom, dis-

cussed the importance of Asia Pacific consumers in gas exports, including expectations that they will more than double their share in the company’s gas exports to 19 percent by 2020 and to 41 percent by 2035.

UN Special Representative and Secretary-General for Sustainable Energy for All Kandeh Yumkella said that energy will be crucial to achieving the goals of the new sustainable development agenda.

“We face three key energy challenges. The first one is to end energy poverty,” he said. “Energy touches on everything about human dignity.”

“Second, we need to strengthen economic growth in ways that are equitable and that satisfy the growing demands of people. ... That cannot happen without affordable, reliable energy,” he said.

The third challenge will be to reduce poverty, lift people to a middle-class lifestyle that relies on energy for comfort, without raising the global temperature. For these challenges, the oil and gas sectors have the solution, he said.

The oil and gas sector can help the UN reach three objectives in the next 15 years: to provide universal access to energy, to double the annual rate of energy efficiency, and to double the share of renewable sources in the global energy mix. “The technologies are known. We can do it. What we need is the political will,” he said.

Also taking part in the first plenary session were Administrator of the National Energy Administration of China Nuer Baikeli, Minister for Energy and Infrastructure of the Eurasian Economic Commis-

sion Tair Mansurov and President of the World Petroleum Council Jozsef Toth.

During the rest of the day, which included panels on stable resource potential as a foundation for ensuring energy security, changes in European energy dynamics and possible implications for Central Asia, strategies of national companies amidst current environment, breakthroughs for energy sector development, local content development and integration processes as well as on the resolution of investment disputes, participants discussed the new realities of a sector facing low prices.

The plenary session of the second day, “Energy Resources in the Limelight of Geopolitical Relations,” gathered Minister of Energy of Romania Andrei Dominic Gerea, Deputy Minister of Energy of Bulgaria Anton Pavlov, Vice President of Transneft Mikhail Margelov, Senior Vice President for Asia of Argus Media Jim Nicholson and First Vice President for Global Industry and Corporate Analysis of Wood Mackenzie Simon Flowers to discuss the use of energy as a geopolitical tool, the emergence of Asian markets as an alternative to European destinations and other geopolitical implications of the industry.

The day continued with panel sessions on modern trends of pure energetics development and downstream sector potential for further economic growth. Within the forum, Samruk Kazyna presented its first designs for wind power stations, and the event also included a separate youth forum, “Youth. Science. Innovations.”

EURASIA&WORLD

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2015

EXTERNAL NEWS IN BRIEF

Kazakhstan has accredited its first representative to the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), Silk Road Reports said on Sept. 25, identifying Konstantin Zhigalov, Ambassador to Canada with concurrent accreditation in Cuba, Jamaica and the Dominican Republic. Meeting CARICOM Secretary General, Ambassador Irwin LaRocque, Zhigalov said that Kazakhstan's Foreign Policy Concept for 2014-2020 includes a commitment to build ties with Latin America and the Caribbean. He also noted Kazakh Foreign Minister Erlan Idrissov's speech at the 2014 CARICOM Council of Foreign Affairs Ministers in New York and the fact that high-ranking Kazakh officials have visited every CARICOM state in recent years. LaRocque said that CARICOM, which is looking to implement a regional energy policy, is very interested in EXPO 2017 and its focus on future energy.

Kazakh and U.S. law enforcement agencies jointly disrupted an organised crime group involved in drug trafficking over the Internet, NewsKaz reported on Sept. 21. Assistant Regional Director at the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) Alfred Paris, who is stationed in Almaty, said the perpetrators were using the digital Bitcoin currency to sell drugs from the U.S. The statements were made at the international workshop, "Discussion, Investigation and Prosecutorial Oversight of Offences Relating to Money Laundering from the use of Electronic Money and Virtual Currency." The investigation was possible because of the relationship between the two agencies and the use of new approaches, he said.

President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev has appointed Sergey Nurtayev as the country's new ambassador to Italy, Tengrinews reported on Sept. 28. Nurtayev had served as ambassador to Greece since 2007. Former Ambassador to Italy Andrian Yelemessov has been named ambassador to Mexico. Nurtayev has been part of Kazakhstan's diplomatic corps since 2002.

Kazakhstan is ready to accept refugees from Middle Eastern countries, Tengrinews reported Sept. 25, citing Deputy Minister of Health and Social Development Birzhan Nurymbetov, who was speaking on the sidelines of a recent meeting of senior regional officials responsible for refugee protection and international migration. Kazakhstan adopted a law defining the status of refugees and asylum seekers in 2011 and has been working with the UN Refugee Agency in the country, he said. "In case of a mass influx [of refugees] ... Kazakhstan will respond in accordance with the legislation. Therefore, if necessary, Kazakhstan will accept a certain number of refugees in compliance with international law. We will take relevant measures to accommodate them," Nurymbetov said. He added that it is unlikely that many refugees will be seeking help in Kazakhstan, a statement echoed by Regional Representative of the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Central Asia Bernard Doyle. "I do not see any threat or possibility of refugees coming to Central Asia. Still, the Central Asian countries may play a great role in providing assistance in this situation. Because Central Asia is a home for a small percentage of refugees ... they can serve as an example for countries that have been accommodating a big inflow of refugees," he said at the meeting.

The Prosecutor General's Office of Kazakhstan plans to establish a database of persons who have committed child molestation offences in the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States in 2016, Vestnik Kavkaza reported on Sept. 28, citing Deputy Prosecutor General Andrei Kravchenko, who was speaking at a forum on Central Asian cooperation in countering violent extremism. Kazakhstan's Border Service has the right to prohibit foreigners with a record of abusing children from entering Kazakhstan without explanation, he said.

Nazarbayev, Obama Reaffirm Strategic Partnership During New York Meeting

By Altair Nurbekov

NEW YORK – Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev and U.S. President Barack Obama had a bilateral meeting in New York on Sept. 29 to discuss international issues and bilateral trade, investment, energy and security cooperation. The meeting took place on the sidelines of the 70th session of the UN General Assembly.

The presidents stressed the importance of the Kazakh-U.S. partnership for development, stability and security in Central Asia.

Nazarbayev recalled that Kazakhstan was the first country to close a nuclear test site as it renounced the nuclear weapons it had inherited as part of the former Soviet Union's nuclear arsenal.

The leaders further discussed the importance of finding peaceful solutions to the conflict in Ukraine that would be based on full implementation of the Minsk agreements. The U.S. president also congratulated President Nazarbayev on the launch of the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) low-enriched uranium fuel



President Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan and President Barack Obama of the U.S. meet during the UN General Assembly in New York on Sept. 29.

bank in Kazakhstan and on Kazakhstan's accession to the World Trade Organisation, the White House said in a WTO statement.

"The seven years of dialogue

with President Obama were productive. America assisted the accession of our country to the WTO and consistently supports all our initiatives. In Kazakhstan,

there are about 500 U.S. companies; the volume of direct investments is about \$30 billion. I noted that our country counts on the support of our aspirations and

the economic programmes of the United States," said the Kazakh head of state during a briefing for the media following his meeting with Obama.

Nazarbayev also said during his meeting with Obama that Kazakhstan welcomes a planned visit by U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry in the near term.

The United States, on Dec. 25, 1991, was the first country to recognise Kazakhstan's independence and to establish diplomatic relations with it following the breakup of the Soviet Union.

In 2010, Kazakhstan and the United States launched the Annual Bilateral Consultations (ABC) under the Strategic Partnership – a framework for cooperation on a range of shared interests, including regional cooperation, the stabilisation of Afghanistan, security, democratic reform, the rule of law, human rights, civil society development, economic development, energy, science and technology and people-to-people contacts. In accordance with the action plan, the parties created working groups that collaborate on these priority issues.

Kazakh President Outlines MDG Successes, Calls for Portions of Defence Budgets to be Diverted to Development

Continued from Page A1

In this context, the President stressed the importance of uniting around the idea of Great Eurasia, which would bring together the Eurasian Economic Union, the Economic Zone of the Silk Road and the European Union in a single integration project of the 21st century.

In addition, Nazarbayev touched upon the issue of uneven progress in different parts of the world.

"Negative trends are exacerbated by conflicts in the Middle East, Africa and Asia. The current immigration crisis is caused not only the

war but also by the development of imbalances. In the 21st century, successful states will feature no stockpiles of weapons and the ability to generate innovative ideas and create attractive environments. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, in 2014 the combined military spending of all nations exceeded \$1.7 trillion, or about 2.3 percent of world GDP," he said.

In this regard, the President once again put forward the proposal that each state annually transfer 1 percent of its defence budget to a Special United Nations Fund for sustainable development.

"The best thing we can do is to give hope that humanity will not break on the reef of modern threats and challenges. Kazakhstan is ready to make all efforts and commit all resources to the cause of global development," Nazarbayev concluded.

The Millennium Development Goals of 2000 set 2015 as the target year. Recognising the success of the goals and that a new development agenda was needed beyond 2015, countries agreed in 2012 at Rio+20, the UN Conference on Sustainable Development, to establish an open working group to develop a set of

sustainable development goals for consideration and appropriate action.

In early August 2015, the 193 member states of the United Nations reached consensus on the outcome document of the new agenda, "Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development."

The UN summit for the adoption of the new Sustainable Development Agenda with its 17 goals, was held from Sept. 25 to 27, convened as a high-level plenary meeting of the UN General Assembly.

"The impressive success of the achievement of the MDGs (Mil-

lennium Development Goals) is by no means a reason for complacency. Addressing global challenges, such as eradicating extreme poverty, combating inequalities, ensuring food security and healthy lifestyles and shifting to more sustainable patterns of production and consumption, will require additional financial, industrial and technological resources, supported by an environment of constructive cooperation and mutual assistance," said Sergey Lavrov, foreign minister of Russia, in his remarks at the summit.

At UN, Nazarbayev Proposes Developing Global Strategic Initiative to Be Implemented by 2045

Continued from Page A1

According to Nazarbayev, the erosion of international law and the weakening of global institutions is a dangerous challenge. He cautioned against the arbitrary imposition of sanctions, which contravene the United Nations Charter and international law.

"The right to impose international sanctions that can damage the well-being of millions of peo-

ple should remain the exclusive prerogative of the security council," he said.

Nazarbayev advocated for the peaceful settlement of the Ukrainian crisis and full implementation of the Minsk agreements. More broadly, he proposed establishing, under United Nations auspices, a global network to counter terrorism and extremism. The 2045 global strategic initiative plan could include a NEW FUTURE

concept to define the goals of the next stage of human development.

The President of Kazakhstan announced that EXPO 2017 in Astana will have a theme of Future Energy which would also support the UN initiative "Sustainable Energy for All."

"We invite all states to participate fully in the exhibition. Looking to the future and using the infrastructure put in place for EXPO 2017, I suggest opening in

Astana an international centre for the development of green technologies and investment projects under the auspices of the UN," he said.

Nazarbayev also urged participants to support the candidacy of Kazakhstan for the position of a nonpermanent member of the UN Security Council for 2017-18.

Before the debates, Nazarbayev met with UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and discussed the

post-2015 sustainable development agenda, as well as the importance of regional cooperation and the activities of the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia (UN-RCCA).

Nazarbayev and the secretary-general also discussed the challenges posed by violent extremism and terrorism and the preparation of the UN Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism.

Nazarbayev also held meetings with President of Poland Andrzej Duda and Prime Minister of Luxembourg Xavier Bettel, the press service of the Akorda Presidential Residence reported. The parties discussed bilateral cooperation in trade and investment.

Nazarbayev congratulated Bettel on the chairmanship of the European Union (EU) and expressed hope that the newly signed agreements between Kazakhstan and the EU would be ratified soon.

Nazarbayev invited Polish companies to establish cooperation with Kazakh entities and said that in doing so they would operate under preferential conditions in Kazakhstan.

During the visit, Nazarbayev met with representatives of major U.S. companies, such as Guggenheim, JP Morgan, Pfizer, Blackstone. In addition, he held meetings with Vice Minister of the International Financial Corporation Jin-Yong Cai and Executive Chairman of the Board of Cisco Systems Corporation John Chambers.



ECONOMY

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2015

Country Increases Meat Export to EAEU States

By Yerbolat Uatkhonov

ASTANA – The government of Kazakhstan plans to become a leading meat exporter to the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) and the world market. In Soviet times, Kazakhstan provided up to 300,000 tonnes of meat every year and low prices for oil is one good reason to start earn more money selling meat abroad.

Deputy Minister of National Economy of Kazakhstan Timur Zhaksylykov stated that Kazakhstan increased meat export to the countries of the EAEU by 56 times over the period of 2012–2014 at a Central Communications Service media briefing on April 22, according to Kazinform.kz.

“It is quite obvious that the figures are big enough so far, but what is important is the trajectory and the speed of growth of our export. I think we will see an increase this year as well,” Zhaksylykov added, as reported by Kazinform.kz.

He noted that beef exports to Russia increased in 2014 from 290 tonnes to 2,042 tonnes compared to 2013. In terms of money, the products exported in 2013 cost \$1.4 million and in 2014, \$9 million. According to him, the export of pork increased by 17 times, from 60 to 1,024 tonnes, and the export of poultry doubled from 2,620 tonnes to 5,292 tonnes.

Minister of Agriculture Assylzhan Mamytybekov called such record-breaking results historic high numbers, because the 6,000 tonnes of beef that Kazakhstan exported in 2014 is not only the highest number in the history of independent Kazakhstan, but is also equal to the volumes of exported beef for all years since Kazakhstan became independent. He



stated that agricultural companies of Kazakhstan will get another 20 billion tenge (US\$73.9 million) as subsidies in this year.

As of today, the Russian meat market is evaluated in the amount of 10.5 million tonnes, which is less than the 10.8 million tonnes it was in 2014, but still a huge market with great opportunities for neighbouring Kazakhstan. Kazakh ambitions are based on the current situation in Russian market: meat producers successfully provide necessary volumes of pork, but have failed to increase beef production over long period of time. The Russian government is taking measures to encourage them, protecting their own market against

importers, but it hasn't yielded results. At that, market capacity was constantly increasing since 2000 and decreased only this year as a result of economic problems. From 2000 to 2006 it increased by 1.5 million tonnes and reached 9 million tonnes in 2010.

A great migration is underway in the world of ranching, according to the National Geographic website. Cowboys from the U.S., Canada, and Australia are taking cattle by the thousands to Kazakhstan. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Kazakhstan's cattle population dropped by 50 percent, National Geographic reports. Today the state is spending a lot of money on loans to its farmers to

import breeding cattle, equipment, and cowboy expertise.

At that, Kazakhstan needs animals suited to its climate. Canada, with its long history of ranching and equally fierce winters is ideal partner in Kazakhstan's evolving livestock industry. The strong climate and soil similarities to Canada mean that the major part of Canada's best agricultural practices can be introduced here successfully.

Argentina is a good example of a developing country that has succeeded in building meat export, and perhaps a good model for Kazakhstan. Cattle breeding is crucially important for the state, which had 48 million heads ac-

ording to data from 2010, which is one of the highest numbers in the world. But Argentina's success isn't based only on the quantity of exported meat, but on its quality too. Restaurants from all over the world are proud to use meat from this country and Argentina's meat by itself became a popular brand a long time ago.

The Kazakh government explains its present success in meat export by easy access to the Russian market through the terms of the EAEU and the operation of Sybaga programme, which provides opportunities to purchase cattle breeding stock for reproduction for farmers and farm households. The programme's goal is to ensure an increase of commercial herds of meat cattle. Soft loans under the Sybaga programme are provided in national currency and their interest rates are relatively low. The programme is operating in all regions of Kazakhstan and it is very easy to participate in.

World meat market is based on three pillars: pork, beef and poultry. Pork is the most popular meat. In 2012, 104.4 million tonnes of pork was produced. China produced 51.4 million tonnes, 22.7 million tonnes was produced by the European Union and 10.5 million tonnes by the U.S. Poultry is in the second place with 87.92 million tonnes produced in 2012. Major producers are the U.S. (16.4 million tonnes), China (13.7 million tonnes) and Brazil (12.7 million tonnes). Beef is the third; worldwide production of beef amounted to 57.1 million tonnes in 2012. The U.S. produced 11.7 million tonnes, 9.2 million tonnes were produced by Brazil and 7.81 million tonnes by the European Union, according to Agrikainc.com.

ECONOMY NEWS IN BRIEF

The government of Kazakhstan is considering privatising three of the country's major oil refineries, Deputy Chairman of KazMunayGas Daniyar Berlibayev said Sept. 30 during the Kazenergy Forum in Astana, the Trend News Agency reported on Oct. 2. He did not elaborate on the nature of the possible privatisation, but said privatisation could bring advantages.

Samsung Engineering has put a big coal power plant project in Kazakhstan on hold due to financing issues, the Korea Times reported on Sept. 24. Samsung Engineering CEO Park Jung-heum said the project had been halted over an issue about the guaranteed purchase of the power the plant will produce. He did not comment on when the project, a \$2.2 billion, 1,320-megawatt plant to be built in Balkhash, might restart.

Production at Chevron-led TengizChevroil (TCO), Kazakhstan's top oil producer, is expected to be flat in 2015 and 2016, reports Rizzone, citing a Kazakh energy official. The company produced 26.7 million tonnes of oil last year, down from a record 27.1 million in 2013. Kazakhstan's overall oil production fell by 1.2 percent to 80.8 million tonnes last year and is officially forecast to drop further to 79.5 million this year. However, TCO is proceeding with an expansion plan that aims to boost production to 38 million tonnes by 2021, Kazakh Energy Minister Vladimir Shkolnik said earlier this year.

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has lowered its predictions for gross domestic product growth in Kazakhstan in 2015 from 1.9 percent to 1.5 percent, Tengrinews reported on Sept. 30. The change is due to the bank's expectations that private consumption will drop due to higher import prices and private investment will drop due to falling profits. The ADB predicts growth to recover to 3.3 percent in 2016, driven by investment in EXPO 2017 and the increasing competitiveness of the country's exports. This is still lower than the 3.8 percent growth the ADB predicted in March, however. The ADB also lowered its growth forecast for Central Asia in general, which it predicts at 3.3 percent in 2015 and 4.2 percent in 2016, down from the 3.5 percent and 4.5 percent projected previously.

A series of signed memoranda on economic cooperation resulted from the meeting of the economy ministers of the Cooperation Council of Turkic-speaking States in Astana, Vestnik Kavkaza reported on Sept. 30. They include agreements of understanding among public authorities to support small and medium-sized business and to explore the possibilities of exchanging experience and cooperatively improving investment environments. Attending the meeting were Turkish Minister of Economy Nihat Zeybekci, Azerbaijani Deputy Minister of Economy Sahib Mammadov, Kyrgyz Deputy Minister of Economy Daniyar Imanaliev and Deputy Secretary General of the Turkic Council Omer Kochaman.

Farmers from North Kazakhstan exported flour and meat products worth \$172 million over the first half of this year, eight times more than the region imported, Kazakh TV reports, citing Aidarbek Saparov, first deputy governor of the North Kazakhstan region. Fifty-four thousand tonnes of meat, 362,000 tonnes of milk and 430 million eggs have been produced since the beginning of the year.

The National Bank of Kazakhstan is continuing to intervene in the exchange of the country's currency to stabilise it, the bank said in a statement on Oct. 1. The latest intervention was on Sept. 30 of \$225 million, the message said. The country switched to a free-floating exchange rate on Aug. 20, but the bank reserved the right to intervene if it was deemed necessary. As of Oct. 1, the tenge was valued at 270.9 to the dollar.

Private Investment in National Housing Savings Bank Won't Hurt Existing Depositors, Says Bank



By Zhaniya Urankayeva

ASTANA – New private investment in the Housing Construction Savings Bank of Kazakhstan will not negatively impact the existing deposits of Kazakh citizens, the bank announced in a recent press release.

“The bank will only benefit after a new partner appears. It is about new investments, additional injections, newer technology and information technology services. Meanwhile, the bank will continue its social function, as it will annually receive subsidies from the state and pay its depositors annual premiums,” said Deputy Chairman of the Board of the Housing Construction Savings Bank of Kazakhstan Aizhan Medeuova.

The state will remain one of the funders of the bank, and its depositors will continue to receive an annual 20 percent interest premium. According to the financial organisation, this provision does not depend on the form of ownership of the financial institution and it is enshrined in the law “On housing construction savings in the Republic of Kazakhstan.” Therefore, citizens have no reason to worry, according to the press service of the bank.

A specific decision to attract a new shareholder has not been approved. The decision and its spe-

cifics, such as the percentage of shares to be offered to a new investor, are expected to be debated over the next two months.

“The Housing Construction Savings Bank has entered a new stage of development and is willing to cooperate with potential investors. It will give a new impetus to the activities of the bank and will make it work even better,” stated the bank's press release.

In this regard, Medeuova offered the example of the practice of international and European banks that have private investors and also carry out the social policy of the state, which is to provide citizens with affordable housing. The Housing Construction Savings Bank will continue its work in the same direction.

The House Construction Savings Bank of Kazakhstan is a member of the European Federation of Building Societies. Following the example of its European colleagues, the bank has implemented the system of housing construction savings in Kazakhstan for 12 years. About 100,000 people in the country have been able to obtain loans at the lowest interest rates in the country and to improve their living conditions due to that system. More than 550,000 contracts have been signed with the bank and it will continue to perform its obligations.

Earlier, during a briefing following a meeting of government officials, Kazakh Minister of National Economy Yerbolat Dossayev said that it is assumed that after the attraction of a strategic investor, the Housing Construction Savings Bank might change its strategy and tactics.

Kazakhstan Achieves its Highest Ranking on Global Competitiveness Index

Continued from Page A1

The biggest improvement was observed on control of international distribution (60; +31). An increase of more than 20 points was also achieved on indicators for trade tariffs, the effectiveness of anti-monopoly policies, the burden of customs procedures and local supplier quality.

In June 2014, President Nursultan Nazarbayev signed into law tax concessions to promote foreign investment, including a 10-year exemption from corporate taxes, an eight-year exemption from property tax, and a 10-year freeze on most other taxes for certain investors. Other measures include a refund on capital investments of up to 30 percent once a production facility is in operation. In 2014, Kazakhstan attracted gross foreign direct investment of nearly \$24 billion. The top five investor countries in Kazakhstan between 2005-

2014 are the Netherlands, the U.S., Switzerland, China and France.

Moreover, the new Nurly Zhol economic policy is, in the short term, aimed at overcoming current economic challenges. In the long-term, infrastructure development is intended to create a strong platform for new growth.

In addition, on June 26, the government of Kazakhstan expanded its visa-free regime and extended it to Dec. 31, 2017. The list now includes 19 countries: Australia, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Malaysia, Monaco, the Netherlands, Norway, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the UAE, the U.K. and the U.S.

Kazakhstan is also a founding member of the Eurasian Economic Union, a market of up to 175.6 million consumers with overall gross domestic product of approximately \$2.4 trillion. This year the country joined the World Trade

Organisation, which is providing new economic opportunities. It will ensure access to foreign markets for Kazakh companies and consumers can have more goods and services to choose from.

The Global Competitiveness Index was created for the World Economic Forum by Professor Xavier Sala-i-Martin and was published for the first time in 2004. The index is composed of 12 pillars of competitiveness that characterise in detail the competitiveness of countries at different levels of economic development.

The Global Competitiveness Reports assess the competitiveness landscape of 144 economies, providing insight into the drivers of their productivity and prosperity. The reports remain the most comprehensive assessment of national competitiveness worldwide, providing a platform for dialogue between government, business and civil society about the actions required to improve economic prosperity.

EAEU Bank Chiefs Discuss Currency Policy in Region

By Zhaniya Urankayeva

ASTANA – An advisory board on the monetary policy of the central banks of Customs Union and Single Economic Space member states recently reviewed the economic situations in those countries, the TASS Russian News Agency reported Sept. 26.

Representatives of Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) states met at the educational and research centre of Armenia's Central Bank in Dilijan, where the 11th meeting of the advisory body was hosted. The heads of the central banks of

Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Russia attended the meeting.

The parties discussed the economic situation in the EAEU states, financial and credit policy, macroeconomic and financial risks and the harmonising of legislation of the countries in these matters, as well as cooperation in payment systems.

“Measures to prevent risks to macroeconomic and financial stability, harmonisation of financial legislation were considered. In addition, participants exchanged views on cooperation in the field of payment systems,” a statement said.

From Kazakhstan, Deputy Chairman of the National Bank Oleg Smolyakov was involved in the meeting.

The advisory board on monetary policy is a consultative and advisory body of the national banks of Customs Union and Single Economic Space member states. The main objective of the council is coordinating currency policy, including the elaboration of unified approaches and directions of exchange rate policy to ensure the expansion of the use of national currencies in mutual settlements.

BUSINESS

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2015

BUSINESS NEWS IN BRIEF

The Mazhilis (lower chamber of Parliament) of Kazakhstan has approved a new draft Labour Code for the country in its first reading at the plenary session Sept. 30. The draft Labour Code was prepared to execute Step 83 of President Nursultan Nazarbayev's 100 Concrete Steps to implement the five institutional reforms of the Plan of the Nation he presented earlier this year. The new Labour Code defines the boundaries of state intervention in labour relations between employers and employees, with a view to ensuring a balance of interests of the parties and to distributing their roles and responsibilities. The state will establish minimum labour standards and guarantee workers' compensation and tightly control their execution by employers.

The third Machine Builders' Forum launched on Oct. 1 in Astana. The forum brings together government officials and representatives from leading enterprises in the field, both local and foreign. Director of the Karaganda Engineering Consortium Bolat Kenzhin said that mechanical engineering is the backbone of any economy in an interview with Ortcom.kz. He noted that Kazakhstan's enterprises are building products that are in demand in Russia, China and Belarus, and that state support for the field, including grants and loans, is creating growth potential. Also in the context of the forum, Mazhilis (lower chamber of Parliament) Deputy Meiram Pshembayev told a Central Communications Service briefing that the volume of production in the country's machine-building sphere has grown from 60 billion to 870 billion tenge (from US\$221.9 million to US\$3.2 billion).

Commercial shipping companies will be exempted from some taxes, the prime minister's website reports, citing a statement by Chairman of the Transport Committee of Ministry of Investment and Development of Kazakhstan Asset Asavbayev at a Central Communications Service briefing on Sept. 30. Waiving corporate income tax and value added tax is intended to improve the competitiveness of the country's merchant fleet, he said. It will also help companies afford new ships.

SaryarkaAvtoprom has signed two documents on further cooperation with companies in Russia and Turkey as part of the World Trade Organisation and the Eurasian Economic Union, Bnews.kz reports. The agreements were signed at the Machine Builders' Forum in Astana. One agreement is on providing bus components to the Nias company of Russia, the other to localise commercial machinery technology with Turkish company Oztreyler.

Kazakhstan's Senate has adopted a draft law of amendments to other legislation due to the country's accession to the World Trade Organisation, Bnews.kz reports. The bill covers regulations related to the procurement of goods, works and services of subsoil users and state-owned companies and obligations regarding entry and sojourn of foreign nationals. It aims at facilitating access to the telecommunications services market, government procurement, subsidies and other issues.

More than 13,000 jobs have been created in Astana as of Oct. 1, Kazinform reported on Oct. 2. According to the mayor's office, 13,614 jobs have been created: 1,076 jobs in industrial sectors; 3,211 in wholesale, retail trade, car and bikes repair; 859 in the transport and storage sectors; 2,260 in education and healthcare; 2,048 in construction and 4,160 in other spheres of employment. From January to September, the mayor's office's employment centre found jobs for 4,488 people and found temporary work for 114.

Governor of the South Kazakhstan region Beibut Atankulov invited Georgian businessmen to invest in the region's agricultural sector at a meeting with Ambassador of Georgia to Kazakhstan Zurab Pataradze.

Finnish Trade Minister, Major Business Leaders Visit Kazakhstan to Build Relationships

By Michelle Witte

ASTANA – Minister for Foreign Trade of Finland Lenita Toivakka will lead a major business delegation on a trip to Kazakhstan from Oct. 4–7 to deepen economic cooperation and trade and develop relationships within Kazakhstan's educational system, industrial sector and green technology industry, she told The Astana Times on Oct. 2.

"The business delegation accompanying me is one of the largest groups of Finnish business leaders and representatives ever to visit Kazakhstan. Its composition reflects well what we Finns want to offer to Kazakhstan: There are 43 companies and educational institutions, 18 of them represent vocational institutions, universities and universities of applied sciences and top-class companies specialising in solutions to facilitate learning. Eleven companies are world leaders in clean tech and 14 companies represent other sectors like construction and logistics. These are good examples of how Finnish companies want to have more cooperation and trade [here]," she said.

Bilateral relations have always been very good, she said, and Kazakhstan is Finland's biggest trading partner in Central Asia. "From our side we want to further deepen this relationship and make the most of existing potential."

Trade also provides a good foundation to expand cooperation



Minister of Foreign Trade of Finland Lenita Toivakka.

to other areas, like investments, technology or sustainable development, Toivakka said. In these areas, the minister sees huge potential for cooperation.

"Developing modern bioeconomy is one of the strategic targets in Kazakhstan," she said. "The Finnish government has designated bioeconomy, where Finnish companies are very strong, as one of the so-called spearhead projects in Finland. Our companies have developed top solutions to utilise different kinds of waste and bio-based raw materials for production of bioenergy."

The country is also strong in combined heat and power and district heating and cooling solutions, she said. Finland, like Kazakhstan, is very cold, Toivakka notes; like Kazakhstan, it is rela-

tively large, with a low population density. Finland's expertise should find a natural home here. "Finnish companies are very strong in energy efficiency and energy saving solutions in the following areas: new construction and renovation, industrial processes and control, smart grids, monitoring and connecting users of renewable energy to main grid." Small towns and villages in Finland are also brimming with off-grid solutions and know-how, she noted, also useful to be shared, or swapped, with Kazakhstan.

The visit to Astana is also a fact-finding mission on preparations for EXPO 2017, which Toivakka said her government will make a decision on around the turn of this year.

"The theme of the EXPO 2017 (Future Energy) is extremely im-

portant and topical," Toivakka said. The country has already sent an expert to explore the possibilities the expo offers Finland; this fall, the Finnish government will discuss its participation and consult interested companies, she said.

The minister is also hoping to boost cooperation in education based on a memorandum of understanding on the subject signed between the two countries in 2009, and on new agreements signed during this trip. Toivakka sees significant potential for cooperation in vocational education and training and higher education, both spheres Kazakhstan is working to develop. Both countries value and invest in education, she noted, and see it as crucial to their continued development.

"Finland has a high-quality vocational education system with highly competent teachers. Our vocational education and training is, in fact, considered a highly attractive choice among students – both young [students] and adults," the minister said.

In addition to expertise with quality assurance mechanisms, vocational teacher education and in utilising information technologies in education, Toivakka says she believes her country has valuable lessons to share in combining education and working life. "Indeed, a deep, practical and interactive cooperation with the working life and companies is fundamental for our system. The needs of working life are carefully taken into account in the development of qualification

frameworks and curricula. This ensures the relevance of education." Kazakhstan, through moving to a more targeted approach with its Bolashak scholarship programme by consulting with major employers on their needs, is taking steps to ensure the relevance of its higher education as well.

Toivakka also encouraged more Finnish and Kazakh students to take part in exchange programmes, like the Erasmus+ programme. "There is also true potential for increasing the mobility of higher education students, teachers and researchers between our countries."

The number of actors in educational cooperation between Finland and Kazakhstan has increased remarkably over recent years, she said, and now covers many sectors, including health and social services, vocational teacher education and even pilot training. Toivakka is confident that it will keep expanding.

"I think we both share the deep understanding that education is the key for wellbeing in our societies and the foundation of economic competitiveness," she said. "We also have many common interests and features like the desire to make our life easier with the help of technological innovations and the persistence due the harsh climate."

There are no obstacles to future cooperation, Toivakka said. "Both Finland and Kazakhstan are seriously interested in deepening our relations in various fields."

Kazakh Railway Delegation Visits China, Meets with Local Officials

By Gleb Malykh

A delegation of Kazakhstan's national railway company, Kazakhstan Temir Zholy (KTZ), headed by company President Askar Mamin participated in the Second International Logistics Forum China – the Silk Road, held on Sept. 21–22 in the city of Lianyungang, China. The forum gathered more than 200 representatives of logistics and shipping companies from China, Japan, South Korea, Kazakhstan and Taiwan, as well as some European countries.

Speaking at the forum, Mamin presented a report on the development of the transit potential of Kazakhstan, introducing the country's new Nurlu Zhol economic policy, which correlates with the Chinese initiative "One Belt, One

Road." It was also noted that the number of China-Europe-China

freightliners has increased three times, from 105 to 291, during

the past eight months compared to the same period of 2014. At the



same time, the speaker mentioned the high development dynamics of the Kazakhstan-China International Logistics Company of Lianyungang, which has managed 150,000 containers in 14 months. The figure is expected to reach 500,000 containers by 2020.

Several bilateral meetings were held during the Kazakh delegation's trip, including with Governor of Jiangsu Province Li Xueyong and Mayor of Lianyungang Zhao Xiaojiang. The sides discussed the implementation of the agreement on the investment of \$600 million in the development of the Khorgos-East Gate special economic zone (SEZ), signed on Aug. 31 during the visit of President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev to China. In addition, within the framework of the expansion of the Kazakhstan-China logistics company, a new project on building a logistics park for the member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation on the territory of the dynamically developing sea port of Lianyungang has been reviewed.

EBRD Launches Women in Business Programme, Offers Credit to Female Entrepreneurs



By Michelle Witte

ASTANA – The European Bank of Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) has launched a 3.7 billion tenge (US\$14.1 million) credit line for women entrepreneurs in Kazakhstan, the bank announced Sept. 22.

"The EBRD is proud to an-

nounce the launch of its first project in Kazakhstan under the new programme 'Women in Business,' actively supported by the government of the country under the auspices of enhanced partnership with the EBRD. I would like to thank Prime Minister Karim Massimov and Minister of National Economy Yerbolat Dossayev for the partner-

ship with the EBRD programme, in which we jointly strive to unlock the potential of the country," EBRD Director for Kazakhstan Janet Heckman said announcing the new programme, according to the EBRD.

She also thanked the country's Damu Fund, which supports small businesses in Kazakhstan, for supporting EBRD initiatives in the small- and medium-sized business (SME) sector.

The credit line, the first project in the larger Women in Business programme, will be provided through Bank CentreCredit, one of the EBRD's partner banks in the country, the EBRD reported. The new programme is intended to help SMEs headed by women gain access to funding, expertise and advice with a combination of credit lines, consulting on modern management practices, technologies supporting productivity and competitiveness and other mechanisms.

Consulting will be provided at one of the EBRD's six offices in the country, in Aktobe, Almaty, Astana, Kostanai, Shymkent and Ust-Kamenogorsk, the EBRD reported. The EBRD is also planning to open an office in the city of Karaganda.

Women in Kazakhstan head only 40.7 percent of active SMEs in Kazakhstan, according to an Azernews report on Sept. 22, and contribute 38 percent of gross domestic product, despite being more than 51 percent of the population as of 2013. Women's SMEs tend to be smaller than men's, according to Azernews.

In an interview earlier this month, Fulbright-Clinton Fellow at Kazakhstan's Union of Women Entrepreneurs Rachel Ostrow noted that women, particularly those outside of the country's large cities, face additional hurdles to accessing credit because of a tendency for property to be listed in the names of men in their families

– their fathers or husbands. This lack of credit can make the expansion from small to larger businesses especially difficult for women. Women's businesses in Kazakhstan and in many of the EBRD's countries of operation also have poorer access than men to information and technical support, according to Azernews.

Kazakhstan, which has so far provided \$43 million to EBRD programmes to support SMEs in the country, is credited as a donor to the Women in Business programme as well.

Chairman of Bank CentreCredit Vladislav Lee said the new programme would help support existing business and preserve jobs during the difficult economic times the country is going through, according to the EBRD press release.

Women in Business programmes have already been launched in Turkey, the Western Balkans and the Caucasus, the bank reports.

EDITORIALS & OPINIONS

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2015

Asia as Possible Home for UN: Far-Fetched, but Worth Considering

At the 70th session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev proposed the idea of moving the UN headquarters to Asia. He recalled that 70 years ago, when instead of the defunct League of Nations in Geneva, the United Nations was being established, it was decided to locate its headquarters in New York, as the centre of world development then moved from the Old World to the new point of global growth, the United States and New York. "In the twenty-first century, the centre of development is shifting to Asia, the largest continent in the world, home to two thirds of the world population and concentrated vast resources. Powerful emerging economies of Asia are marking a new reality in global processes. It is important to use this historic opportunity to give new impetus to relations between states," he said.

While the idea of moving the UN headquarters to Asia will require some time to gestate, it is nevertheless important to consider some developments on the continent as far as they relate to changing global dynamics.

Under the current global economic order, indeed, Asian economies have developed quickly and prospered, and to a large extent have been the main beneficiaries of the postwar settlement, taking full advantage of it. Successive trade rounds of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (which significantly reduced trade barriers of industrial nations while allowing developing countries some preferential treatment), as well as the export-oriented growth strategy of most Asian nations, made their rapid growth and industrialisation possible. Increased capital flows and investment (direct and portfolio) by the West accelerated their growth potential.

Moreover, with the collapse of the former Soviet Union and the consequent impact on Eastern Europe, more than 400 million people were integrated into the free market economic system. With the opening and accelerated growth of the economies of China and India, nearly 2 billion people became fully integrated into the global economic system. That means that, over the last 20 years, we have seen economies with half the world's population integrate into the global economic system. In addition, globalisation of national economies across the world, both advanced and developing, started to accelerate in the 1990s. Emerging economies accelerated their financial deregulation and opening, which led to rapid integration of their financial markets into the global market. This also led to massive and volatile capital inflows to these economies.

Most Asian economies are very open, depending heavily on international trade and investment. Maintaining an open system will be a key to their future success. For instance, over the past 20 years China's real gross domestic product growth has averaged 9.9 percent. This has lifted its economy from being only marginally relevant to being one of the biggest drivers of global growth. Chinese investment abroad, especially in the production of strategic commodities, but also in consumer industries, will continue to attract the attention of foreign governments.

China took the initiative in establishing the Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). AIIB is an inter-governmental institution for the multilateral development of Asia. It aims to promote infrastructure construction, connectivity, economic integration and common prosperity in the Asian region. AIIB is also a multilateral financial institution and a specialised investment and financing platform for infrastructure development in Asian countries.

The establishment of the AIIB can not only provide highly efficient and reliable long-term financial support for Asian economic and social development but also strengthen infrastructure construction as an engine of economic growth. It will also improve the efficient utilisation of capital in Asia through leverage so as to promote construction of all-around connectivity in the region.

Therefore, more and more Asian countries and even non-Asian countries have joined the AIIB and are eager to be founding members. It reflects their trust in the AIIB and its good prospects for development. Asia now produces up to 30 percent of the world's GDP and its share is expected to reach 50 percent by 2050.

Despite the fact that Asia is one continent that has some of the most dynamic economies in the world, Asia's economic integration is developing too slowly. There are many reasons for the delay.

First, unbalanced economic growth is one of the main difficulties for Asia's economic integration. For instance, if we compare countries such as Singapore or Saudi Arabia (high-income countries) with Pakistan and Laos, which are low-income countries, it is clear that Asia's economic growth is unbalanced.

Second, Asia has diversified cultures, religions and customs.

Third, there are still numerous problems related to security in Asia, ranging from lack of peace on the Korean Peninsula to tensions among numerous states over territorial claims including in the seas; from rising instability and the lack of settlement in Afghanistan to the war in Syria, to name but a few. There is no doubt that those tensions also negatively affect the progress of Asia's economic integration.

So, all in all, the proposal by the Kazakh leader to transfer the UN headquarters is interesting, yet requires a longer look, at the very least. His other proposal, also voiced from the UN rostrum, to open an international centre for the development of green technologies and investment projects under UN auspices in Astana based on the EXPO 2017 premises seems more near term and more substantial.

For instance, East Asia became one of the key global centres for new electronic industries during the past three decades because those countries created special economic zones, export processing zones, science parks and other institutional arrangements to entice foreign investments in the electronics sector. This is a clear example of a great success.

Therefore, establishing new office under UN auspices in Astana will provide additional impetus to development not only for Asian countries, but also to the development of world economies.

Astana was chosen as the venue to host EXPO 2017, which will focus on the theme Future Energy and seeks to concentrate on both the future of energy, but also on innovative but practical energy solutions and their global impact. The exhibition will last three months, include representatives from approximately 100 countries and is expected to draw 3 to 5 million visits. This will give a powerful impetus to innovative development across Central Asia and help stimulate international discussion on sustainable green energy and economies.

This event could potentially become a great project for the future. After the exhibition, the EXPO's buildings could be transformed into the international centre for the development of green technologies and investment projects under UN auspices.

This platform can become an appropriate place to discover new technologies, gathering brilliant scientists and specialists in this field. Meanwhile, all countries need to join efforts to save our planet by searching for practical energy solutions.

Nurly Zhol and China's Economic Belt of the Silk Road: Confluence of Goals

By Sanat Kushkumbayev

Modern Kazakhstan, located in the central part of Eurasia, is a transit link in the system of multilevel interconnections of Asia and Europe. It is known that the internal development and availability of international transport arteries are essential ingredients to the economic and political independence of states. For Kazakhstan and other Central Asian countries since independence, the role of international transport communications has been and remains significant.

The draft economic Belt of the Silk Road (EBSR) and the Nurly Zhol state programme both were announced in the capital of Kazakhstan. It is symbolic that Chinese President Xi Jinping first announced this initiative to the international community in September 2013 in Astana. The concept is based on five principles: political convergence, communication infrastructure, free trade, circulation of capital and the rapprochement of peoples.

Announced by President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev in November 2014, the Nurly Zhol new economic policy largely corresponds with the plans for the development of EBSR. Launched into operation in recent years, sections of the international highway Western China – Western Europe, as well as the Kazakhstan-Turkmenistan-Iran-Persian Gulf railway, can be an organic part of the modern Silk Road routes.

The Nurly Zhol programme is directed at integrated continuation of the course of reforms in the economy. To this end, Kazakhstan conducted a large-scale programme of modernisation of transport assets, which covers all modes of transport.

Until 2020, it is planned to implement projects with a total investment of about \$40 billion. Until the end of 2015, it is planned to attract \$5 billion from four leading international banks for the construction of roads in the Centre – South, Centre – East and Center – West directions. This is how the task set in Nurly Zhol of connecting the capital with major regions on the radiation principle will be implemented.

2015 was especially fruitful for Kazakh-Chinese relations. President of China Xi Jinping at the time of his visit to Astana in May, noted, "Currently, China and Kazakhstan have achieved initial results towards the formation of the belt and the Chinese side appreciates this fact. China intends to promote the convergence of the formation of the economic zone of the Silk Road with the Kazakhstan's Nurly Zhol programme."

"Both countries should continue to implement large-scale joint projects in the spheres of infrastructure and transport and communication of interconnectedness to promote cooperation in the field of energy and finance, to deepen relations in the humanitarian sphere, to continue to strengthen the partnership for security," said Xi Jinping.

The state visit of the President of Kazakhstan to China in early September gave a new impetus to bilateral cooperation and in particular the further interaction of Kazakhstan's Nurly Zhol and the Chinese initiative of the Economic Belt of the Silk Road. A joint declaration on a new stage of comprehensive strategic partnership, adopted by the two leaders, secured the long-term perspective.

Kazakhstan's competitiveness depends not only on the development of transit potential, but also on the level of development of national transport and communications infrastructure.



Cooperation with China, having rich experience in this field is attractive for Kazakhstan.

The planned construction of the Big Almaty Ring Road near Almaty will exceed 100 km and will be built funded by Chinese investment. Infrastructure facilities such as the Almaty – Ust-Kamenogorsk road, the road to the border with China to the Alashankou station and several others will be implemented through the investment from China.

"The loan agreement between JSC Astana LRT and the State Development Bank of China was signed. Light rail transit will be built in the capital of Kazakhstan and he creation of a system of high-speed BRT buses will be subsidised. Chinese partners are planning to invest \$600 million over five years in the development of the logistics and the creation of industrial special economic zone at Khorgos-Eastern Gate. The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank is the driver of these and other projects with capital of \$100 billion along with the Silk Road Fund with \$40 billion.

For the purpose of industrial development in Kazakhstan, the Bank of China is ready to allocate \$5 billion through the Baieret holding. Moreover, investments are expected in Kazakhstan from the Silk Road Funds and also the largest investment corporation, CITIC Group. In addition, the Samruk Kazyna Sovereign Wealth Fund has signed with Chinese companies agreements in the spheres of transport, energy, nuclear, metallurgical and chemicals totaling \$5.1 billion.

Kazakhstan welcomes Chinese investment in non-primary sectors of the economy. In the framework of the signed new contracts, joint ventures will be created in the manufacturing and agriculture sectors (cement, glass, food industry) on the territory of Kazakhstan. These ventures involve dozens of companies and billions of dollars in contracts.

With regard to the implementation of projects with partners from China, Kazakhstan has formed a volume of 100 container trains from the port of Lianyungang to Central Asia. This new volume has never been on the railroad. EBSR has become an open platform for economic cooperation between the Eurasian Economic Union and the Asia-Pacific region.

With a gradual shift of the global economic centre towards the Asia-Pacific region, relations between Europe and East Asia will take a leading role. The dynamic development of these ties is currently channeled through ASEM (Asia-Europe Meeting) institution with regular meetings of leaders of Asia-Pacific countries and the EU. Kazakhstan's accession to the World Trade Organisation and the introduction of international standards for the movement of goods across borders should have a significant impact on the development of transport infrastructure of the region.

The author is deputy director of the Kazakhstan Institute of Strategic Studies under the President of Kazakhstan.

'One Belt, One Road' Initiative Will Extend Regional Prosperity

Even a generation ago, the Silk Road would have seemed to most people little more than a fascinating, if long-lasting, episode in history. It may have been the route through which goods, people and ideas flowed between East and West for many centuries, but its relevance to the modern world seems slim.

After all, it was a time when the U.S., Japan and Europe were still regarded as the motors of the global economy. It was maritime and air routes that were seen as the future. It was also why Central Asia, despite the region's position at the centre of global crossroads, was seen as peripheral to the future.

Perceptions today are very different. Any lingering doubts about the key importance of China to the health of the global economy have been dispelled in recent weeks by the impact on confidence worldwide of suggestions that the country's remarkable growth in recent years may be slowing down. Kazakhstan's region, too, is now seen, for both good and bad reasons, as central to the challenges and opportunities facing the world.

It is against this background that the One Belt, One Road development initiative has to be viewed. By modernising and extending the ancient Silk Road and ensuring its benefits are felt by all the citizens and countries along its route, it will be a powerful lever to spread stability and prosperity east and west, north and south.

First spelled out in detail by China's President Xi Jinping on a visit to Kazakhstan in 2013, it won immediate, enthusiastic support from his hosts. Kazakhstan had, in fact, already been involved in developing the ideas that will see significant new investment to open up trade routes across land and sea and to build an integrated and cohesive economic area around them.

The vision goes far beyond restoring the importance of the old Silk Road by making road and rail links between China and Europe fit for the future, important as these are. It also sets out to create new maritime connections to foster investment and cooperation with Southeast Asia, Oceania and Africa.

Any glance at a map would show how central Kazakhstan is to the success of these plans. The country's territory links Asia and

Europe and also the fast-growing markets of the Middle East, from whose ports goods can be exported and imported. Kazakhstan's energy and mineral wealth already form an important part of the trade along both routes.

Kazakhstan's vital role in the project has already been confirmed by a series of joint investment deals with China to increase cooperation on infrastructure, energy and industrial capacity. It will be further boosted by plans to streamline customs rules and remove bureaucratic barriers not only between the two countries but among all nations on the Silk Road.

For at the heart of this initiative is a recognition of the importance of all countries sharing in its benefits. Opportunities and prosperity must be extended as widely as possible or the progress and stability of all could be undermined.

Kazakhstan, of course, has its own economic policy – Nurly Zhol, which shares a lot of similarities with the One Belt, One Road initiative. Nurly Zhol will compliment China's project, as its main priority is the development of transport and logistics, as well as industrial and energy infrastructures. When combined together, the Nurly Zhol programme and the One Belt, One Road initiative will open up new opportunities for strengthening the strategic partnership between the two countries and will ensure that both Kazakhstan and China achieve their objectives.

One Belt, One Road is, of course, also a powerful answer to those who feared the launch of the Eurasian Economic Union would see Kazakhstan limiting its horizons. It confirms, as does the country's membership in the World Trade Organisation (WTO), that Kazakhstan sees the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) as another way of driving growth and deepening its relationship with the global economy.

Two years ago when President Xi Jinping visited Kazakhstan, the prospects for the world's economy seemed more optimistic. Today's climate is more challenging. But this uncertainty has only strengthened the case for the One Belt, One Road initiative, whose main aim has always been to spur growth. It shows why ideas like the Silk Road have stood the test of time.

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Kazakhstan Seeks to Create Highly Qualified Professionals

By Aslan Sarinzhypov

Our country points out qualitative education as one of its main priorities, and lately Kazakhstan has been very active at the national level improving the quality of qualified staff training.

The head of state set a clear action plan for further development of the national educational system and science in the National Plan "100 steps on implementation of five institutional reforms." Drawing on the expertise of the countries that had succeeded economically due to the competitiveness of human resources, such as Korea, Japan and Finland, a goal has been set for us to introduce new academic standards of school education that would let us step away from the "passive" system of knowledge transfer to the development of creative skills, perceptive activity and independent thinking.

Measures for implementation of a 12-year education system, a new model of multi-language education in high school and universities are aimed at the renovation of educational content as well.

Education policy updates will give an opportunity to set a Mangilik El (Eternal Nation) values system as the basis for programmes at all levels of education. Its ideas will be integrated in school pro-



grammes through academic subjects, research and extra-curricular activity, complementary education and elective courses.

To help train highly qualified professionals for the six priority economic fields, more than 2,000 industry specialists will be brought to universities and colleges. Twenty-four university laboratories and 57 college laboratories will be equipped within the Nurlu Zhol governmental programme. Expansion of academic and administrative freedom will be started stepwise, considering the experience of Nazarbayev University.

As for science areas, it is planned to develop two innovative clusters based on the Astana Business Campus of Nazarbayev University and the Alatau Innovative Technologies Park. There will be corporate research and development centres, high-tech projects of small- and medium-sized businesses, start-ups and the creation of an innovative ecosystem.

Also the law on "commercialisation of scientific research" will be drafted and a scheme of scientific grants and programmes will be redirected towards the needs of the State Programme of Accelerated Industrial and Innovative Development of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

A great role in implementation of the 100 steps Plan of the Nation is devoted to the Bolashak International Scholarship of the President of Kazakhstan.

This year the official administrator of the Bolashak Programme "Centre for International Programmes" turned 10 years old. Today, the centre supports active cooperation with more than 200 foreign partner universities in 25 countries and 750 employer organisations in Kazakhstan. The Centre provides control of education and job placement process of about 11,000 scholars and alumni. It is notable that the centre won the nomination of national business ranking's research Field's Leader 2015 according to "Long Term Assets. Balance" criterion.

At present a new five-year strategy has been drafted and approved for the realisation of the Bolashak Programme, which is one of the most successful models of specialist training in countries with developing economies today.

Comparing it to similar governmental scholarships in China,

Saudi Arabia, Brazil, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Pakistan, Vietnam and Russia, international experts highlight the inter-balance of Bolashak basic administrative instruments, reflected through the wide access and target-specific approach of specialist training for the national economy.

This policy of target-specific training made it possible to re-direct the programme to train staff for the projects of the 100 steps Plan of the Nation. For example, economic and legal experts preparing for work in the future Astana International Financial Centre and Arbitration Court, judicial system's workers for International Council at the Supreme Court, civil servants and others have the opportunity to study or complete an internship in leading universities and production centres of the world.

Training top managers at MBA and Executive Education programmes in the world's top 10 business schools (according to Forbes ranking) will become a totally new format for Bolashak.

A new split Ph.D. scientists' model of training, which had been successfully practiced at Nazarbayev University, is outlined as a separate direction of the programme. This year it has been integrated in the study process of 10 universities, training specialists for the State Programme on

Industrial and Innovative Development. The project uniqueness lies in the possibility to conduct national research at the best world laboratories.

Taking into account the changes listed above, the ministry is re-considering the lists of majors and universities approved for Bolashak scholars studying abroad. Recommended higher education institutions will be presented in the top 10 positions of international subject rankings published by QS World University Rankings, Academic Ranking of World Universities and Times Higher Education World University Rankings, which respectively raises the requirements for the academic background of the applicants.

Moreover, this year all scholars take language courses in Kazakhstan, in language centres based at Nazarbayev University in Astana and Al-Farabi Kazakh National University in Almaty.

Foreign representative offices of the Centre for International Programmes and the Bolashak Alumni Relations Office provide close networking with all of the programme's scholars and Kazakh students studying abroad aside from the Bolashak scholarship.

The leading dialogue platform is the Bolashak Alumni Forum – Bolashak Alumni Reunion Conference and Education Fair (BARCEF). Today it is the largest

educational fair in Central Asia, uniting annually representatives of more than 60 foreign and Kazakh universities and more than 4,000 Kazakh high school and university students.

This year, BARCEF will take place in Astana on Oct. 16. Besides the usual participants, leading international experts in international education have been invited from the British Council, German Academic Exchange Service DAAD, Campus France; ranking agencies and representatives of the departments involved in specialist training for 100 steps projects.

Within the forum, issues on the export potential of Kazakhstan's education and national universities' opportunities in competitive staff training will be discussed. Besides that, a recruitment campaign for Kazakh students and a traditional meeting of Bolashak Alumni with alma maters will take place.

Hence, within implementation of the 100 steps of the Plan of the Nation an important role is devoted to the issues of highly educated, competitive and qualified staff who will be able to contribute greatly to economic prosperity of independent Kazakhstan.

The author is Minister of Education and Science of Kazakhstan.

Bolashak Alumni Reunion Conference and Education Fair 2015 – Comments from Foreign Partners and Participants

Gintare Diliunienė, international programme coordinator, the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences:

First of all, let me express my sincere gratitude for the honour to be here with you and to be able to welcome such an important conference. I am absolutely convinced that regular live contact between people united by the same ideas and same tasks is strongly required. I wish my colleges fruitful work at the upcoming conference, which is an effective business platform for discussion and practical solutions for the future. During the conference, my colleagues and I will present the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences, recruit students and fellowship researchers, hold consultations and meetings with the Bolashak Programme graduates, which studied at our university at different times. We appreciate being part of the Bolashak Programme, and are very proud of the fact that it creates a new generation of professionals by training highly qualified specialists. We are pleased that the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences is in the Bolashak List of the best institutions of the world (229 institutions from 23 countries), in which the Bolashak scholarship holders can study abroad. Fourteen scholarship holders completed internship at the LUHS over the past three years.

Ausra Razgune, leading specialist for international strategic partnerships, Vilnius University:

The Bolashak Alumni Reunion Conference and Education Fair (BARCEF) is becoming a great platform for establishing new partnerships not only among universities, but also businesses. We see a great future for BARCEF conference as an event providing networking opportunities for a wide range of organisations. Vilnius University is interested in finding common ground with Kazakh universities and establishing collaborations in different academic spheres, which would lead to a long-term partnership. Since it has been only a year of Vilnius University participation in the Bolashak programme, the exchange is not yet active with our university, but we already received several requests and we look forward for first enrolment. We would like to congratulate the administrator of this programme with the 10th anniversary of the CIP and wish all

the luck and success in gathering more and more members and participants each year.

Duan Chunming, director, International Cooperation Department, North China Electric Power University:

I would like to propose arrang-



Gintare Diliunienė

ing the occasion of letting participant universities to talk face to face about possible collaboration and sign a memorandum of understanding, to make more opportunities for the participant universities to meet, talk and sign the agreement, to have the opportunity of attending the round table talk with Kazakh universities and officers from the Kazakh government, to know Bolashak more and join into the Bolashak collaborative partner network.

For future work within the conference, I would propose to make it a platform for China Universities, universities from Kazakhstan, and universities of other regions across the world to gather together and raise some key points of view regarding higher education, to make it a place for making friends and collaboration partners, to discuss substantive collaboration, such as renewable energy, cross-border electricity transmission, student exchange programmes in a specific area, to explore the articulation program at the undergraduate level by admitting credits mutually.

I am planning to participate in the conference in order to congratulate the conference and fair, introduce North China Electric Power University to Kazakh universities, to meet the Kazakh universities and establish the partnership, to discuss with Kazakh colleagues to

establish some Energy University League in the future, to discuss the possibility of establishing a high-level think tank between North China Electric Power University and Kazakh universities in international energy collaboration, to establish student exchange programmes with Kazakh universi-



Ausra Razgune

ties, to make North China Electric Power University one of the Partner Universities of Bolashak in the area like renewable energy and electric power engineering. Speaking of the evaluation of results and plans for joint partnership activities with Kazakh colleagues, I would say that until now, we have had student exchange programmes with two Kazakh universities. The programme goes very well. We have one more undergraduate programme that admits the Kazakh students of high school into the undergraduate programme of electrical engineering through the collaboration with Sino Petroleum. It goes very well. And what's more, we also admit the Kazakh students of high school. They all come to North China Electric Power University studying electric power energy and renewable energy programmes. Unfortunately, we have not yet had any Bolashak scholars at our university. We are looking forward to accepting students of such a model in the future.

Michael Jaumann, director of the DAAD Information Centre Kazakhstan:

Founded in 1925, the DAAD is celebrating an anniversary this year – as does the Centre for International Programmes, which since its foundation ten years ago evolved into one of the most im-

portant partners for the DAAD in Kazakhstan. The DAAD has been working in this country since 1987, when the first lecturers from Germany were sent to universities in Almaty. Until today, more than 3,000 students and scholars from Kazakhstan received financial funding by the DAAD. Since 1994,



Duan Chunming

the DAAD has been cooperating with the Bolashak Programme and everyone in our service is proud to look back on this long and stable relationship, including our close ties to the CIP. The motto of the DAAD is "change by exchange" – the Bolashak Programme fits perfectly into the idea of mutual collaboration that is expressed by this phrase. With Bolashak the Republic of Kazakhstan and her President demonstrate their engagement for internationalizing and further developing the higher education system. For Germany and the DAAD, this close cooperation with Bolashak means that Kazakhstan is not only a receiving but also a giving partner, a unique situation highlighting Kazakhstan's leading role in Central Asia.

As a result of global university expansion and increased marketing efforts, the number of international students enrolled at German universities has grown substantially, especially over the past 20 years. Today, Germany ranks third, in absolute numbers, among the countries hosting international students. Of the international students studying in Germany, more than one in four is a so-called Bildungsinländer, that is, a resident foreigner holding a university entrance qualification acquired in Germany. The percentage of international students varies from one

university to another, ranging from 5 percent to 35 percent, with a mean of approximately 12 percent. In the last years the number of foreign students at German higher education institutions has risen again. Approximately 282,200 foreign students were enrolled in Germany in the 2013 academic year,



Michael Jaumann

approximately 17,000 more than in the previous year. Supported by the generous financial support given by the Republic of Kazakhstan through the Bolashak programme, also many Kazakhstani participated in this trend and they continue to do so.

Foreign students are drawn by the high quality of German universities and by their general interest in Germany, the European Union's most populous member state and its strongest economy. And there are approaches to further improve the academic system in Germany. One example is the Excellence Initiative: To support top-level research (with Clusters of Excellence) and outstanding early-career academics (with Graduate Schools), as well as to recognise universities whose Institutional Strategy for the Future promises to boost their competitiveness in the international arena, the federal (75 percent) and state governments (25 percent) of Germany are spending almost €5 billion (2006-2017). Funding decisions in this initiative were made by international committees under the leadership of the German Research Foundation and the German Council of Science and Humanities.

Once again Bolashak scholars with the generous funding of their government are taking part in those developments. There is a

pre-selected list of 18 outstanding universities in Germany as a destination for Bolashak-supported Master studies, and the hope is high to further increase the number of universities on this list. Together with the CIP, the DAAD is administering the Bolashak scholars who are going to attend these



Simon Gooch

universities. The central office of the DAAD in Bonn also supports the scholars in adjusting to daily life in Germany and organises pre-study language classes for them.

We would like to congratulate our friends and colleagues at CIP for the 10th anniversary, we wish all the best for the future, and we hope for more warm and fruitful cooperation in the decades to come.

Simon Gooch, director of student recruitment, Europe and Africa/ELS European Pathways, ELS Educational Services, Inc.:

ELS has only recently been approved by Bolashak so we have no alumni to date.

This year will be our first Bolashak conference, and we send our best wishes to the administrator of this programme in honour of the 10th anniversary of the CIP in 2015.

It is a great honour for ELS Educational Services to be invited to this conference and we look forward to participating in it. The CIP plays an extremely important role in the economic development of Kazakhstan through the development of its most talented youth and we congratulate CIP on its 10th anniversary and look forward to playing our part in the next 10 years.

EURASIA&WORLD

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2015

Kazakhstan, Japan Call for Early Entry into Force of CTBT

By Altair Nurbekov

NEW YORK – Foreign Minister of Kazakhstan Erlan Idrissov and Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida as well as UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and numerous other top officials and diplomats called for stepping up efforts to ensure an early entry force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty or CTBT. The pact would prohibit all nuclear tests.

The two foreign ministers entered into two years of co-chairing the ninth Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT on Sept. 29 in New York.

The nuclear test ban treaty was adopted at the UN General Assembly in 1996. However, the pact has yet to take effect, as nuclear powers such as China, the United States, Egypt, Iran, Israel, North Korea, India and Pakistan have failed to either sign or ratify it.

“Nearly two decades after its negotiation, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty has still not entered into force. A breakthrough is long overdue,” UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon told delegates. “We need every person in this room to show leadership on the urgent international imperative of ending nuclear tests,” Ban said.



Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida (L) and Foreign Minister of Kazakhstan Erlan Idrissov assume the chairmanship of the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT).

“The CTBT is essential to realising our vision of a world free of nuclear weapons. It will help ensure that the international community is no longer forced to live in the shadow of nuclear weapons,” he added.

He was unusually blunt in his comments as he addressed the eight countries on whose actions the CTBT’s entry into force depends. “You have a special responsibility,” Ban said. “You must not wait for others to act before ratifying.”

Japan and Kazakhstan took over the rotating two-year chairmanship in the conference from Indonesia and Hungary. In their remarks, rep-

representatives of all four nations expressed frustration over the lack of progress on the CTBT’s entry into force.

In his speech, Idrissov noted the uniqueness of the co-chairmanship of Kazakhstan and Japan, two countries that have suffered from the effects of nuclear weapons’ explosions and which have the full moral right to demand concrete steps from the states that have not signed or ratified the CTBT, he said.

“This document, along with the Treaty on the Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons, is the cornerstone of the entire global security

system. Therefore, we are for the full universalisation of the treaty. Its entry into force will become an important step forward on the road to a world free of nuclear weapons. Kazakhstan intends to make substantial progress in this important work,” Idrissov said.

“We all know what it is all about,” Idrissov told the gathering, choosing to forgo prepared remarks and speak of the cuff. “We all know that its entry into force depends on the signing and ratification of the CTBT by the eight states. We believe that the time for specific steps and direct conversations has come. It should be no longer business as usual. As we have just agreed with my colleague, Foreign Minister Kishida, we will be very aggressive in our work, we will be blunt and we sometimes will not be diplomatic as we will seek to achieve the CTBT’s entry into force,” Idrissov said.

Idrissov stressed Kazakhstan’s contribution to global nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation, including its most recent initiatives. On the initiative of President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev, the UN announced Aug. 29, the day of the closing of the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site, as the International Day against Nuclear Tests. Since 2012, in the framework of the in-

ternational initiative The ATOM Project, every person in the world who opposes nuclear weapons can sign an online petition addressed to world governments to end nuclear testing forever, as well as support the early entry into force of the CTBT. Today, the petition has been signed by more than 200,000 people from over 120 countries.

CTBT Preparatory Commission Executive Secretary Lassina Zerbo, in his own remarks following Idrissov’s, noted the contribution of The ATOM Project and especially its Honorary Ambassador Karipbek Kuyukov in galvanising global public opinion to the cause of banning nuclear testing permanently. The ATOM Project presented its activities during a Sept. 10 informal session of the UN General Assembly dedicated to the International Day against Nuclear Tests.

In his remarks, Idrissov also noted that President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev in his Sept. 28 remarks at the UN General Assembly suggested an initiative to achieve a world without nuclear weapons by 2045.

“This goal seems quite distant and unattainable, but it is achievable with the presence of political will and we need to start moving towards that goal today,” Idrissov

stressed. “Yes, we can achieve a world without nuclear weapons,” he said, recalling the 2008 electoral slogan of U.S. President Barack Obama.

Kishida said at the meeting that it is vital that efforts toward the treaty’s implementation be accelerated, as a test ban is a key pillar in nuclear arms reduction. He called on participants to make their greatest efforts to bring political pressure to bear on countries that have not ratified the treaty.

Kishida, whose home city is Hiroshima, cited the words of a Hiroshima atomic bomb survivor who said the threat posed by nuclear arms should not be forgotten, even for one day, in order to secure the survival of mankind. Kishida called for the CTBT to be supported “at the highest possible level” and said: “We need everybody for this treaty to be able to enter into force.”

As part of the conference, Idrissov also met with Lassina Zerbo of CTBT. During the meeting, the foreign minister noted that Kazakhstan highly appreciates the current level of cooperation with the organisation, and, in particular, supports the initiative on assembling the Group of Eminent Persons with the goal of promoting CTBT’s early entry into force.

Kazakh-Led Effort on Regional Migration Offers Example for Europe, Say Experts

By Michelle Witte

ASTANA – Kazakhstan’s chairmanship of the Almaty Process, a two-year-old effort to enhance cooperation on legal and illegal migration in Central Asia, is bearing fruit and the region can be an example for Europe in handling migrants and refugees, say experts.

Bernard Doyle, regional representative for Central Asia for the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), told participants at the Almaty Process Senior Officials Meeting in Astana on Sept. 22 that European countries can learn from the Almaty Process. “The Almaty Process is a young process, but I think it’s already setting some very good examples for other processes,” particularly in how to deal with huge numbers of migrants or refugees, which he noted Almaty Process countries have hosted for decades.

The Almaty Process can be a model for Europe in the way its member countries have provided solutions for their refugee populations, he said, and in the institutions the countries have built to deal with migrants and refugees, particularly in legislation. “That technical expertise that you have could be very helpful for the countries in Europe and the countries in the Middle East that are affected by this refugee process. So I think the importance of the Almaty Process is actually growing as we see this refugee crisis in other parts of the world.”

The Almaty Process on Refugee Protection and International Migration was initiated in 2011 by the government of Kazakhstan, the Internal Organisation for Migration (IOM) and the UNHCR. Its first regional conference resulted in the adoption of the Almaty Declaration, which acknowledges the need to address the challenges of complex regional migration dynamics and mixed migratory movements in Central Asia and beyond with cooperation and coordination. The seven member states are Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkey and Turkmeni-

stan, with Iran and Pakistan as observer states.

The Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) focused on strengthening the capacity of participating states in handling labour migration in Central Asia, including through exploring labour opportunities, challenges and good practices, as well as analysing trends in labour and migration flows.

It included the presentation of a specially prepared report by the IOM, “Mapping on Irregular Migration in Central Asia 2014,” the first such document to be created at the behest of and within Central Asia, IOM Coordinator for Central Asia and Chief of Mission in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan Dejan Keserovic said in an interview on Sept. 23.

“This is the first time that something was done from and within Central Asia. All other things that we normally receive [on migration flows] are things that we get from Brussels, Washington, Berlin, but not from here,” he said. “This is the first time [migration in the area has been mapped] with the participation of actors from Central Asia, and working together.”

In a region that is still struggling to build internal connections, migration seems to be an area in which states and organisations are working together fruitfully, the experts say.

Some of the major successes of the young process are the establishment of employment centres for Kyrgyz workers looking to emigrate to Kazakhstan, he explained. The centres set up by the IOM and the governments of the countries, help potential migrants try to find jobs first within their country, then abroad. “It’s a facilitated, regular migration, meaning that they sign the contract before they depart. And this protects the right of the migrants ... and at the same time the receiving country, Kazakhstan, is also protected because then the taxes are paid, everything is regular. There’s no harm to the country, no harm to the migrant,” Keserovic said.

The process has also given countries a platform for gathering to make

plans for emergency preparedness, as they did in a meeting in Turkmenistan earlier this year, when the participating countries of the Almaty Process made it clear that they will have to cooperate and create plans to handle the movement of people after natural or man-made disasters, he said. It has also led to increased data collection and reporting on human trafficking.

The process is supporting real, productive cooperation because migration is recognised as an issue that affects every country, and because the process is increasingly driven and owned by the participating states, the experts said.

“Migration is here, and it’s a common issue,” said Piotr Kazmierkiewicz, an international consultant and lead author on the Mapping on Irregular Migration project. “It’s not IOM that is coming with some external agenda. [Central Asian states] are having a problem, and they are making requests, actually; the latest research was requested by the government. The agenda is set here ... I think that is crucial.”

This success is something other regions can learn from. Kazmierkiewicz pointed out two major examples the countries of Central Asia are providing: working together, and accessing local information.

“One thing is that countries are learning from other countries in the region. A destination country like Kazakhstan is sharing its capacity, its knowledge, on how to manage migration and is helping the countries that are facing transit flows, or even countries of origin, which I think would be a great thing across the Mediterranean,” he said.

This is being achieved through trust – not a state often found between governments or between public and private organisations in Central Asia. Distrust was preventing collaboration and the sharing of information, Kazmierkiewicz said. “We actually had to persuade the authorities that all this is being done for the benefit of their policy, and that they remain free to adopt certain solutions.”

Through the Almaty Process, it was established that sharing information would benefit all parties, and that despite asking for technical assistance and recommendations, countries would remain free to adopt whatever solutions they chose. Understanding that this need not impinge on sovereignty is crucial for Europe, he said.

The second issue was access to operational information. After presenting information gathered in the field, Kazmierkiewicz was approached and asked where he’d got

it. “And we said, we get it from local experts. The problem is that local experts cannot just approach the government and say, ‘OK, I’m an academic, here is my advice.’ It takes a process. And I think at least this part of the Almaty Process was about trust building and about per-

suading [law enforcement and other public bodies] that we are on the same side ... that we really are on the same page, we really are interested in strengthening this country’s capacity to manage migration flows.”

In only two years, Kazmierkiewicz said, what began as contro-

versial is beginning to seem commonplace, from the basic idea that migration can be governed and guided strategically to the need to protect migrant workers’ rights just like those of citizen workers, to legalise existing migration flows and to work with employers.

The Almaty Process has also shown that there is enough data and knowledge within Central Asia to handle their problems here, Keserovic said. “You do not need to be told by others. There is enough knowledge here, it just needs to be promoted and shared.”



Participants at the Senior Officials Meeting of the Almaty Process in Astana on Sept. 22.

Photo: IOM

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Nation & Capital

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2015

CULTURE

Annual National Cuisine and Culture Festival Kicks Off in Almaty

B3

SOCIETY

ZIBROO, Sportswear Brand Made in Kazakhstan

B5

SPORTS

Kazakh Rising Star Elizabet Tursynbayeva Ready to Continue Country's Figure Skating Legacy

B7

FC Astana Brings Football Frenzy to Capital, Draws with Galatasaray

By Dmitry Lee

ASTANA – Football Club (FC) Astana inspired the entire nation Sept. 30 in a home game against Turkish Galatasaray, when the team unexpectedly drew 2:2 in the last minute of the nail-biting match after trailing by one goal throughout the game.

The roller-coaster of a match started somewhat slow, relative to early predictions by fans and experts. Galatasaray pressured Champions League rookie Astana from the start of the game; numerous attempts were fixed in front of Astana goal keeper Nenad Erić but were futile.

The home team didn't look optimistic and didn't seem to put too much effort into chasing the ball. The visitors looked confident and kept the game under control and in the 31st minute Bilal Kisa sent a long-range ball, assisted by Wesley Sneijder, past Erić to give his team the lead. That was the only produced goal of the game: as it



FC Astana player Foxi Kéthévoama goes for a goal.

turned out, the other three were all own goals.

Astana needed to control the game and make Galatasaray play

their game, but they failed to do so until the end of the first half.

In the second half, the home team started its offensives and things start-

ed to happen for the team. Most importantly, they started to make their guests feel pressured for the first time.

Continued on Page B7

Astana Street Names Provide Historical Guide for Residents

By Zhazira Dyussebekova

ASTANA – Small and big, central and distant, old and new, Astana's streets hold lessons in history and geography for those who recognise their names.

According to Zakon.kz, before Astana was made Kazakhstan's capital in 1997, only 180 streets out of 619 had names associated with the history of Kazakhstan. More than 400 streets had names related to the Soviet period; the rest had names far removed from the cultural and historical references of today, like Vagonnaya (wagon), Raionnaya (district), Sennaya (hay), Letnyaya (summer), Marsovaya (Mars), Samotsvetnaya (gemstone) and Novaya (new). Streets in the southeastern part of the city and in the new administrative centre of the capital and the left bank were simply numbered.

The restoration of old buildings and the construction of new ones in a short time led to a radical change in the infrastructure of the capital, affecting not only the appearance of the city, but also the names within it. When the capital expanded, suburban villages were incorporated into it and many street names were duplicated.

About 70 streets were renamed over a two-year period. Names associated with the leaders of the Soviet era, the founders of the com-

munist doctrine and the chronicles of socialism, such as Lenin, Marx, Engels, October, Revolutionary, Socialist and others have disappeared.

Now, almost all the streets in Astana have names that can be divided into several groups. The first is famous people in Kazakh history, such as Abai, Kenessary, Abylai Khan, Shokan Ualikhanov, Saken Seifullin, Shakarim Kudaiberdyuly, Dimmukhamed Kunayev and many others. Most people know who they were or have some understanding of which period they represent or what they are famous for.

The second group consists of names of ancient and modern cities, such as Turkestan, Saraishek, Syganak, Akmeshit, Orynbor, Almaty and others. The third group commemorates political and cultural touchstones, like Respublika (republic), Tausizdik (independence), Saryarka (yellow steppe) and others.

Another group of names commemorates great figures who are at risk of being lost to history. These streets are named after people who were outstanding members of the society at their times, but who are now rarely heard of. Thousands of people pass these capital streets with no idea what kind of history is hidden behind their names.

Continued on Page B8

Mare's Milk Producers Confident about Drink's Domestic, Int'l Future

By Kamila Zhumbayeva

ASTANA – Businessmen and scholars of the Zhambyl region promote Kazakh nano kumis and are confident that the traditional beverage of nomads will conquer the entire world. The realisation that kumis (fermented horse milk) had allegedly been patented in Germany was shocking for Kazakhs, noted a Sept. 19 article on Inform.kz.

According to the news agency, farmer and Zan LLP Director Dyusenbek Ibinaliyev, like many farmers who own mares, was producing kumis in small quantities until he heard the news that German Hans Zollmann had patented and begun manufacturing the drink.

"This news outraged me deeply. How could the Kazakh national beverage from so long ago be appropriated by a resident of far-away Germany? I could not agree with it," said Ibinaliyev in the interview on the website.

Ibinaliyev spoke with Taraz State University's former rector, Ashimzhan Akhmetov, telling him everything about the "concerning" patent deal. He received approval for his request to involve university scientists and sanitary and epidemiological stations with their own laboratory for the case, reported Inform.kz.

"We have developed and vali-

dated our own standard, technology and instruction. We observed the product's acidity every week together with the university's staff and took a simple Kazakh folk recipe as the basis," said Ibinaliyev.

One big breakthrough was the possibility of increasing kumis' shelf life to 60 days. Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev commended Ibinaliyev's idea and instructed the region's leadership to support the initiative, according to the news agency.

Ibinaliyev obtained a patent in 2013 for his domestic method of producing kumis. The fermentation at the factory is made according to an old recipe from his ancestors.

His company produces products of four different levels of acidity under the Khan Kymyz brand. Its popularity has travelled far beyond the region, as buyers from Astana, Almaty, Aktau and Atyrau regularly purchase the milk. The firm also has a certificate of quality from the Customs Union that allows it to reach out to foreign buyers.

Developing dry, tableted kumis was another achievement of the university's nano lab.

"The freeze-drying method is applied in the production of dry kumis. The method lies in a quick, shock freeze and crystallisation of water which is then entirely evaporated. Freeze-drying provides

almost absolute retention of all nutrients; 10-11 grammes of powder come from one litre of milk," said university nano lab senior researcher Nina Gorbatovskaya. "Desiccated kumis goes under a very high pressure and turns into a tablet without any binding material, whereas starchy substances are added for binding to other pills. 4.2 grammes of a single tablet substitute for two glasses of the drink and can be consumed by adding water, only make sure it is sterilised."

Freeze-drying kumis was also developed in Germany, where approximately 30-40 farms produce and sell the milk, as reported by The Astana Times in an April 17, 2013 article. The beverage is also brewed in Austria, Belgium, Germany, Italy, Mongolia, the Netherlands, Ukraine and Russia's Sireian region of Yakutia.

The confusion was clarified regarding the news about the German entrepreneur allegedly patenting kumis, according to Inform.kz. Zollmann did not patent the product itself or the technology of its production, but merely the product trademark under the name "Kumus."

The story of where the German colleague learned the kumis recipe proved to be quite interesting, the article reported. During World War II, Zollmann's relative by marriage was taken prisoner in the USSR, where a tuberculosis epi-

demic was present at the time and he contracted the terrible disease.

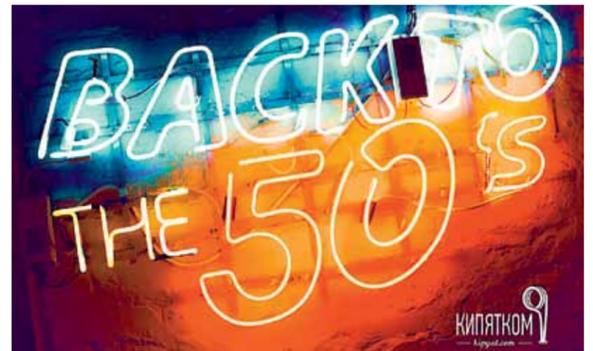
Following Joseph Stalin's death in 1953, German prisoners were amnestied and convoyed to their homeland. The guard on the train carrying Zollmann's in-law, apparently fearful for his health, decided those who were sick would not live long and left the poor, weakened wayfarer on a steppe. A Kazakh family found him and took care and cured him with the help of kumis.

When he returned to Germany, he spoke about his miraculous healing. The magical product could not go unnoticed and the German entrepreneurial streak manifested itself.

The Zollmann farm in the town of Waldbrunn is Germany's first and largest mare's milk farm. The milk is produced according to Demeter Biodynamic standards, along with mare's milk powder and cosmetics, according to managerprogramm.de. Just five family members and six employees run the entire farm, with around 400 horses and approximately 450 hectares of agricultural land.

According to Zollmann, interest in the therapeutic properties of kumis grew in the 1960s after scientists discovered its positive effect in the treatment of lung diseases, digestive problems and weakened immunity, as reported by this newspaper before.

Kitschy Soviet-Era Restaurant Popular in Astana



Klava Davai

By Bilqis Bahari

ASTANA – Capitalism has been moving quickly around Astana since the city became the capital 17 years ago. Many things have changed as a result, including the food enjoyed by locals.

One can see a sprout of American fast food restaurants in the city, such as Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC), Burger King and Hardees. With the presence of these chains, many residents are becoming accustomed to the food they offer.

But if you want to go back to the Soviet era, whether to revisit your childhood memories or just fancy dining at an eatery where you can have a "feel" of the period, look no further than Astana itself.

Organisers of the charity auction include the Social Voluntary Group, the Mercy Voluntary Society, the Public Found, The Ritz-Carlton, Almaty, SNC Kazakhstan and the Clay House Gallery. The exhibition at The Ritz-Carlton, Almaty, will remain open until Oct. 10. The charity auction will take place the following day, Oct. 11.

Epoch Restaurant

Address: 9 Valikhanov Street, Telephone: +7 (7172) 210 157

Contrary to other local and international restaurants in the capital, Epoch serves much more than scrumptious Soviet cuisine.

It recalls your childhood during the Soviet era and provides a crash course in history to those who never experienced life under the leadership of Stalin or Lenin. Opened Dec. 23, 2009 on the right bank of the Yessil River, Epoch's uniqueness is its interior design, which reflects the glory days of the Soviet Union.

Upon entering the restaurant, one can immediately feel the Soviet ambiance. The walls are painted red to symbolise the spirit of Communism, while the ceilings are decked with emblems of 15 previous USSR countries – Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

Continued on Page B8

The Ritz-Carlton, Almaty, Hosts Art Exhibition for Children

By Michelle Witte

ASTANA – An art exhibition featuring paintings created for the third annual charity auction "I Want to Live!" was opened Sept. 28 at The Ritz-Carlton, Almaty, the hotel announced.

The "I Want to Live!" auction raises funds for children fighting life-threatening diseases, according to a Ritz-Carlton, Almaty, press release. The auction will feature paintings created by famous Kazakh artists and children who have survived life-threatening illnesses. The exhibition is being

held as part of the hotel's Community Footprints programme and is on display in the Vista Restaurant on its 30th floor.

"The wellbeing of children, their life satisfaction is the main focus of our corporate social responsibility programme, Community Footprints, in which all the Ritz-Carlton hotels and their employees around the world participate," said General Director of The Ritz-Carlton, Almaty, Joe Ghayad, in the hotel press release. "We are proud to participate in this project and we are happy to invite you to see the paintings by Kazakhstan's artists and children and appreciate their

expressiveness and depth of feeling. You will be amazed."

The Community Footprints social and ecological responsibility programme focuses on the wellbeing of children, environmental responsibility and hunger and poverty relief, according to the hotel.

Organisers of the charity auction include the Social Voluntary Group, the Mercy Voluntary Society, the Public Found, The Ritz-Carlton, Almaty, SNC Kazakhstan and the Clay House Gallery. The exhibition at The Ritz-Carlton, Almaty, will remain open until Oct. 10. The charity auction will take place the following day, Oct. 11.



Paintings by Kazakh children and artists.

PEOPLE

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2015

Notary, Banking and Tax System Are Among Country's Doing Business Challenges

By Dmitry Lee

ASTANA – Running a private business can be a challenge itself, while running a business in a foreign country doubles or even triples the pressure. The Astana Times decided to take a deeper look into some of the challenges of running a business in Kazakhstan and interviewed one successful entrepreneur in Astana – Ben Godwin, 30, from the United Kingdom.

“I don't have to be in Kazakhstan; I choose to be in Kazakhstan. I love Kazakhstan; I want to talk about the problems because it is very difficult right now. I don't want to criticise. This land offers a lot of opportunities, but I believe we need to know the problems to work on them, to go through the hardships to get a bigger reward,” Godwin said.

He moved to Kazakhstan from the U.K. when he was 23, having been invited by his business partner to start a project in the Central Asian country. That project has grown into a successful business today – The Capital Group. Launched as a small education startup in 2008, the Group has grown into several projects that include Capital Education (English-language courses and transla-



Ben Godwin

tion services, including the Capital Film educational film series) and Capital Contractors, which was founded in 2011 initially to promote international operators and manufacturers in Kazakhstan's geology sector. Today it represents a large range of international manufacturers in the geological and oil and gas sectors.

“I like the idea of having my own business because of the complete freedom that I can have; I can go to bed whenever I want for instance,” said Godwin, who is also fluent in Russian, recounting the perks of having his own business.

However, he also discussed some of the challenges of doing business here.

Notaries

“[There are] a few major things that I come across every day. The first one is the notary. For instance, if we have to translate 50 pages of an international document and one page of translation and notarisation costs 1,000 tenge that's 50,000 tenge.” This is a waste of money, Godwin believes. “Every time we have to sign a contract or compete for a contract we have to pay thousands of tenge just to have someone to put a stamp on a document,” he said. It's a minor problem, he added; however, given the nature of his business, it is something he faces every day.

Banking systems

“I was suddenly shocked to know that when I deposit the money into the bank I have to pay a commission; can you believe it? There are a lot of bank charges, commissions and stuff like that. Again, they're not significant but every month they add up. However, the bigger problem is getting a loan. The [interest rates] are from 14 to 15 percent and higher. You have to be [out of your mind] to agree to that,” Godwin said, smiling. “There is absolutely no opportunity to get them; there is no way

to bargain with the banks. Though I understand inflation is high and you can't have European rates. There are no means of financing international investors for a reasonable price. Over the years we had to constantly self-finance, which is exhausting and very risky,” Godwin explained. At his age, he can't continue taking the risks he did before, he said. “Although there are government programmes that are available for entrepreneurs, such as the Damu Fund, a lot of them are offered to startups, with the age limitations from 18 to 28. So an 18-year-old can apply through the government programme and I can't, even though I have a successful business with 40 people on staff. I believe I am exactly the kind of person who should be getting this money. So it is very difficult to scale your business up.”

Real estate

“The rental prices for [offices] are through the roof [in Astana]. Obviously, the real estate market is dropping now, and very fast actually. But it is very difficult to buy property because the prices are so high and again it is very difficult to get the mortgages and loans. The demand is high and the supply is small and so it is difficult for small

and medium businesses to get [good] quality offices.”

Private ventures versus government

“Unless you're a barber shop or a car service station, you most likely work for the government under contract. Half of our business is with the government whether directly with state bodies or indirectly with national companies. It is quite clear that there is a considerable imbalance in the relationship, meaning these bodies are legally able to create problems for their contractors if they don't properly fulfill the contracts to the letter. While this is often the case in the U.K. and elsewhere, I have seen more evidence of abuse of this privilege in Kazakhstan. Suing your clients is obviously costly and risky, and the constant threat of being sent on to a two-year supplier black list hangs over you like a sword of Damocles and could potentially close you down. One sure way to avoid that is to undertake to do less than what you actually are capable of, don't overstretch yourself.”

Rigid tax system

Godwin also owns a small business in the U.K. and constantly works with the businesses from there. He says authorities in the U.K. are a little more lenient towards small and medium businesses.

“Although the taxes [here] are less than in the U.K., the system can be more punitive. For example,

our bank account was frozen because we made a genuine mistake. We failed to pay social deductions for one employee. We couldn't use our bank account. I wish there would be 30 or 90 days to correct the problem, like in the U.K.”

According to the Ministry of National Economy's Department of Statistics, “favourable business climate and political stability promoted a considerable foreign direct investment (FDI) inflow to the country.” Kazakhstan has attracted gross FDI of over \$208 billion since 1993, the year such statistics began to be tracked. However, doing business in the 24-year-old country still has specific hurdles and challenges.

To attract more FDI in the country, numerous governmental projects are being implemented, one of which is EXPO 2017. Within the concept of the expo, Kazakhstan is going to introduce a visa-free regime with the countries of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). The government of Kazakhstan has recently introduced a flexible taxation system for foreign entrepreneurs, which includes a 10-year exemption from corporate income tax and land tax, as well as an eight-year exemption from property tax; state reimbursement for up to 30 percent of capital expenditures after commissioning and the right to employ foreign labour until one year after construction is finished, and free of quotas and permissions. All of these have been effective as of January 2015.

Chinese Entrepreneur's Success Shows What is Possible in Kazakhstan

By Zhuldyz Starbekova

ALMATY – There are few successful foreign businessmen heading domestic companies in Kazakhstan, but Qigang Chen – the founder and president of TsinKaz – is one of them. Under his management, the company has reached impressive results.

In late 1998, the young and ambitious Chinese entrepreneur founded a company in Almaty for the production of tomato products. At the time, few believed in the success of this endeavour, as it had been a difficult period for the economy and society as a whole. The country was implementing market-oriented reforms, but amid the financial crisis in Southeast Asia, Russia and some other countries, the real sector of the republic was going through hard times.

“The idea is interesting and original, but risky; you can lose a lot of time and money before you reach success,” warned his businessmen friends. Qigang Chen listened to their views and advice, but held firmly to the goal. His intuition and analysis suggested the chosen direction was correct.

In observing the Almaty regional food market since 1993, he had noticed the market for tomato paste was one of the popular traditional Kazakhs food in which demand clearly exceeded supply. In addition, the quality of these products was very low. Therefore, Qigang Chen saw this as an opportunity that could not be missed. What remained was developing a business strategy, recruiting a team of like-minded professionals, purchasing equipment and starting production.

The years have shown the fears of the sceptics were in vain, as his business sense allowed the bold entrepreneur to fully implement his plans. The corporation founded under Qigang Chen's leadership has gone from a small, unknown workshop to a large, dynamically-developing company – a recognised leader in the market of tomato products and canned vegetables not only in Kazakhstan but throughout Central Asia. Today, more than 40 percent of this segment in Kazakhstan is associated with products under the TsinKaz trademark. The company regularly participates in various local and international food producers' forums, exhibitions and fairs. In 2008, TsinKaz signed a declaration of quality with the Global Quality Promotion programme and was awarded the golden quality certificate. The following year, the company won the title of “No. 1 producer of tomato products, 2000–2009

Kazakhstan” in the Choice of the Year in Kazakhstan festival competition. The advanced management system used by TsinKaz played a significant role in this success, as well as the large and friendly collective of the enterprise.

“Today, 134 people constantly work in TsinKaz. Our employees are regularly trained for professional development in China, Germany and Russia. There, they get acquainted with new technologies and exchange experience with colleagues. During the training they also have a rest,” said TsinKaz Managing Director Alma Mukusheva.



TsinKaz founder Qigang Chen.

According to Mukusheva, increased employee motivation is one of the priorities in the TsinKaz development strategy.

“We understand that without the solid, amicable, harmoniously-working collective, it is simply impossible to achieve any heights. If every employee responsibly and efficiently fulfills their part of the overall work, it will definitely affect the final result. The management, in turn, does everything for people to feel support and care. At his or her birthday, each worker receives congratulations and gifts and festive events and corporate events are held regularly. All this strengthens the positive atmosphere in the collective and rallies people. Initiative is the embodiment of its founder Qigang Chen on the localisation of human resources,” she said.

Being a leader in the industry and proving its effectiveness, TsinKaz gets well-deserved assistance from the state, participating in various state support programmes for small and medium businesses. The interest here is mutually beneficial: the company receives various preferences, subsidies and grants for production development; the state, in helping the business, strengthens the whole economy. For example, in the framework of the Productivity 2020 programme, the company managed to significantly improve the important indicator of labour productivity. But for TsinKaz to dwell on this

is not intended – the company has adopted and implemented a comprehensive plan to increase productivity. TsinKaz doesn't intend to stop at this point; the company has adopted and implemented the comprehensive plan on that increased effectiveness of labor productivity.

Kazakhstan's participation in such a large-scale integration project as the Eurasian Economic Union could not leave operations of TsinKaz unaffected. Previously, for TsinKaz to export goods to neighbouring countries was not very profitable, but the removal of customs and other barriers has opened wide opportunities for expansion into neighbouring countries. The example of TsinKaz is a graphic illustration of the effectiveness of Kazakhstan's integration policy, which allowed domestic producers to reach one of the largest consumer markets with a population of over 170 million people.

“Our production extends across all Kazakhstan to 42 regions. Besides, we now come into good contacts with partners in other countries. Their interest in our production is now big; many would like to cooperate with us. As they say, ‘the rumor is ahead of us.’ Businessmen leave neighbouring countries, find us on our site, Tomato.kz, and are interested in our production at the international exhibitions, forums and fairs where we take part,” said TsinKaz Quality Manager Zhanar Rakhymbekova.

Besides traditional TsinKaz tomato paste, the company makes a number of products, beginning with vegetable salads and finishing with six types of ketchups. Ketchup consumption, a product which isn't really typical of Kazakh cuisine, is gradually growing in Kazakhstan and in the future TsinKaz plans to increase production of its own ketchups and expand their range. The company not only responds to changes in the structure of consumer demand, but also seeks to implement strategy about mass production of products proposed by founder and President Qigang Chen.

For product packaging and storage, the company launched production of its own containers – plastic bottles made by innovative technology.

“Our company produces its own multi-layer packaging by using a new material EVOH – a co-polymer of ethylene and vinyl alcohol. When introduced into the polymeric structure of the packing material, it obtained a transparent film with barrier properties on the level of aluminum. Polypropylene is chosen as the main material forming an external and internal surface of a new plastic bot-

tle; EVOH is used for an inside barrier layer. The bottle contains five layers and ensures the safety of the product without preservatives for up to 18 months. Such packing doesn't concede to a glass bottle; it is close

to its transparency and thus weighs much less,” said Mukusheva.

The example of Qigang Chen, who decided 18 years ago to open a new plant in a foreign country and achieved recognised success, shows

that nothing is impossible for those who have chosen a solid target and are firm in achieving their goal. Over the years, he and his staff have become one big and happy family and Kazakhstan his second home.

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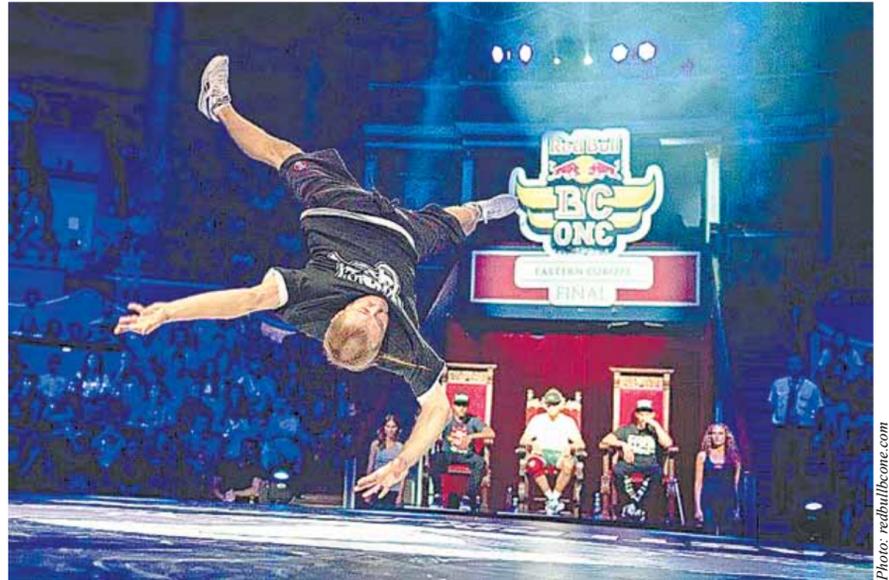
CULTURE

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2015

Kazakh B-Boy Wins Red Bull Breakdancing Eastern European Final



Nikolai Chernikov, also known as Killa Kolya, celebrates his win at the Eastern Europe final of the Red Bull BC One breakdancing competition in Tbilisi, Georgia.



Killa Kolya performs at the Eastern Europe final of the Red Bull BC One breakdancing competition in Tbilisi, Georgia.

By Zhazira Dyussebekova

ASTANA – Nikolai Chernikov, also known as Killa Kolya, won the Eastern Europe final of the Red Bull BC One breakdancing competition held in Tbilisi, Georgia on Sept. 5. He will represent Kazakhstan at the world final in Rome on Nov. 14.

“When I arrived in Tbilisi, the only thought I had was about winning. Two years ago at the Red Bull BC One Eastern Europe final, I lost my battle in the second round, so I was looking forward to the day where I could try again,” said Killa Kolya after the

event, according to the petition website.

Killa Kolya’s victory marks the first time that a Kazakh dancer will compete at the global level, according to the website.

The championship in Tbilisi brought together the best 16 dancers from 14 different countries.

In the final dance battle, Killa Kolya met Ukraine’s B-Boy Robin. Both came from widely different and respected B-Boy styles, but it was Killa Kolya’s stamina that won him the night, reports redbullbcone.com.

Since its launch in 2004, Red Bull BC One has become the world’s premier B-Boy champi-

onship, consistently attracting the best individual B-Boys and B-Girls in the world. The event and its participants celebrate breakdancing culture by using its original, one-on-one, knockout battle format, as opposed to the crew-battle style more prevalent today.

Originally from Karaganda, Chernikov has been involved in breakdancing for 15 years. He and his friends created the Simple System crew. During those years, he became experienced in all elements of dance.

According to Chernikov, he really became interested in breakdancing when he saw his brother

dancing using new moves at that time. That was when he got into b-boying.

After 10 years of hard training, Killa Kolya and Simple System crew decided to change their location and try in a new city. “We wanted to evolve further. Everyone in Karaganda already knew us. We wanted to explore new destinations. So we decided to give it a try in Astana,” said Chernikov in a recent interview with The Astana Times.

Things turned out well for Chernikov and his crew and now they are teaching young dancers, as well as performing at events and organising breakdance championships.

The stage name Killa Kolya was given to him by his friend B-Boy Fix. “It was when I won a championship in Pavlodar back in 2007. During the championship, I won 13 times in a row. And he started calling me Killa Kolya. It was a joke in the beginning. It refers to a killer. I did not like it. It was too loud and too rude. But then I got used to it. And now I am thinking I should match my stage name in a good way, be the best,” said Chernikov.

Breakdance is one of the most popular dance movements in Astana, even though it is still young. “Now we have around 300-400 students, and the number of chil-

dren increases constantly,” said Chernikov. “I think the young generation is dancing really well, and they will show good results. I see a lot of young talented dancers and how much effort they put in their work. I am sure one day they will present Kazakhstan on the world stage. We try to pass our knowledge to them. They get everything so quickly. When we were just starting, we had no information. Not a lot of music and video. Internet was just starting to spread. But now the younger generation have it all. I am sure that one day breakdancing in Kazakhstan will reach the highest level,” he added.

Annual National Cuisine and Culture Festival Kicks Off in Almaty



Young riders play Kyz Kuu.

By Dmitry Lee

ASTANA – The third annual Festival of Kazakh National Cuisine and Traditions and Cultures of the Peoples of Kazakhstan called Toi Kazan was held recently at Almaty’s Alatau Skiing and Biathlon Complex. The festival was dedicated to the 550th anniversary of the Kazakh Khanate, the 20th anniversary of the Constitution of Kazakhstan and the 20th anniversary of the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan (APK), Tengrinews.kz reported.

The festival gathered more than 1,000 people at the complex, despite rainy and windy weather.

“We were worried that too few people will come because of the weather. But it turned out that nothing could stop the people in Kazakhstan. Around 1,300 people came to the festival,” Beknur Kisikov, the organiser, said.

Participants had a chance to watch Kazakh national horse-riding games, such as Kyz Kuu (a young man needs to chase a girl on horseback for a kiss; if he fails, she gets to whip him), Audaryspak and Kume Alu.

Another highlight of the event

was a huge bowl of beshbarmak cooked on the spot. Other dishes were also available, including Uigur langman noodles, Uzbek pilav, Tatar chak-chak as well as Korean salads, among many others, including Spanish paella with seafood.

A competition for best national costume and a Kitap, or book festival, were also included in the programme.

“One of the goals of the festival is to step up the exchange of useful books so that city dwellers ex-

change books with other book lovers instead of throwing away the books they finish reading. Unfortunately, today people are becoming more and more laconic and technological, leaving no space for books. That is why we have created a platform where each and every book can find a place. You can bring your books to Toi Kazan to exchange them,” Kisikov said.

The Toi Kazan festival is held annually with the support of the local akimat (city administration).



Toi Kazan guests and performers.

Almaty Hosts 2015 Capital of Islamic Culture Int’l Artistic Festival

By Kamila Zhumabayeva

ALMATY – Prior to the city day celebrations, the Kazakh Ministry of Culture and Sports treated citizens to a festival of artistic groups and individual performers from the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) member countries as part of the Almaty – 2015 Capital of Islamic Culture event, reported the city’s administration on Sept. 16. The multicultural celebration, opened by the Otrar Sazy Tlendiyev academic folk-ethnic orchestra, was held the previous day at Mukhtar Auezov Kazakh State Academic Drama Theatre.

“The format of the festival within the proclamation of Almaty as the capital of Islamic culture in 2015 is a unique event the Almaty viewer has not seen before. The concert was a great success and the public accepted guest artists from overseas, especially Tannura, an Egyptian group,” said Kazakh Ministry of Culture and Sports representative Dinara Sabirova. “Our collaboration with Egypt has become less active due to the situation in that country and the Near East, but artists willingly responded to our invitation. We have enough international cultural projects and would be pleased to do it again.”

The ministry directed letters of gratitude to Azerbaijan’s Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Kyrgyzstan’s Ministry of Culture, Information and Tourism and Egypt’s Ministry of Culture as an appreciation for participation, she added.

Audiences warmly welcomed “Kazakh Valsy,” a composition by the “king” of Kazakh waltz, Latif Khamidi. The appearance of the Gulder State Dance Ensemble brought no less delight on stage, noted the press release.

The Azerbaijan State Ensemble and Dance and Bereke State Ensemble of Dance from Kyrgyzstan were



the main entertainers of the evening, while the performance of Egypt’s Tannura dance group marked the highlight of the programme. The troupe performed the Darvish dance of the Sufis and the Tannura, the Egyptian national dance, according to the report. The acts of the world-famous ensemble are known for their deep spiritual insight.

The splendid costumes of the artists, which reflected their identity while simultaneously interlacing their folk traditions, complemented the musical content of the evening. “Atameken,” the patriotic song performed by People’s Artist of Kazakhstan Yeskendir Khassangaliyev, was the final chord of the festival, noted the press release.

The festival was just the beginning of the intercultural event’s large-scale celebration. The capital of Islamic culture will also accept a number of artistic exhibitions through the end of the year, noted the report.

The fundamental principle of the Islamic culture capitals programme is demonstrating the heritage of cities to enhance the culture values in a broader regional and international context, according to El.kz. The international project aims to portray the high potential of cultural exchange, further development of humanitarian ties and deepening cooperation among OIC members, noted the website.

Photo credit: Juriya Irblova Photo source: almatymaidenet.kz

COUNTRY

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2015

The Aral Sea Experiences Second Birth, Revives Hope

By Staff Report

The Aral Sea can regain its lost status of the country's harbour thanks to the successful implementation of the regional project on managing the Syr Darya's riverbed and preserving the northern part of the water body. The project allowed the creation of the first man-made sea in the country, called the Small Aral. Today, it can be stated that the sea is experiencing its rebirth, according to Khabar TV channel.

Many experts believed the Aral Sea was irretrievably lost. The drying was so severe that it caused negative environmental consequences, including damaged flora and fauna in the region. Shipping and fishing were

no longer available. The sea has moved 100 kilometres away from its former coastline. Today's distance is only 17 kilometres, and some fish species have returned to the water.

"My ancestors were engaged in fishing activities and I continue our family business. It is the only source of income for us. Usually we catch from 200 to 300 kilograms of fish," said local fisherman Yesset Nazashov.

According to head of the regional office of the state-owned enterprise Kazsushar in Kyzylorda Marat Bozgulov, the northern part of the Small Aral has to be filled with water for 36 months. In the frames of the Syr Darya/Aral Sea management project, the Kokaral dam was created in 2005, which helped revive

the Small Aral Sea within six months.

In the 1960s, the Aral Sea was an impressive water body covering about 70,000 square kilometres. It was the fourth largest sea after the Caspian Sea, before it lost three quarters of its volume and 60 percent of its water surface.

"I saw the Aral Sea 20 years ago. I saw a desert with grounded ships left behind. Today, the situation is changing. This is the first time people were able to save the whole sea. It's amazing," said representative of the French national broadcaster Isabel Magland.

This year, the project enters its second phase. It is planned to expand the water volume by three times and return the status of the sea port to the city of Aralsk.



Photo: wallpaperbox.ru

Government to Discontinue Support for Noncompetitive Agricultural Enterprises

By Kseniya Voronina

ASTANA – Minister of Agriculture Assylzhan Mamytkov recently announced that the government will continue subsidies for healthy agricultural businesses, but will no longer support non-competitive agricultural enterprises.

"The concern about further farming subsidies is growing. I can say that the agricultural sector will receive governmental support. As stated in our development programme, we are going to increase subsidies by 2020 by five times the amount provided in 2013. From our side, we expect the growing efficiency of agricultural enterprises," said Mamytkov.

It is expected that a new approach will be implemented in 2017. The minister drew attention to the fact that the growth of support correlates with the productivity growth of companies. Therefore, large enterprises showing better performance, will receive greater support.

"Some businesses became unproductive because they receive state subsidies. For example, there are several poultry farms, which

don't sell even 70 percent of their production's capacity. They usually produce about three tonnes of meat per year. However, such companies continue existing because all of their losses are covered by subsidies," explained the minister.

According to him, as a result, the law of the market in which only the strongest survive, doesn't work.

"It disturbs business development in the country. New and, perhaps, more efficient enterprises can't enter the market as it is fully occupied. The government shouldn't sponsor non-competitive enterprises," admitted Mamytkov.

He also recalled the example of the international practice in which subsidies are allocated mainly for infrastructure development and in order to improve the quality of enterprises.

"The government should support basic branches like science, veterinary and phytosanitary measures as well as access to cheap credits and leasing platforms. This is the basis to provide for the healthy growth of competitive enterprises," concluded Mamytkov.



Photo: Altaynews

Bankruptcy of Physical Bodies Law to Be Passed in Kazakhstan by 2017

By Yerbolat Uatkhanov

ASTANA – Kazakhstan plans to reform its personal bankruptcy laws by 2017 to better help citizens recover from unpayable debts.

"As of today we are working in close rapport with the World Bank and have already developed the concept of bankruptcy of physical bodies. The State Incomes Committee plans to develop concepts for corresponding laws. We consider that by the end of 2017, when all Kazakh citizens will start to declare their income, we will finish them," Chief Expert of

Debt Management Department of State Incomes Committee Meruert Sisembayeva said.

The new law will bring stability in the financial field and help citizens recover from unaffordable debts. The law is expected to benefit debtors and banks.

World practice usually requires a person to prove a failure to pay their debts in court with supporting documents. If the court declares a person bankrupt, an officer is assigned to sell the debtor's property. Usually the debtor is able to retain their apartment or a house, if it is their primary residence. Other real

estate, cars, motorcycles and boats and other luxury items are sold. State decorations and pets cannot be sold as part of the bankruptcy. A debtor is also exempt from fines and forfeits, which are charged during delays in payment. If debt isn't cleared by the disposition of property, a bank won't have the right to any further claims on the debtor.

Personal bankruptcy laws were passed in Russia in December 2014, where a bankruptcy petition is accepted by an arbitration court if debts exceed 500,000 roubles (US\$7,700).

In Japan, the process of selling a debtor's property to pay debts is

called liquidation. Citizens declaring themselves bankrupt forfeit the right to work as company chiefs, lawyers, notaries, accountants and other positions.

Bankruptcy has a long history and its present procedures are common in all countries. In ancient Rome, defaulting on loans was dangerous for the life and freedom of the debtor. In the medieval period, Italian traders had a bench for clients and if a trader wasn't able to pay debts, he broke the bench in public, which indicated that he would stop trading. Broken bench is "banka rotta" in Italian.

Almaty City Instagram Account Seeks to Improve Public Services

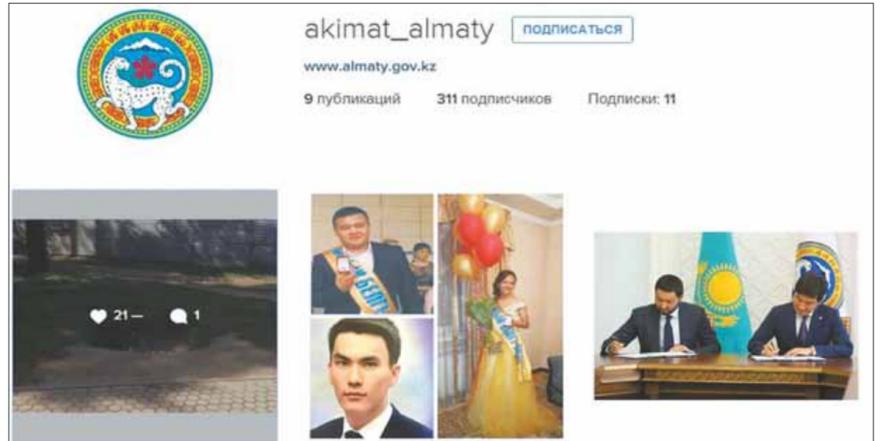
By Julia Rutz

The Almaty city akimat (city administration) recently created an Instagram account to respond to citizens' complaints about issues including trash collection, fallen trees, open sewers and clogged ditches.

The account was created in early September and has already gained attention and popularity among the population. If a local finds a problem that is in the control of the city akimat, he can take a picture and post it on Instagram with a hashtag #akimat_almaty, indicating the address where the picture has been taken. All messages are then sent to different akimat divisions and services for appropriate actions to be executed.

According to the press service of the Almaty akim (mayor), the account is improving on a daily basis in order to enhance its operation and establish mechanisms of interaction within structural divisions of the akimat.

During the first two weeks after the account was established, the



number of subscribers reached 3,000 people. Moreover, the akimat has already reacted to several requests.

The first request was initiated by the city akimat. One of the employees noticed garbage lying on one of the central city streets, the disposal

of which was organised the next day.

The open sewer on Abai Avenue detected by an Almaty local became the next task the akimat received on Instagram. The bad condition of a bus stop located in the North Ring district was also improved thanks to the new approach.

The number of posts with improvement requirements on Instagram is steadily growing and, according to the current statistics, the akimat is able to process one per day.

The official account of the akimat can be found at @akimat_almaty

Kazakhstan Intends to Export Oil Production Equipment

By Yerbolat Uatkhanov

ASTANA – In spite of the current condition of oil production in the world, Kazakhstan continues to develop its oil production engineering industry and intends to export oil production equipment to Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) states.

"Of course, the situation in the world affects the situation in our state and our field. A major part of companies abroad have decreased their investment expenditure and frozen their projects, but we don't plan to decrease them seriously. Domestic companies produce the following oil production equipment: pumps, nodding donkeys,

high pressure tanks and many other products, which are constantly sold in the market," Chairman of the Mechanical Engineers Union and Deputy of Mazhilis (lower house of Parliament) Meiram Pshembayev said at a briefing of the Central Communications Service on Sept. 25.

"This production process was started five years ago under the first five years of the State Programme of Accelerated Industrial and Innovative Development [SPAIID]. This period of time was used for very dynamic development of oil production engineering. In this year, in spite of a decrease of production volumes, Kazakh oil production engineering

plans to export our own products to the EAEU states," he added.

Kazakh producers provide more than 1,000 types of parts for oil production equipment. Investment activity can be described by the following facts: in 1998, 260 million tenge (US\$928,500) was invested in oil production equipment engineering and in 2014 this figure rose to 32 billion tenge (US\$114.3 million).

In 2015, production volume amounted to approximately 8 billion tenge (US\$28.6 million), but experts estimate it will be seriously increased in the near term, reaching 28 billion tenge (US\$100 million). This increase will be caused by major minerals developers working at Kashagan and Tengizchevroil.



WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2015

ZIBROO, Sportswear Brand Made in Kazakhstan

By Julia Rutz

After creating the Kazakhstan national team uniform for the 2011 Asian Winter Games, the 2014 Sochi Olympics and the upcoming Almaty Winter Universiade to take place in 2017, local manufacturer KazSPO-N has introduced its new sportswear brand, ZIBROO. The owners have also announced plans to enter the market in other countries.

"We started expanding our product line by introducing sports uniforms for children. Two main criteria were important for us: quality and original design. Before entering the market, any company should conduct research among the population in order to estimate the average constitution of potential clients. This is what we did. Gradually, a new branch in our company has emerged, so we started to produce women's and men's sportswear in different styles. Knowing the demand among the population for domestically produced products, we presented our new brand ZIBROO," explained the head of the company's sales department, Zaire

Kurumbayeva, speaking to Voxpopuli.kz.

According to her, the company has examined the particularities of different types of sport. It was also important to consider the expectations professional sportsmen and amateurs have when choosing sportswear. As the company had no experience in professional equipment production, they decided to start with normal sports clothing for everyday wear and suits for training. The first large project was the preparation of the team uniform for the 2011 Asian Games. To get the right to represent the country during this event, ZIBROO competed with Umbro, Nike and Russian Bosco Sport brands.

"At that time, the country's government had just begun implementing a state programme to support local producers. Today we can say that all our clothes are entirely produced at our own facilities and are a 100 percent domestic product. Raw materials, which, unfortunately, have to be purchased abroad are the only exception," said Kurumbayeva in the Voxpopuli report.

Apart from ceremonial and train-

ing suits for athletes, ZIBROO also produces clothing for judges and coaches and volunteers, as well as VIP-suits. All in all, 26 different items have been manufactured, including hats, scarves, underwear, sweaters, bags and shoes.

"While preparing for the Olympics in Sochi, we carefully consulted with archaeologists and read historical books in order to create a unique look for the Kazakhstan national team. Our uniform reflected national ornaments and animal motifs common for Saks, who are the ancestors of today's Kazakhs, as well as the 'tumar' symbol – a traditional guardian of nomads. Athletes have a tradition to exchange uniforms with their rivals from other teams. Our guys later told me that it was the first time they didn't want to give up their garments, as they really liked them. Our design took the fourth place among other countries participating in the Olympics," said Kurumbayeva.

ZIBROO plans to produce professional equipment as well, according to Voxpopuli. However, international federations limit the choice of brands athletes can perform in during major international

competitions. In order to join the list of allowed brand manufacturers, the company needs to go through a tough process of certification.

The company has also produced equipment for Russian clients like F-5, Stayer, Bask and Ecip-Centre, all of which work with professional skiers from eastern Russia. ZIBROO has a large production area; the company's production has reached 300 garments per day. The number of employees is 200 people.

The company plans not only to expand its sales in the local market, but also to organise export to neighbouring countries. The brand has good working contacts with Russian and Austrian companies. ZIBROO's representatives believe that the idea to make the brand recognisable abroad is quite real.

"We would like to expand our cooperation with professional athletes and international teams. We want to see athletes participating in competitions in a uniform made in Kazakhstan. There is a growing demand for clothes with national symbols and we are ready to respond to it, at least in the sports sector," concluded Kurumbayeva.



Athletic wear by ZIBROO.

Kazakhstan's Children's Philharmonic Opens Season with 'Kambak Shal'

By Kamila Zhumbabayeva

ASTANA – The first season of Kazakhstan's Children's Philharmonic opened with the children's opera "Kambak Shal" at Astana Congress Hall Oct. 1. Kazakh composer Zholan Dastenov wrote the opera in 1979. His son Aliaskar Dastenov attended the premiere and rehearsals of the opera.

The opera was first staged by the Abai Opera and Ballet Theatre in Almaty in the 1980s, but hadn't been staged for more than 20 years.

"Time will tell how the composition will go now, how often it will be played and how popular it will become. The music is very interesting... children like to participate in this opera," Dastenov, who also teaches sound producing and designing at the Kazakh National University of Arts, told The Astana Times during a Sept. 30 rehearsal held the day before the premiere. "I feel excited that the composition will finally be played. It seemed to me it was undeservingly forgotten and all notes were lost... It has appeared that this whole heritage is alive and will be in demand I hope," he said.

"It is worth noting that this is the only [children's] opera in the Kazakh language. Our children listen and know a lot about different types of music, however, they are not attracted to classic music, be it opera, ballet, symphonic or

other compositions. It is made for adult perception... while the text, music and content in the children's opera is, most importantly, more clear and easier for children to understand," Kazakh cultural figure, academician of the Russian National Academy of Design and Professor of Arts Ermek Assylkhanov said.

Assylkhanov believes other composers will emerge later and will write opera and symphonic compositions for children. He admires children's opera, choreography and modern interpretations of some performances. He emphasised, however, that historical symphonic compositions like "Otrardyn Kuyreui" (The Last Day of Otrar) and "Sketches of Alatau" were also staged within celebration of the 550 years of the Kazakh Khanate and other significant events that are being held in the country.

"We have an opportunity to use the symphonic orchestra of adult philharmonics where more than 60 musicians are involved, like Daulat Muratbekov's choreographic team whose dance shows made "Kambak Shal" very vivid, expressive and entertaining, and the work of our chief director, Marina Garbuz, who is the second organiser of children's philharmonics," organiser of the Children's Philharmonics Nadezhda Voinova said.

"We want children to be in-

involved in the production process at our philharmonics, not only as artists of a big stage opera like "Kambak Shal" and know only national culture, but to be also attached to a grand culture of all times and nations, as we want to raise the heritage created during Soviet Union times when many operas were written for children," Voinova said.

According to her, the philharmonic plans to stage musicals where children will sing and play main roles. The "Pippi" musical by famous composer Vladimir Dashkevich is planned for the end of the spring season.

"We are very happy that he is cooperating with the Children's Philharmonic in Astana. He sent us a full score of the 'Pippi Longstocking' musical. It is very joyous that many composers from Russia want to cooperate with us, send us their artworks," the organiser said.

The philharmonic is also looking for financial sponsors.

"Many kinds of help would be in need due to the fact that the Children's Philharmonic is a public association that doesn't have financing," Voinova noted. "The project is not an upmarket one, for example, participating in children's choreographic and choir studios of the Astana Opera is quite expensive but children on stage here obtain the unique skills of young actors, dancers and singers for free."



Performers of the Children's Philharmonic rehearse the opera Kambak Shal at Astana Congress Hall on Sept. 30.

Kazakh Students Provide Eight Senegalese Villages with Water

By Dmitry Lee

ASTANA, Oct. 2 – Graduates of the Kazakh-Turkish Lyceum in Astana have financially supported the drilling of water wells in Senegal to help the inhabitants of eight small villages in the African nation.

One of the graduates, Askhat Bobey, wrote on his Facebook account about the project.

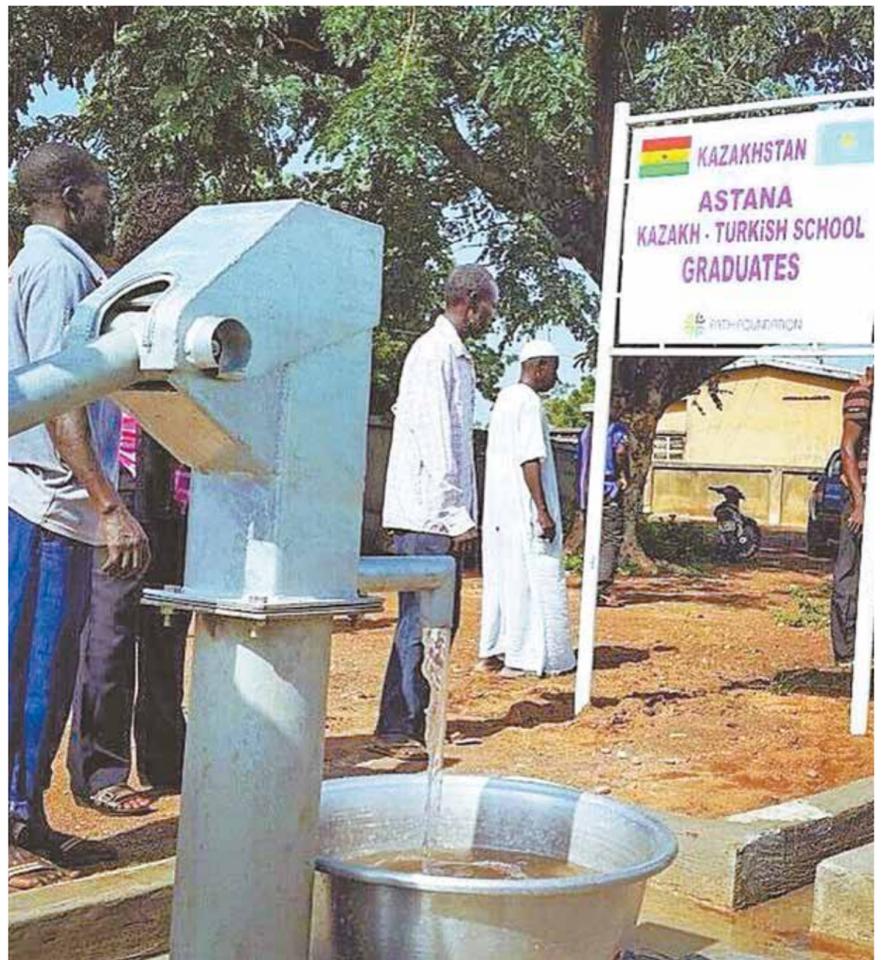
"Some may wonder: Why Africa? We don't have this pressing [water] issue because in the Soviet Union water was available in almost all settlements, but they are suffering from a water shortage. This small gesture gives the inhabitants of that continent hope that there are people out there who care!" he wrote.

In 2013, Kazakhstan became an observer at the African Union (AU). Astana is also a supporter of the active interaction of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the AU in questions of African conflict resolution and ensuring interethnic and interreligious dialogue, poverty eradication and illiteracy, as well as the fight against a variety of illnesses and diseases, as covered in previous stories in this newspaper. Recent efforts to support development across the continent include a joint project by the UNDP and Kazakhstan to enhance professional development and training among African specialists, which last month brought a delegation of African doctors to Astana for training at

the capital's Nazarbayev University.

Kazakh involvement in these regional and global processes provides the possibility of having multi-faceted information to inform approaches to solving international security problems dealt with by the United Nations (UN) Security Council. Kazakhstan is currently campaigning for a non-permanent seat on the Security Council for 2017–2018.

Africa has significant natural resources and a huge market for different industrial and agricultural goods. According to some international research centres, in the 21st century the African continent could become a very important commercial partner and economic destination for Kazakh businesses.



TOURISM&EXPO 2017

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2015

Brazil, Argentina, Chile Plan to Participate in EXPO 2017

By Murager Sauranbayev

SANTIAGO – Some of South America's largest nations, including Brazil, Argentina and Chile, announced this month that they will participate in EXPO 2017 in Astana. The announcements followed a Sept. 14-18 visit to South America by EXPO 2017 Commissioner and First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan Rapol Zhoshybayev.

Zhoshybayev started his South American trip in Brazil with meetings at government agencies, the country's trade and investment promotion agency and leading Brazilian travel agencies.

Receiving his Kazakh counterpart, Deputy Minister for External Relations of Brazil Hadil da Rocha Vianna welcomed the Central Asian nation's growing role in the international community and highlighted the relevance of the "Future Energy" theme for EXPO 2017. Brazil is keen to take part in the exhibition, as Brazil pays much attention to developing green ener-

gy and is a significant producer of biofuel, he said.

Today, there are 2,756 power plants operating in Brazil. The backbone of power generation in Brazil is hydro-electrical stations that produce 85 percent of the country's electricity, with the rest produced by wind, nuclear and thermal (coal) power stations.

During a meeting with Executive Secretary of Brazil's Ministry of Mines and Energy Luiz Eduardo Barata, officials discussed bilateral cooperation in science and technology. Barata briefed his Kazakh guest on key trends in power generation and consumption in Brazil. About 45 percent of energy and 18 percent of the fuel consumed in the country are renewable, he said. Barata underlined that participating in a Future Energy-themed expo fits well with the goals of Brazil's Programme for Incentives for Alternative Electric Energy Sources – Proinfa.

The visit also helped explore the potential of Kazakh-Brazilian cooperation in tourism. Today, Brazil is one of the leading centres of tourism in the world. According to estimates,

more than 6.4 million tourists visited Brazil in 2014. Brazil offers many options for tourist experiences, ranging from eco-tourism to various types of cultural tourism. Annual income from the tourism industry exceeds \$6.7 billion. Brazil's experience in running its tourism industry can be useful for Kazakhstan, they agreed.

It is with this mind that Zhoshybayev's meeting with Executive Secretary of Brazilian Ministry of Tourism Alberto Alves was arranged. The EXPO Commissioner

and his counterpart examined avenues for cooperating on joint projects and promoting Kazakhstan's tourist attractions to Brazilian audiences and signed a memorandum on cooperation in tourism between the Astana EXPO 2017 National Company and a Brazilian tourist association.

At the next meeting at the APEX Brasil Trade and Investment Promotion Agency, a number of Brazilian companies showed interest in participating in the expo in Astana. APEX

Brasil played a major role in Brazilian presentations at the three previous expos, in Shanghai 2010, Yeosu 2012 and Milan 2015.

The next stop on the EXPO Commissioner's Latin American tour was Argentina, where on Sept. 16 and 17 Zhoshybayev visited the country's Foreign Office and made a presentation concerning EXPO 2017 for Argentine companies interested in launching joint projects with Kazakh partners.

At a meeting at the Argentine Ministry of External Relations and Worship, Brazilian Undersecretary for Investments and Trade Agustin Wydler announced his nation would participate in EXPO 2017. Brazil's achievements in advancing the production and use of wind, solar, geothermal, biomass and nuclear energy could be represented in Astana, the Argentine diplomat said.

The presentation about the expo to a group of senior managers of state and private companies in Buenos Aires also confirmed their interest in contributing to an Argentine presence at the Astana exhibition. Argentina's major state energy cor-

poration, ENARSA, showed interest in presenting its work on the development of energy-saving technologies, and Director Fernando Salim noted the company's willingness to invest up to \$10 million to implement green technologies at the Astana airport terminal in the run up to the expo.

In Santiago, Chile's Minister of External Relations Heroldo Munoz Valenzuela received the Kazakh delegation. The Chilean diplomat said his country was planning to be present at EXPO 2017 in Astana. According to the minister, his office and the PROCHILE national authority on promoting Chilean exports and attracting investments would soon formally confirm the country's participation in the upcoming event.

The Kazakh officials told their counterparts that the government of Kazakhstan looks forward to increased bilateral contacts and cooperation and handed a letter from President Nursultan Nazarbayev to his Chilean counterpart, Michelle Bachelet, with congratulations on Chile's national day, which is marked Sept. 18.



Expo Commissioner Rapol Zhoshybayev (second from left) in Brazil.

Foreign Tourism Partners Optimistic about Kazakh Tourism Market

By Kamila Zhumabayeva

ASTANA – Despite the unstable economic situation that resulted from the devaluation of the tenge, Kazakhstan's tourism sector is supported by optimism and hope from foreign tourism partners offering alternative travel solutions. Representatives from India, Indonesia, the Maldives, Sri Lanka and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) shared their views during the 2015 Leisure International Tourism Exhibition, held Sept. 24-26 in the capital city's Korme Exhibition Centre.

"The current economy is impacting the way people are trying to be very cautious now and looking a hotels' price ranges. It is all about the price at the moment, but we are seeing a big increase from Kazakhstan's market, particularly in our region," Kempinski Hotel Sales Executive in Ajman, UAE, Yulduz Kengbayeva told The Astana Times. "We know there are going to be some changes; that is why we are working on special offers to make it easier for tourists from Kazakhstan."

The UAE sees Kazakhstan as a promising and major market with good business potential among the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), she added. The Emirates are among the most popular destinations for people in Kazakhstan looking to travel not only to Dubai, but other emirates as well.

"When tourists from Kazakhstan come to the UAE, our task is to make it as attractive as possible so that they can come and stay at a good hotel with a good price range," said Kengbayeva.

India's Minar Travels Deputy General Manager for Business Development Amitoj Singh believes devaluation will definitely affect inbound and outbound tourism and reduce sales. "Last year, we had a smaller number of bookings. The season is going to start about 40 days from now and we are quite hopeful that things will improve for Kazakhstan, not only for travelling to India but also other countries."

"Right now, the situation is not very encouraging at all and as contributors to support our partners in Kazakhstan, we try to lower prices, give maximum 'freebies,' 'early bird' and special promotion offers from hotels and excursion agents to push partners and make it easier for them to buy the product. But we need to just wait and watch as of now," he added.

"I see an interest in agencies. Last year, we saw growth in the market and hope it will continue this year,

too. Although it is hard to predict what exactly will happen, I think we need to watch out this time. Tourism will depend on the economic situation," said Tangerine Tours in Sri Lanka General Manager Charith De Alwis. "We are very interested in cooperating with Kazakhstan, will continue to work and support agents in hosting promotions and contributions and support this market, as we see Kazakhstan is a new market that has come to Sri Lanka."

According to Yosi Aprizal, third secretary of the Indonesian Embassy and head of Indonesian social, cultural, protocol and consular affairs, the economic situation in Kazakhstan will not have a strong impact on its tourism and will soon adjust to a stable condition.

"We haven't seen a significant impact so far and believe this will not last long, because Kazakhstan has a strong financial and economic system," he said.

The interest of Kazakh people in coming to Indonesia is quite high, he added.

"Based on our visa issue records from 2012-2014 there was a huge increase, which shows that Indonesia is growing stronger as a destination. The flow of tourists from Kazakhstan to Indonesia is steady, mostly during the winter time and reaching its peak in December and January," said Aprizal.

Indonesia's tourism agencies see a huge potential for cooperation between the two countries and are optimistic about making contacts which will be enhanced in the future.

"Right now, we are not experiencing the best time when it comes to the CIS region. All markets are not doing as well as before, but we still believe the market of Kazakhstan is our potential market," said Sun Hotels and Resorts sales manager for Russia and CIS countries in the Maldives Liza Unzhakova. "We can still try to bring more business from this country, because not everyone is aware yet of the Maldives as a destination. Most people here think it is too expensive and with the current crisis, unaffordable. But it's not true, as most resorts are extending special offers for CIS markets. Let's hope it will work."

The Maldives has just started cooperating with Kazakhstan and she believes exhibitions are good steps towards future cooperation.

"We hope the business will get better and the people of Kazakhstan will be aware of the product, know our resorts and visit us. We are happy to host everyone, especially the CIS market," said Unzhakova.

Fund Created to Ensure Kazakh Travelers

By Julia Rutz

Vice Minister of Investment and Development Albert Rau recently announced the creation of a new insurance fund for Kazakh tourists travelling abroad at the beginning of next year. The announcement was made during a Central Communications Service (CCS) press conference held on Sept. 18.

"We have faced cases when a tour operator, after sending people to resorts, appeared unable to pay their return. Moreover, there are a lot of travel agencies going bankrupt nowadays. In order to ensure that Kazakh citizens will return back

home safely, the Ministry of Investment and Development sent a bill to establish compulsory insurance for people going abroad to the Mazhilis (lower house of Parliament) for consideration," said Rau.

It is planned that the bill will be introduced for signature to Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev this year. According to the vice minister, the new organisation will be managed not by the government, but the business community, which is represented by tour operators and insurance companies. It is believed that such measure will make the work of the fund as transparent and efficient as possible.

"Every tourist before going abroad will be obliged to pay 0.5 of

a monthly calculation index (MCI), which composes approximately 1,000 tenge (US\$4). The money will be spent to cover insurance risks. These funds will be returned after the tourist season is over and in case of an absence of accidents. It will affect air traffic as well. In case a tour operator decides to use charter flights, he will be obliged to contribute to the fund by paying a special deposit. If the market collapses, tourists will be able to come back using the charter flight, which has been insured by the travel agency," explained Rau.

The proposal to create a fund has been made based on the experience of such countries as the U.K., Finland, Norway and Sweden.

A large number of Kazakh tourists this year went had negative experiences while on holidays in Turkey, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Thailand and Malaysia, when they realised that their tickets were invalid.

"The initiative was suggested by local business representatives. Our goal is to provide a legislative framework. All financial flows will be managed by business itself," said Timur Duisengaliyev, who directs the tourism department at the Ministry of Investment and Development.

It was also announced that prices for tourist vouchers are not expected to be changed, as it is not in the interests of travel agencies.

Kazakh Medical System Serves Citizens, Medical Tourists

By Aliya Asanova

ASTANA – Around 5,000 citizens from more than 30 countries received medical treatment in Astana clinics over the last three years. The Chairman of the Board of the National Scientific Medical Centre and Deputy of Astana Maslikhat Abai Baigenzhin discussed in an interview Sept. 19 what attracts foreign tourists, what medical services are demanded the most and if Kazakhs are able to receive the whole range of medical care in their home country.

There is more and more talk lately that people in Kazakhstan will soon be able to be treated for any diseases in their own country without spending huge amounts of money at expensive clinics abroad. It especially concerns oncological patients. Is it indeed possible?

I think such a prospect is not far off. The roadmap of development of oncological service in Kazakhstan is now being developed at the Ministry of Health and Social Develop-

ment. Worldwide known oncologists are consulting our specialists. One of the chief experts, head of the European Academy of Oncological Science, doctor Alexander Eggermont is our long-time partner. According to his observations, the situation in Kazakhstan is serious and it is mainly due to a greater percentage of neglected forms of cancer. Europeans are surprised at how patient our compatriots can be at times, even if they detect dangerous symptoms, they do not hurry to see doctors. As a result, the disease progresses and it becomes harder and more expensive to help a patient. If for example the treatment of breast cancer costs less than 150,000 tenge (US\$553.4) on the first stage, on the fourth stage it is already 27 million tenge (US\$99,513). Meanwhile, the number of oncologically ill patients is growing.

On what is the roadmap based?

Three kits form the basis of the roadmap: early diagnosis, creating infrastructure and personnel training. It is planned that department of bone marrow transplantation will

open on the base of the National Scientific Medical Centre, where patients suffering from leucosis, aplastic anaemia, lymphomas and other medical conditions can receive treatment. Programmes to alleviate patients' pain, prepare and conduct chemotherapy, introduce a system of centralised dilution of chemotherapeutic drugs are being considered. Kazakhstan's specialists will be able to undergo training in a leading multi-profile oncological centre of Europe, the Gustav Ruski Institute where 250,000 patients are admitted on an outpatient basis, 200,000 chemotherapy procedures and 10,000 surgical interventions are conducted yearly. I think even short-term courses in such a clinic would be a great school for our doctors and nurses. Most importantly it was possible to agree that European scholars will be coming to Kazakhstan to train our specialists on the spot.

As far as I know, the National Scientific Centre is very popular among foreigners arriving for treatment in Kazakhstan. What

kind of services are in the highest demand?

Indeed, there are citizens of the United States, China, Kuwait, the UAE, India, Russia, etc., among our patients. Foreigners are attracted to cell technologies that are already being used or their application is being planned for treatment of rapidly growing diseases in the near future. All diseases for which medical treatment is ineffective are to be included in this list. Metabolic syndrome and second type diabetes are the most frequent pathologies.

Sixty-five patients from overseas received medical treatment at the National Scientific Medical Centre from 2011 to 2014 overall and it is certainly not the limit. The cost of treatment plays a crucial role, of course. It is much lower than in their native country. For example, a liver transplant will cost \$20,000 for a patient in Kazakhstan; the same operation costs \$108,000 in Turkey. And we are by no way inferior to our colleagues from overseas in either personnel or equipment.

Tell me, will anything change due to changing economic conditions?

The National Scientific Medical Centre will continue to work in the same regime, provide the same assured aid to the population and raise it to even a higher level.

Statistics Show Increase in Kazakh Airlines' Safety

By Aidar Uteshev

ASTANA – According to international statistics, flying in Kazakhstan has become safer. The percentage of activity compliance of Kazakhstan's civil aviation has grown by 18 points, said Beken Seidakhmetov, head of Kazakhstan's Civil Aviation Committee (CAC) on Sept. 23.

"We currently sent a letter to the headquarters of the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) about readiness to conduct a validation mission in Kazakhstan. We expect a response from them very soon," Seidakhmetov said.

All restrictions on flights to European Union countries will be withdrawn from Kazakh airlines if the airlines pass the checks. Only Air Astana has such an opportunity now.

"Based on the results of the ICAO validation mission, a significant remark was withdrawn on flightworthy conditions in June of 2014. The percentage of activity compliance of Kazakhstan's Civil Aviation Committee to ICAO standards has grown from 47 percent (2009 figure) up to 65 percent," he noted.

The global average index corresponds to 60 percent. Kazakhstan

hopes to reach 80 percent compliance by 2020, he added.

"Experts of ICAO Technical Cooperation Bureau are working on various activity directions of the Civil Aviation Committee from 2013 till now. In cooperation with them, all airlines had recertification in Kazakhstan. And if there were 70 airlines in the country in 2009, 45 remained in 2014," Seidakhmetov said.

Seidakhmetov also spoke about the reconstruction progress of Kazakhstan's airports.

"Our country has 18 national airports, runways are currently being reconstructed at 13 of them: Aktobe, Atyrau, Kyzylorda, Pavlodar,

Astana, Aktau, Almaty, Karaganda, Shymkent, Zhezkazgan, Taraz, Taldykorgan and Kokshetau," he informed.

Similar works will be completed at the airports of Petropavlovsk and Uralsk in the following year and at the airports of Semey, Kostanai and Ust-Kamenogorsk before 2020. At the same time, the passenger terminal of Astana's airport is to be reconstructed to increase its capacity from 750 to 1,750 passengers per hour, or 7 million passengers per year, he added.

The reconstruction of the passenger terminal of Taraz airport is also being completed this year.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2015

Kazakh Rising Star Elizabet Tursynbayeva Ready to Continue Country's Figure Skating Legacy

By Dmitry Lee

ASTANA – Kazakhstan's winter sports popularity continues despite recently losing the chance to host the Winter Olympics in Almaty in 2022 by only a few votes. After the country's Sochi 2014 Olympics figure skating success, where Kazakh trailblazer Denis Ten took the first-ever Olympic figure skating bronze for his country, the nation's aspirations have been set even higher. With 15-year-old rising star Elizabet Tursynbayeva, these ambitions seem within arm's reach, as she took silver at the 2015 U.S. International Figure Skating Classic in Salt Lake City, Utah, and won four junior international competitions last season.

"Elizabet is a very talented girl with a strong and decisive character," reported the Ice Network website, citing her coach, Brian Orser. "She works very hard and has the full support of her national federation, family and coaching staff. This girl has everything it takes to become the best skater in the world."



Elizabet Tursynbayeva

Tursynbayeva was born in Moscow on Feb. 14, 2000. In May 2015, she moved to Toronto, Canada.

"I dreamed a long time to be coached by him," said Tursynbayeva's mother Pashakan Sultanalieva in an interview with Goldenskate.com. "He is a very good coach."

Working under his tutelage is a distinct advantage, she added. Although she is not a coach, last season her daughter trained most of the time alone with her in a shopping mall ice rink in Moscow.

"It was very hard to prepare [for

competitions] in the public skating sessions," said her mother. "There were lots of kids on the ice and they can't give way. It was difficult to do the jumps. It was terrible to train this way since September [2014]."

Despite all the inconveniences and hurdles, however, with her parents' assistance the young Kazakh has managed to put her name on major mass media outlets. Now the world is learning to pronounce her last name properly and will probably remember it for years to come.

"I'll have a lot of competitions this year," noted Tursynbayeva. "I want to compete at Junior and Senior Worlds and also the Youth Olympic Games. I would have liked to have gone to the Four Continents as well, but unfortunately they take place at the same time as the Youth Olympics. I like to compete. I didn't have enough big competitions [last season], because I was not age eligible. But now I want to go to all competitions."

The talented young skater, who in her spare time enjoys playing the violin, spends most of her day on the ice.

"My training sessions begin at 8:40 in the morning and then I also have workouts at 12 p.m. and 2 p.m. After that, I have off-ice training. At home, I play the violin and do my homework. In the evening, I mostly rest and gather strength," she said. "I want to make a decent debut in the Senior Grand Prix Series, at Skate America and Skate Canada. Also, I want to take part in the senior world championships in Boston."

FC Astana Brings Football Frenzy to Capital, Draws with Galatasaray

Continued from Page B1

It was a different Astana team, more mobile, well-balanced, aggressive and hungry to come back. Although Kazakhs are famed for being overly hospitable, that was not the case in the second half of the game as the home team kept the pressure on the Turkish defence, which erred in the 77th minute as Hakan Balta sent the ball past his teammate, goal keeper Fernando Muslera, to make it 1:1.

The home team didn't celebrate for long, as only nine minutes later Erić failed to keep the ball out when substitute Sinan Gumus's shot deflected off his hands and found the back of the net. But even then the home team got carried away by their attempts and continued pressuring the opponents. Yet again it paid off, with an own goal by Lionel Carole, who changed the trajectory of the ball that was not headed toward the target, into his own net in the last minute. At that moment all bar owners in Kazakhstan held their breath and felt the trembling of their customers'

tables, hoping that they wouldn't break.

"Today was a historic match for Kazakh football," Stanimir Stoilov, head coach of FC Astana, said after the game, as cited by fca.kz. "We were pressured hard in the first half. In the second [half] when we were losing we showed aggressiveness, created good moments, scored a goal but also missed a lot of good chances. I am pleased with the result, but I think we deserved to win today."

"We wanted to return with a win but we failed. My congratulations to Astana on the win," Hamza Hamzaoglu, head coach of Galatasaray, said. "We started well, created enough plays, scored, but perhaps the one-goal advantage affected our game in the second half. Once more congratulations to the Kazakh club on the win! It is a feisty team!"

The next match for FC Astana will be on Oct. 22 in Madrid against Atlético Madrid.

Almaty Hosts Bicycle Race, Kazakh Cyclist Gets His First Monument Win

By Aiman Turebekova

October 4 was a big day in Almaty. Not only did the city host Tour of Almaty 2015, a one-day professional road bicycle race, it saw a Kazakh team cyclist win his first monument, reported the Mayor's press service.

The event officially began with the presentation of the riders. Nineteen teams from 16 countries took part in the Tour of Almaty, including professional ones such as Astana PRO Team, headed by Fabio Aru, and the Russian Katusha.

Welcoming the participants and spectators, Almaty Mayor Bauyrzhan Baibek noted interest in cycling, carried out in an urban setting for the third time, is increasing every year.

"Last year, about 10,000 people visited this event and due to the Eurosport TV channel broadcast, more than 100 million people had

a chance to watch the racing. Cycling has become one of the recognizable brands of the city. Thanks to the President of the country, Almaty has been transformed into a world sport centre and has the vast potential to bring up the tourism sector in a big way. Over the past few years, the metropolis hosted around a dozen world championships for a variety of disciplines and has over 1,100 sports facilities," he said.

Akhmetzhan Yessimov, chairman of Astana EXPO 2017, the official sponsor of the race, said the Tour of Almaty is a familiar project to promote the country as well as the international exhibition. Yessimov, a former mayor of Almaty, then fired a pistol to start the race.

"For us, this race is a great opportunity to improve the city's infrastructure, which we are improving for the Universiade 2017.

Almaty citizens highly appreciate the organisation of the Tour of Almaty. Cycling is becoming more and more popular in our city. We will support this race in the future," emphasised Baibek.

Alexey Lutsenko, a Kazakh road race cyclist who rides for the Astana team, was the winner, with Aru, an Italian professional road bicycle racer for UCI ProTeam Astana, taking second place. Pavel Kochetkov, a member of the Katusha team, received the bronze medal.

The participants each had to cover a distance of six laps of 31 km, making the total length of the route 186 km. Since 2013, the race has usually been held in October and is sanctioned by the International Cycling Union (UCI) as a 1.1 race as part of its Asian tour.

Nibali, who won the 2014 Tour de France, made his first attack on the Civiglio ascent.

"I've always wanted to win a

race of this stature and of this kind and it was my time to win it," he said at the finish. "To win a monument you also have to be lucky. It has been a great day."

Nibali's victory in the fifth and final monument of the season – the others being Milan-San Remo, the Tour of Flanders, Paris-Roubaix and Liege-Bastogne-Liege – is also the first by an Italian since Damiano Cunego won the Giro di Lombardia in 2008.

"I'm satisfied with my season. Things often went wrong, but thanks to my mental strength and determination I got things back on track and fought back. My season has ended well because I've won a monument, something an Italian hadn't done for a long time. It's a team victory because of the work everyone did. Now I hope to finish the season well in Abu Dhabi and then we'll start thinking about next season," said the Giro di Lombardia winner.

Barys Near Bottom of KHL After 18 Games

By Ilyas Omarov

ASTANA – Thirteen is considered an unlucky number in Russian folklore, and indeed, Barys Astana's 13th game of this, its eighth season in the Continental Hockey League (KHL) turned out to be a bad one for the team's coach Yerlan Sagymbayev.

After going down 1-4 against Avangard Omsk on Barys's home ice, Sagymbayev along with his assistant, Finnish specialist Raimo Helminen, were dismissed.

Led by new coach Yevgeni Korshkov, formerly a star player of Torpedo Ust Kamenogorsk and a long-time member of the Barys coaching staff, the Astana team confidently beat Avangard in the return leg away, although the Omsk team is viewed as one of the season's best teams so far in the league.

After that, Barys lost twice, 3-4, to Severstal Cherepovets in overtime and then to CSKA Moscow. They were unlucky again against Torpedo Nizhni Novgorod (0-2) and Dinamo Minsk (2-6).

Ahead of Barys now is a series of four home matches against teams of the Eastern Conference, after which the club will travel westwards, to central Russia, Slovakia and Croatia.

With nearly a third of the KHL's regular season behind them – with 18 matches out of 60 played so far – Barys find themselves in the bottom of the standings, now ranking 12th out of 14 teams in the Eastern Conference, one of the team's worst KHL starts yet. Injuries that have forced changes to the team's style and tactics, a generational change on the team and poor refereeing in recent matches are among the reasons experts list for Astana's bad start.

CrossFit Takes Off in Astana

By Zhazira Dyussebekova

ASTANA – The fitness industry in Kazakhstan is constantly growing, offering an ever-increasing range of activities. Residents and tourists can now find almost any type of sport they want and go to any gym or fitness club they can afford. A group of local entrepreneurs decided to quit their careers in big companies and follow their passion by opening the first CrossFit gym in Astana.

"I have studied in Great Britain. During the last year of my studies, I found out that there is a new direction in fitness: CrossFit. At that time, it had only begun to spread in Europe. But I started doing CrossFit workouts by myself later when I came back to Almaty, which already had CrossFit gyms. My friends and I decided to open a gym in Astana. I was working as an engineer in one of the fuel companies. I was so keen on that idea that I decided to quit my job. My friend Erik was working at a consulting company at that time and made the same decision," said co-founder and Technical Director of CrossFit Astana Zhassulan Assanuly in a recent interview with The Astana Times.

The CrossFit Astana gym was launched in October 2014. Today, the brand already has two clubs

operating in the capital. Both offer group and individual training programmes, as well as special programmes for beginners, called Basics, and for women under the name Lady CrossFit. The gym also offers monthly payment plans.

During the organisational process, the young businessmen studied U.S. practice, since it is the country where CrossFit was created. They wanted their gyms to be similar to American ones as much as possible. One of the founders even went there to see how they work.

According to Assanuly, CrossFit Astana focuses on a wide range of clients. "We wanted to create a unique environment for the community within the club. We organise special master classes for our clients on recovery after trainings, personal growth, weightlifting and special skills. We go out of town. The community here unites with those types of events. Here everyone knows each other. We, the founders, go to workouts with the clients also," he added.

The entrepreneurs are planning to expand their chain and for the next step they are planning to open another gym in Almaty. "For now we are working on that. We want to become the best and biggest CrossFit chain in Kazakhstan," said Assanuly.

He also shared his opinion why

CrossFit and fitness are becoming popular throughout the country. "People now understand that health plays a huge role in life. A healthy person can achieve a lot. We can see a lot of examples now which show that sports works. If a person works hard, he gets results and it is reflected in other parts of his life," he said.

CrossFit Astana also invited a specialist from the country of its origin, experienced high-level trainer from Austin, Texas, Benjamin Palmer. He has been involved with CrossFit since 2011.

"I really enjoy different challenges that CrossFit presents. When I first began, what I liked about it was that it levelled the playing field. Also, I picked it up very quickly. My background is actually endurance sports. I have been coaching for four years now," said Palmer in an interview with The Astana Times on Sept. 29.

Before coming to Kazakhstan, Palmer worked as a trainer in Kuwait for a year and a half. Now he is a trainer at CrossFit Astana and shares his experience with local trainers, as well as leads trainings with clients.

According to Palmer, the approach to a CrossFit gym in Kazakhstan totally differs from the U.S. "Usually gyms in the States are located in old car garages or old warehouses. Usually they are

not so nice. But here it's a brand new facility, including a sauna, showers and other conveniences," he stated.

CrossFit is considered to be a sport more for men, rather than women, because it has elements of weightlifting and powerlifting. But the tendency seems to be changing.

"Initially, when CrossFit gyms began in the U.S., they were predominantly male. And as a gym lifecycle kind of came all the way through, most of the gyms in the U.S. ended up being predominantly for women. They really like the social aspect of being in the class. While men are comfortable going to the gym, doing the workout and listening to the music, here in this gym, I would say one third are women and two thirds are men. As CrossFit is becoming more commonplace in Kazakhstan and Astana specifically, it will move closer to equal numbers; I would say in five or six years. We have mixed classes here. Around 70 percent are men and 30 percent are women. And we have women's classes. Most of women prefer to go to women's classes because they feel more comfortable," said Palmer.

The trainer also shared his opinion on why CrossFit has become a trend in the world fitness industry. "As I see it now, [it is about] physi-



Crossfit Astana trainer Benjamin Palmer at work.

cal training as a way for people to self-actualise. It is something that everyone can do. Most people are still not good athletes, but they can do something. CrossFit is a really nicely packaged way for people to experience that in a supportive environment. And it can bring up some parts of their lives."

"On the surface level they can feel better, stronger and fitter," Palmer said. "We see that when this part of life is being brought up, other aspects start to be brought up as well. When you get your physical side tuned up a little bit more, everything else sharpens up. I'm not saying if you lose two kilograms, you will start making \$10,000. It doesn't work that way. [But] it can be a catalyst for self-improvement. The sport also serves as a great antidepressant.

It helps fight stress and anger. And CrossFit is popular for a reason. The thing that I think is the best quality of CrossFit is that the training works if you are consistent with it. And because you are in a cumulative group environment that's led by a coach, people are more likely to stay consistent. So it kind of feeds into itself. So because of that, people get results and they keep coming back," he concluded.

CrossFit workouts include elements such as high-intensity interval training, weightlifting, jump training, powerlifting, gymnastics, calisthenics and other exercises. There are more than 10,000 affiliated gyms in the world where people improve their skills. The original gym is in California and was founded by Greg Glassman.

CAPITAL

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2015

Astana Street Names Provide Historical Guide for Residents

Continued from Page B1

Here are three people whose names are part of the city map, yet who are not well-known to people of the capital.

Zhumabek Tashenov was a member of the Communist Party of Kazakhstan and chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Kazakh SSR. He was born on March 20, 1915, in Tanagul Village of the Akmola region.

Tashenov actively opposed the Virgin Lands campaign in 1960 and the proposed unification of five areas of northern Kazakhstan (North Kazakhstan, Kokshetau, Kostanai, Akmola and Pavlodar) and their separation from the Kazakh SSR. He was openly against the idea of Nikita Khrushchev, then leader of the Soviet Union, to separate this northern region from the rest of the Kazakh SSR, appealing to the Constitution of the Soviet Union and saying that the idea was a flagrant violation, contrary to the interests of the people, and that he would appeal to international organisations if the illegal transfer was carried out.

In 1961, Tashenov was removed

from the office. On May 25, 1999, the Astana Maslikhat (city council) decided to rename one of the capital's streets in his honour. Almaty, Shymkent, Kokshetau and the Arshaly village of Akmola region also have streets named after him.

Today Tashenov Street is one of the busiest streets of the capital. It is located in the centre and serves as a link between different parts of the city.

"Zhumabek Tashenov was one of the outstanding leaders of Kazakhstan. His achievements are invaluable. He was the one to preserve country's integrity during Khrushchev's reforms. In my opinion, his name takes a deserved position on the Astana map," said Professor at Eurasian National University Zhambyl Artykbayev in a recent interview with The Astana Times.

Another familiar but unknown name is that of Aleksander Barayev. Many buses use the route bearing his name, which stretches from left bank to right. Barayev was a Soviet agronomist and the founder of soil conservation farming systems. He was a doctor of agricultural sciences, and academician of the Acad-



Astana's Kenesary Street and the famous Astana supermarket (see related story at the bottom of the page).

emy of Agricultural Science, holder of the Lenin Prize and a Hero of Socialist Labour, the highest civilian honour during the Soviet times.

Barayev was born July 16, 1907, in Saint Petersburg. His soil conservation farming system became the main basis for the Virgin Lands campaign. In 1936, he came to Kazakhstan's Uralsk region and became director of the Agricultural Experiment Station. During his leadership, the station extensively studied issues of snow retention,

tested various methods of tillage and later developed some elements of anti-erosion treatment. In 1953, he was appointed director of the Kazakh Research Institute of Agriculture. His farming systems were used across the country and by 1975 they were operating on 12 million hectares of land. By 1990, that number reached 60 million. Barayev did an enormous service to Kazakh agronomy, and because of his skilful defence of the soil, saved lands from degradation. His sys-

tems have become a reliable shield against dust storms and erosion.

"Barayev Street is one of the oldest in the city and it has the name of one of the greatest agronomists of Kazakhstan. During the period of the Virgin Lands campaign, there were a lot of difficulties due to erosion. Big territories were plowed, and the wind was blowing away the top layer of fertile land. He solved those problems by creating his systems. Kazakhstan has managed to maintain its grain area and now it gives income to the country. All of that is Barayev's achievement," said Artykbayev.

Zhanibek Tarkhan Street is located on the right bank, closer to the old centre. Its namesake is from an earlier period. Zhanibek was born in 1693. He went down in history as a famous batyr (warrior), distinguished by (judge and administrator) and first tarkhan (military rank equal to field marshal) in the history of the Kazakhs. In the history of the Russian Empire, only 20 representatives of Turkic peoples were awarded with the title of tarkhan.

Zhanibek was one of the greatest leaders during the Kazakh state's

battles with Dzhungar aggressors. He contributed to the restoration of Kazakh statehood in what is now the Kostanai region. Zhanibek ruled with Abylai Khan and in difficult times largely determined the future of the nation's policy of relations with Russia and other neighbouring states. Unfortunately, not much information about him remains.

According to Artykbayev, "Zhanibek was one of the great leaders of Kazakh society. He played a huge role during the Dzhungar invasion. Also, his role was important in the establishment of Kazakh-Russian relations, especially in the northern parts of Kazakhstan. At that time, he received the rank of tarkhan and was released from all taxes and given the right to freely move within the territory of Russian Empire. Zhanibek was a mediator of Kazakh-Russian relations. It was difficult time from a political perspective and he played a positive role during that period."

Astana streets contain more names of people unknown to most residents. A city map can be a great guide to learning Kazakh history.

Kitschy Soviet-Era Restaurant Popular in Astana

Continued from Page B1

The silverware and samovar (Russian teapot) are kept in a vintage dish shelf and an old television, music player, clock and different types of cameras are on display. Models of used Russian cars – Moskvitch and Zaporozhets, – are parked inside and outside the eatery.

"The items that are used for decoration in the restaurant tell a certain story from the Soviet era. We want to educate those who dine in our restaurant, especially the younger generation of post-Soviet countries and foreigners, on Soviet history," Epoch's general manager Aisulu Karzhaubekova told The Astana Times in a recent interview.

Customers may choose to eat in either the open-spaced dining area or one of the ten private dining rooms. The former is decorated with Soviet history books along the sides of the walls. Diners can spend time reading the books while enjoying a delicious Soviet speciality or simply sipping chai (tea).

Each private room has its own theme, including the Kremlin, Vladimir Lenin, Joseph Stalin, Dinmukhamed Konayev, Voennaya (military equipment of the Soviet Union and Germany) and Komsomol (the youth organisation under the Soviet Union). Depending on the motif, the rooms are decorated with pictures of former Soviet leaders, famous quotes from the era, news clippings, World War II weapons or utensils used during

the time.

Interestingly, some of the glass-covered dining tables are decorated with items as diverse as old documents and books or real bullets and grenades. Meanwhile, the glass floors in some of the rooms allow guests to see memorabilia such as the Soviet interrogation room.

"We provide tours around the restaurant for our diners and explain the story behind the themes to them," said Karzhaubekova, who has been managing Epoch for five years.

Patrons from former USSR countries will be familiar with the Soviet-era food. For those who are not, traditional Russian, Ukraine, Kazakh and Uzbek staples such as borscht, Olivier salad, beshbar-

mak, manty and shashlik, as well as European fare, are served at affordable prices.

While it continues to preserve the Soviet ambiance in its decoration and cuisine, Epoch plans to stay in touch with the progressing times by offering more choices such as pizza and pasta on its menu.

The restaurant also has special in-house beers that are made in its cellar using German technology, said Karzhaubekova.

Klava Davai

Address: 56 Beibitshilik Street, Telephone: +7 (7172) 310 969

Fancy a Soviet-themed bar where it is cosy to relax, listen to great music and hang out with

friends? Klava Davai is the right place to go.

The interior of the two-story bar screams vintage. It has wooden walls and floors and is well decorated with big neon signs and old household items such as irons and a sewing machine, as well as a television and music player set. It also has comfy, colourful sofa sets that can accommodate up to 150 customers.

Unlike other thematic restaurants, Klava Davai provides the ambiance of the Soviet Union without a crash course in its past.

"We are the only bar in Astana that has a thematic Soviet-era concept, but we don't provide explanations on Soviet history to our customers. Our customers come here to hang out with their friends while at the same time experience

the 'feel' of the Soviet era," Klava Davai director Raikhan Tokabayeva told The Astana Times in a recent interview.

Since its opening in June 2012, Klava Davai has been welcoming customers daily from 4pm to 4am. It is famous for its drinks, especially its in-house beer called Klava.

The bar also offers European cuisine such as pizza, steak and shashlik, which are well-known among those from post-Soviet Union countries.

Friday and Saturday evenings are usually packed with those in their 20s and 30s, as there are in-house DJs spinning the night away with chill-out music. The bar also organises salsa parties every month for those who are interested in the Latin American dance.

Historical Buildings of the New Capital

By Kamila Zhumabayeva

ASTANA – The history of the capital city of Kazakhstan is revealed through some of the old buildings quietly standing on the busiest streets and avenues of Astana's old half. The former trading company of Matvey Kubrin, mansions of merchants like Vasily Kubrin and Moiseyev, a school for Muslim youth and the Church of Konstantin and Elena are among the best-preserved.

Head of the Architecture Department, professor and candidate of architecture at Gumilev Eurasian National University and member of Kazakhstan's Architects and City Planners Union Sara Sadykova spoke to us about the creation of the city's architecture from the middle of the 18th century to beginning of 20th century.

"In 1830, the imperial government ordered to set down military fortifications deep inside Kazakhstan, on the Yessil River shores. Closer to the 20th century, military fortifications were no longer necessary and the territory began developing into a city named Akmolinsk (Akmola) along the right bank of the river, as it was less exposed to spring high waters," Sadykova said.

A lot of Russian and Tatar traders and merchants began to live in the city and construct wooden buildings with fortified walls and watchtowers when it started to develop as a regular settlement. "Akmola was the northern border of the Great Silk Way intersection where a lot of trade fairs passed," the professor noted.

According to Sadykova, Akmolinsk began to develop as a trade city in 1890–1891. The city budget was increased, and construction of the city garden, council, arcade, fire tower and other facilities began. Merchants were wealthy residents and started to build stylish stone stores and mansions.

Known to many as the Astana Supermarket (at the crossroad of Bokeikhan Street and Kenesary Street) and the building of the Ukrainian Embassy (on Kenesary Street, a few metres away from the store) are historical landmarks of Astana built in 1905–1907 and are closely connected with the name of the Kubrins merchant dynasty.

According to a Your Vision blog post on April 13 by blogger Sholpan Mars, in pre-revolutionary Akmolinsk, the Kubrins were famous not only for their outstanding entrepreneurial abilities, but also for their attentiveness to the material and spiritual needs of residents, which was manifested in the generous donations of the family in support of various social undertakings.

Stepan Kubrin was elected head of the city in 1891 and a small street in modern Astana was named after him. The Astana store belonged to Matvey Kubrin, the uncle of Stepan, the blogger said.

"In 1913, Kubrin's company was trading pharmaceuticals, manufactory, haberdashery, jewellery, paper and stationery, as well as clothing, foot- and headwear, watches, tea and sugar," it was stated in the Siberian Commerce and Industrial Yearbook.

According to Mars, the store was named Raduga (Rainbow) during the Soviet era. It was also called as "gorelyy" (Russian for burnt) among people, when all wooden constructions of the building were burned down due to the fire in 1944.

Nowadays, the Astana Supermarket is one of the most successful supermarkets on the right bank. The external appearance of the store has been purposefully kept as close as possible to its initial appearance and the interior walls are decorated with old photographs of the city's merchants of the early last century, the blogger wrote.

The stylistically similar building that is now occupied by the Embas-

sy of Ukraine was a mansion built in 1910–1912 by merchant Vasily Kubrin, the son of Matvey Kubrin. In different years it was occupied by different organisations and establishments, including militia and regional historical museum, the blog post said.

The story of its emergence in the Kazakh steppe town is interesting. According to the blogger's findings, Vasily Kubrin, while on a business trip in Saint Petersburg, fell in love with an actress of the Moscow theatre and proposed to her. She agreed, but the condition for her moving to Akmolinsk was to build the famous Kubrin mansion, which still adorns the old centre of Astana.

According to the blogger, another old two-storey mansion a few metres from the Astana store originally belonged to the merchant known now only by his last name, Moiseyev. The mansion was begun in 1914 and finished in 1918 for the merchant, who came from Russia to take advantage of the busy trading scene in the Akmola region. Wealthy merchants like him built stone and brick houses to protect themselves from fires. Representative of Soviet authority accommodated the mansion a year after it finished building in 1919 and the merchant did not even manage to inhabit his house, the blogger stated. The mansion has retained its original appearance and is now occupied by the central clinical hospital for handicapped veterans of the Great Patriotic War.

According to Mars, the Kazkomertsbank building on the other side of the Bokeikhan Street, a few steps away from the mansion, once was a Koshegulov School for the Muslim youth. The result of a 1986 reconstruction was an overbuilt second floor, which according to experts has considerably reduced the uniqueness and historical value of the old structure.

"This could have been reconstructed in a more delicate way, as

it was not a very good decision," Sadykova said.

The Church of Constantine and Elena just off Republic Avenue, built in 1900, has been better preserved. The Soviet government closed the church, but its service was resumed on the request of believers later during the Great Patriotic War.

Many cathedrals were built in the biggest cities of 19th century Ka-

zakhstan, and the Kubrin merchants donated a lot of money for the construction of the Alexander Nevsky Cathedral in Akmola. Emperor Nikolai II donated a sacred icon and a student of a famous artist came to Akmola from Moscow to make paintings for the walls of the cathedral. It was a majestic, impressive church, the most beautiful building and pride of the city, the blogger described. The temple was turned into a club, theatre and cinema under the first Soviet Union state, then was plundered and fully demol-

ished between 1931 and 1941. Tatar merchant and cattle dealer Nurmukhamed Zabirov built the city's Green Mosque in 1895, which was demolished as well. Only the fencing of the mosque on Abai Street was retained.

Many historical memorials, cathedrals and mosques were either exploded, burnt down or demolished due to the war on religion and restructuring by the Soviet state but the few landmarks that remain are under government protection today

